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monkeyhelpers.org



Alison and Sadie

Photo by Stew Milne

From the Executive Director

I hope this newsletter finds you well, where ever you are. It is hard to fathom everything that is currently happening in the world, but we remain safe and healthy here at the Monkey Living Center. As you know, we suspended all placements in March of 2020 in order to protect our recipients, monkeys, and staff. I am happy to report that we have not had a single monkey contract COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, and for that we are very grateful. I want to say a huge thank you to our staff and board who have gone above and beyond to make sure that all our capuchins remain well cared for, no matter the circumstances.

And, after much careful and thoughtful reflection, and a deep understanding of the landscape around us, we made the suspension of our training and placement programs permanant in early 2021. Please know, we remain deeply committed to all the monkeys in our program; those living at the Monkey Living Center (formerly The Monkey College), those still paired with recipients across the country, and those living in special care homes. Our capuchins have given so much over the years and cared for so many - it is now our turn to care for them.

This difficult decision was not made lightly or in haste, but was necessary, considering the following:

- As technology advances, the need for our services is in decline.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act only recognizes dogs and miniature horses as service animals.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation recently ruled that primates are no longer welcome to fly (effectively canceling any hopes of transporting our capuchins outside of New England).
- A majority of states prohibit primates in home environments.

All of these restrictions, as well as the advancing ages of our monkeys, led us to the conclusion that we must build on our legacy and use our vast knowledge to work with communities around the globe to understand how humans and animals interact and find other ways to support our community. We spent the summer meeting with experts in robotics, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence, formulating the path we will take in the future. If you visit our **new website**, you will see the progress we have made and the plans we are putting in place to move forward in this new direction, while giving all our monkeys the very best care possible for their entire lives.

Wishing you a healthy and happy fall,

Drane A. Mahabedian





The Monkey Living Center



Several years ago, Helping Hands had begun a multi-year envisioning process as we anticipated caring for our aging monkey population and taking on new challenges. We realized that older monkeys would be returning to Boston from their years of service and companionship in greater numbers. Our building needed to provide a safe, secure, and healthy physical environment for elderly monkeys as they entered their post-service years; a long-term safe space where they could enjoy their lives in comfort. We needed to create the Monkey Living Center.

With the upheaval of COVID-19, our timeline had to be dramatically compressed. We were faced with an immediate and urgent need to rehabilitate and prepare a home suitable for our aging monkeys. We needed to start the renovations even before raising the funds!

Over the course of 4 months, Helping Hands transformed the top floor, formerly the administrative offices, into 6 large play areas, where our post-service monkeys can climb, swing, and play...just like monkeys! We built hammocks to relax in and puzzles to solve. Bubble machines, rope ladders, and even a kiddie pool! On a daily basis, the building is filled with the noises of happy capuchins playing, foraging, and cuddling in their new spaces. Hiding peanut butter and walnut treats for them to find has been so fun for the monkey care team, and watching the monkeys make new discoveries every day brings happy tears to the staff.



With our monkeys taking over the top floor, we needed a place for our administrative team, so we completely renovated the bottom floor of the building, creating a comfortable and inviting office space with lots of light.

As we all have learned over the past year and a half, airflow and ventilation are key to keeping people (and monkeys!) healthy, so improvements to these systems were also at the top of our emergency list. The 20-year old heating/cooling system was at the end of its life and its replacement was particularly crucial not only for air quality, but also energy efficiency.

So far all the renovations have been a huge hit with humans and primates alike, but it was emergency construction - we had to do the renovations before we raised the \$2 million needed. There are still Naming Opportunities available at the Monkey Living Center, such as:

- \$150,000: The Veterinary Suite
- \$45,000: Window enlargements
- \$3,000 each (total of 6): Play areas
- \$1,500: The Laundry Suite

If you or someone you know is interested in contributing to the Monkey Living Center, please contact Diane Nahabedian, 617-787-4419 or via email at dianen@monkeyhelpers.org to begin the conversation. Our monkeys have given so much to so many - please help provide them with the post-service home they deserve!



The Monkey Helper Calendar is back!

The Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers calendar is back for 2022 - 12 months of adorable monkey photos from the Monkey Living Center. With a full 11 x 8 ½ page for each month, you will have plenty of space to write important dates, reminders, and birthdays!

The calendar will be available for purchase in October of 2021 through our website and on our social media channels. Visit us at monkeyhelpers.org for more information. We love this calendar and we hope you will, too!

Thank YOU!

The last year and a half has been such a challenge for everyone, and we want to thank each and every one of you who has helped to make it a little easier and safer for our monkeys and our staff.

As you have heard, our monkeys are no longer welcome to fly on commercial airlines. So what does that mean when there is an emergency and we have to pick up a service monkey from the opposite side of the country in the middle of a pandemic? We weren't sure, until our good friend Charlie Tillett offered to help us fly Alison and Kukla back to the Monkey Living Center.

Charlie, your kindness and generosity was so appreciated in our hour of need. Thank you for being a stalwart friend to Helping Hands and going above and beyond for us.



Pictured: Doug Leenhouts, Alison Payne, and Charlie Tillett.



Double your Impact in September!



If we can raise **\$15,000 September 1 through September 30**, a generous donor will **MATCH** that dollar for dollar. Your generosity makes **TWICE the IMPACT** this month - help us reach our goal.

And, did you know that **your gift is tax-deductible?** With the expansion of the CARES Act, you can now **deduct up to \$300 of charitable giving (\$600 if filing jointly) on your 2021 taxes**, even if you do not itemize.

There has never been a better time to make a donation to Helping Hands. Do it today!

monkeyhelpers.org/match

Meet a Monkey: Siggy!

Siggy is an incredibly confident girl who has quite the tale! She's unique at the Monkey Living Center as she is our only black and white capuchin. Read Siggy's story at monkeyhelpers.org/siggy.



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