



**Press Release**  
**For Immediate Release**  
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## DAD CHARLES PICKS HIS BABY'S NAME

**November 18th, 2009, Toronto, Ontario:** Letting his nose be the guide, Western Lowland gorilla Dad Charles was able, this morning, to choose a name for his baby son, born on September 2nd, 2009. Faced with five stations, each containing an equally favoured treat such as banana leaves and a sign with one of the five finalist names, Charles, after some consideration, made a beeline for the container bearing the name "Nassir" and, incidentally, some choice apples, pears, and oranges. Ngozi, who came to the Toronto Zoo from the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle on March 4th, 2008, specifically to breed with Charles, is the baby's mother. Nassir is the 18th of this critically endangered species to be born at the Toronto Zoo and the birth is genetically highly significant for the North American Western Lowland gorilla population.

The contest to name this newest baby ran from September 30th to October 27th. The only stipulation was that the name must begin with the letter "N", which is also the first letter of Mom Ngozi's name. Over 11,000 votes were cast and 5,000 name suggestions were submitted. A panel of Zoo Animal Care staff and enthusiastic Zoo kids whittled these down to 10 names. The public voted on these to arrive at the final five name possibilities - Nassir, Neo, Nico, Nigel and Nsambu - for Dad Charles to ponder.

The Toronto Zoo currently has eight gorillas, of which four, Charles, Samantha, Josephine and Ngozi are adults, and four, Johari (female, born 2001), Shalia (female, born 2002), Sadiki (male, born 2005) and the new baby are youngsters.

A critically endangered species, Western Lowland Gorillas are found in the rainforests of Angola, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. An adult male can weigh 200kg, with adult females weighing around 100kg. Females mature at approximately 8 years but typically don't breed until 10 years of age. The average gestation period is 265 days with a single young being born.

"We're just thrilled with Nassir and the success of our captive breeding program for this species, especially in this, the Year of the Gorilla," says Toronto Zoo Executive Director of Conservation, Education, and Research, Dr. William Rappley, "and we invite everyone to come out and see him in the African Rainforest Pavilion."

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Zoo Hours – 9:30am to 4:30 pm. Last admissions one hour before closing. General Admission 13-64 incl. is \$21, Children 3 and under are free, Children 4-12 are \$13 and Seniors 65+ are \$15. Parking is free until March 1st. **Events subject to change without notice.** The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Road and Hwy. 401, Exit 389 east and west bound. For general information, call (416) 392-5929. The Toronto Zoo is open year round (except December 25<sup>th</sup>).

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