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541 Cambridge Street
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monkeyhelpers.org



Allyson and Buttons

**HELPING HANDS**
MONKEY HELPERS

From the Executive Director

The work of Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers is always about our mission: *Providing enhanced quality of life and opportunities for individuals living with physical challenges, their caregivers, and their communities.* Whether we fulfill that mission by transitioning to a plethora of innovative technologies as we are doing or training and placing capuchin service monkeys as we once did—the most important thing we do is abide by the mission to assist those living with physical disabilities live independent lives.



We, the members of our board of directors and staff, find ourselves in the unique position of undertaking the transformation of the organization while maintaining the legacy of Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers. Let's face it—there aren't many organizations that attend to the work of transforming their organization downstairs while their beloved legacy, former service monkeys, are enjoying the post-service years jumping and running around in large play spaces outfitted just for them, upstairs.

Our unique adventure unfolds daily. All of you are part of this journey. For those of you who have been a part of our work, we cherish your support. For those just getting to know us, we appreciate that you are here with us. You are a part of the Helping Hands family.

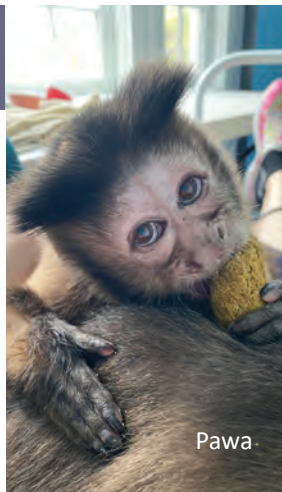
Please take some time to read through this newsletter. It is longer than our monthly eNews, and our daily social media posts. However, you will get a sense of what is going on at the organization and how our transition is progressing. As always, if you have comments, questions or just want to say hello, please reach out to me at dianen@monkeyhelpers.org.

Wishing you all the best,

The 2023 Monkey Helper Calendar

That's right! 12 months of adorable monkey photos from the Monkey Living Center is coming! With a full 11 x 8 ½ page for each month, you will have plenty of space to write birthdays, appointments, and reminders!

The calendar will be available for purchase in October of 2022 on our website and on our social media channels. Visit us at monkeyhelpers.org for more info. We love our calendar and we hope you will, too!



Pawa

As when we trained service monkeys from the 1980s through 2020, our goal today is to provide tools that allow individuals to have opportunities to pursue meaningful careers, advanced educational degrees, and fulfilling personal lives.

Currently, we are looking at three areas including:

- Assistive and adaptive devices
- Robotics
- Virtual reality (VR)



How Does It All Work?

Technology and how individuals use it or what technology they need may vary. Many adults need assistive or adaptive devices to help them daily, and provide the independence necessary for work or school.

Assistive Technology Program

Our initial gateway offering will be the Assistive Technology Program. Assistive devices could be technology that can be easily purchased, easy to use, and make an individual's day-to-day life easier. They are devices that are not covered by insurance and an individual or family cannot afford on their own. (i.e., Amazon's Fire TV Cube or Echo). The device will not only provide independence for the individual, but may also provide the caregiver with some free time.

We will provide up to \$2,000 in financial support for needed devices. These can be anything that makes one's home safer, helps with socialization, or assists with school or work technology. This is a financial-needs based program, and the seed money was provided by a grant from Liberty Mutual Foundation.

Robotics and Virtual Reality (VR) Programs

We are beginning our Robotics and VR Programs with pilot projects that will ascertain how advanced technologies provide independence to someone with limited mobility.

Pilot Projects

We are currently engaging in pilot projects to determine how the innovative technology in development will:

- Improve quality of life and assist in daily needs for those living with disabilities.
- Provide peace of mind for the primary caregiver.



Continued on next page.



Transition in Process

If you are a regular reader of *Monkey Business*, our eNewsletter, you know we are transitioning from offering service animals to exploring various options to providing innovative technologies for those living with mobility impairments. **Transition is messy.** There is no magic solution to transforming the way an organization does business. However, the steps the board and staff have taken to date are ensuring that the transition will continue to provide enhanced quality of life and opportunities for people with physical challenges. The transition is looking at both the present and the future—developing programs and collaborations that will be important for Helping Hands for the next five, ten, twenty, even fifty years.

Where We Are Going

As we go through our transition, we are guided by two key principles.

- Providing innovative technologies and quality-of-life opportunities to those living with physical disabilities.
- Taking care of our post-service monkeys until the end of their natural lives.

Our Future

As an organization dedicated to working with those living with disabilities, we look at our history with great pride. Our new initiatives allow us to continue to serve the disability community by providing resources through the utilization of robotics, assistive devices, Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

We are looking to take the 40+ years of experience, intellectual property, and insights Helping Hands has gained in service to the disability community and offer it in collaboration with robotic, AR, VR, and AI research organizations, universities, firms, service providers, and those living with physical impairments.

The goal of our Innovative Technology Initiative is to offer new and existing technologies, now coming on the market at a rapid pace, to help empower individuals with physical disabilities to live more independent and engaged lives.



Transition in Process continued

Pilot Projects cont.

We are delighted to be collaborating with:

- **Northeastern University's Institute of Experiential Robotics** to ascertain if a robotic arm will assist a person with multiple sclerosis with his daily needs as well as give his caregiver peace of mind.

We are in process of brainstorming two VR projects including:

- **The Billy Project** – looking at how to make VR gaming more accessible for those living with physical mobility impairments. This is a collaboration with a special effects company, a person living with a spinal cord injury, and a gaming company.
- **Examining practical solutions to pain management, depression and other health issues due to spinal cord injuries through the use of VR.** This collaboration involves two individuals living with spinal cord injuries (one of whom is also a mental health counselor working in the health care field in Boston, the other an individual in the financial arena) as well as a company in Toronto, Canada, and Helping Hands.

Our work needs your help. We appreciate your donation in any amount. We cannot continue to carry on the mission of Helping Hands without you. monkeyhelpers.org/tech

Double your Impact in September!



Kukla

We have been issued a challenge by one of our generous donors. If we can raise **\$15,000 September 1 through September 30**, they will **MATCH** that donation dollar for dollar. Your generosity makes **TWICE the IMPACT** this month. (And if your employer matches your donation, you could even triple your impact!)

Every gift gets us closer to our goal, no matter the amount.

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

monkeyhelpers.org/match

Meet a Monkey, Kyla!

Good things come in small packages! Don't let her size fool you—Kyla is quite the self-assured and independent 34 year old little lady. She enjoys spending her time with Alison and other monkeys, especially her BFFs Lucy and Sadie. Get to know Kyla: monkeyhelpers.org/kyla

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