

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 11, 2006

**BABY SIAMANG MAKES PUBLIC DEBUT**

FRESNO, California -- The siamang (*Hylobates syndactylus*) born July 14 is making his public debut this morning at the Fresno Chaffee Zoo. Keepers have determined the tiny ape is a male and named him Bahasa (bah-HAH-sah) which means "language" in the siamang's native land of Malaysia. The name was chosen due to the siamang's hooting calls that can be heard for two miles.

Bahasa, his 24 year old mother Lottie, 38 year old father Biong, and brother Jambi, almost three years of age, are expected to spend each morning on exhibit in Sunda Forest. The family has not yet been reintroduced to the orangutans that share the habitat, therefore the orangutans will be on exhibit only in the afternoons.

Siamangs are the largest of the lesser apes reaching heights up to three feet and weighing 17 to 28 pounds. This agile ape's five foot arm span, well-developed forearms, and hook like hands, facilitate movement through the treetops. In the wild, they rarely descend to the ground, instead living in the upper canopy of forested regions of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. Loss of habitat through agriculture has severely reduced their numbers in the wild and they are an endangered species. Siamangs reach maturity at eight to nine years of age and their life span is 20-25 years in the wild and 30-40 years in zoos.