

# CHIMP HAVEN DIGITAL MEDIA KIT

## FACT SHEET

**Mission:**

To provide and promote the best care of sanctuary chimpanzees and inspire action for the species worldwide.

**About Chimp Haven:**

Outside Shreveport, Louisiana, on 200 acres of beautiful, forested sanctuary, more than 330 chimpanzees, many of whom were used in biomedical research, are living the good life — or, as we like to call it, the Chimp Life.

At Chimp Haven, chimps retired from research experience the joys they would have enjoyed in the wild: climbing trees, living in large, bonded social groups, eating their favorite fruits, running, playing, exploring, and — best of all — choosing how they spend their days.

We believe we're not that different, humans and chimpanzees. As our closest living relatives, chimps share more than 98 percent of our genetic blueprint, and upon visiting the sanctuary it doesn't take long to see that they have all the personalities, emotions, relationships, dramas and joys that we do.

We believe they all deserve a chance to live the Chimp Life. That's why we're working diligently to transport all remaining chimpanzees to the sanctuary as soon as possible and embarking on an ambitious sanctuary expansion to ensure there is room to welcome them all home.

On behalf of the more than 330 chimps currently enjoying retirement at Chimp Haven, and the many more to come, thank you for your support!

**Background:**

Chimp Haven was founded in 1995 to meet the need for long-term chimpanzee care. In 2000, Congress passed the Chimpanzee Health Improvement Maintenance and Protection (CHIMP) Act, establishing a federal sanctuary system to provide lifetime care for chimpanzees retired from medical research. The federal government chose Chimp Haven to fill the role.

In November 2015, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) officially ended all research on chimpanzees. Over the past few years, Chimp Haven has welcomed hundreds of chimpanzees to sanctuary. More than 330 chimps live at the sanctuary now, and there are still chimps in research facilities awaiting a home here.



### **About the Chimpanzees:**

Chimpanzees are a lot like us. They are our closest biological relative, and because of that they were once considered a good medical model for research on illnesses and diseases that affect people, from HIV to hepatitis and more. Chimpanzees have contributed to hundreds of medical studies.

At Chimp Haven, each chimp is integrated into dynamic, natural social groups where they are able to interact with other chimpanzees while enjoying an enriching environment. Retirees get to choose how they spend their time and who they spend it with, whether that's hanging out in their indoor bedrooms, or outdoors in one of the property's multi-acre forests or other large habitats.

Sanctuary provides not just a safe and natural environment for chimps, but also an enriching one, full of opportunities to play, explore and climb just as chimps do in the wild. The Chimp Haven team creates amazing challenges and activities to ensure chimps here are mentally stimulated and engaged.

The chimps at Chimp Haven vary in age from four to 61 years old, with an average age of 32.

### **Cost of Care**

It costs about \$17,000 per chimpanzee annually to provide care at sanctuary. This includes their food, medical care, enrichment and all of the basic necessities for these extraordinary individuals.

### **Funding**

Chimp Haven is a private, nonprofit organization that depends significantly on the generosity of individuals to help cover the cost of chimpanzee care. Chimp Haven receives government funding (75 percent) to support the care of federally-owned chimpanzees, and must raise the remaining 25 percent of funds for the chimpanzees' care through private support.

Additionally, Chimp Haven does not receive any government funding to improve, expand, or add more chimpanzee habitats or veterinary suites to provide care for additional chimpanzees awaiting retirement. Without the generous support from individuals, corporations, foundations, and organizations Chimp Haven could not provide the chimpanzees with the retirement they deserve. To learn about donation opportunities, please [visit our support page](#) and consider making a donation today.

## TIMELINE: 1995-2015

**1995** — Chimp Haven is founded to meet the need for long-term chimpanzee care.

**2000** — The CHIMP (Chimpanzee Health Improvement Maintenance Protection) Act becomes law, establishing a federal sanctuary system to provide lifetime care for chimpanzees retired from medical research.

**2002** — Chimp Haven applies and is awarded federal contract to operate as the national chimpanzee sanctuary.

**2005** — The first two chimpanzees, Rita and Teresa, arrive at Chimp Haven.

**2006** — Sixty-one new chimps are welcomed to the sanctuary.

**2007** — Chimp Haven is Home Act passes, closing a loophole in the CHIMP Act and prohibiting retired chimpanzees from being returned to research.

**2008** — Nineteen new chimps are welcomed to the sanctuary.

**2009** — Henry, a chimp found kept as a pet in a garage for 15 years, comes to the sanctuary.

**2010** — Sixteen new chimps are welcomed to the sanctuary.

**2011** — Ten new chimps are welcomed to the sanctuary.

**2013** — Fifty more chimps move to Chimp Haven from New Iberia Research Center in Louisiana. By year's end, a total of 149 chimps are living sanctuary retirement at Chimp Haven.

**2014** — Sixty-five new chimps are welcomed to the sanctuary; a total of 192 chimpanzees now enjoy sanctuary retirement at Chimp Haven.

**2015** — NIH ends biomedical research using chimpanzees. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists all chimpanzees as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Seven more chimpanzees come to live at Chimp Haven.

## TIMELINE: 2016-2019

**2016** — Twenty-nine chimpanzees move to Chimp Haven to spend their retirement living in sanctuary.

**2017** — Forty-two chimpanzees move from research facilities to Chimp Haven. Chimp Haven embarks on “Welcome Them Home” Capital Campaign to raise \$20 million to build additional forested habitats and expand to create more space for chimpanzees in research facilities awaiting their chance for sanctuary retirement.

### January 2018

NIH forms Council of Councils Working Group on Assessing the Safety of Relocating At-Risk Chimpanzees. The working group’s charge is to provide advice and recommendations on factors to be considered by attending veterinarian staff when deciding whether to relocate NIH-owned or -supported chimpanzees housed in federally supported research facilities to Chimp Haven.

### May 2018

The working group delivers a number of recommendations for NIH to consider including that all research facilities that house NIH-owned and NIH-supported chimpanzees should relocate all of the chimpanzees to the sanctuary system unless relocation is extremely likely to shorten their life. The recommendations undergo a public comment period.

### August 2018

Public comment period on working group’s recommendations ends with more than 3,000 comments submitted.

### October 2018

NIH director announces “vast majority” of chimps should move to sanctuary, outlining new effort to develop and implement uniform standards and seek independent input when assessing chimpanzees’ health and risk factors for relocation. Over the course of year, the sanctuary welcomes 42 more chimpanzees, bringing the total number of retirees living at Chimp Haven to more than 260. More than 200 federally owned and supported chimpanzees remain in research facilities awaiting sanctuary retirement.

### 2019

Forty six new chimps arrive at the sanctuary.

### 2020

Twenty nine chimps arrive at the sanctuary.

## FAQS

### **Why were chimpanzees retired from biomedical research?**

Chimpanzees are a lot like us. They are mankind's closest biological relative, and were once considered a good medical model for research on illnesses and diseases that affect people. When the HIV/AIDS epidemic hit the U.S. in the 1980s, the federal government established breeding centers for chimps across the country and hundreds of chimpanzees were used to try to find a cure. However, in the mid-1990s, scientists discovered chimps were no longer a good model for HIV/AIDS research which left hundreds of "surplus" chimpanzees in research facilities.

Following decades of efforts by animal protection groups, captive chimpanzees were classified as endangered in 2015. The National Institutes of Health responded with the landmark decision to retire all NIH-owned chimpanzees living in research facilities around the country to sanctuary.

### **What is sanctuary? Why retire chimps there?**

Sanctuary provides chimpanzees with the opportunity to experience life in a natural environment, free from experiences of the past. Choice is a key ingredient of sanctuary life, with ample space for the chimps to play, climb, and explore in an environment similar to what they would experience in the wild.

Chimp Haven is specifically designed to offer long-term, personalized care to the aging chimpanzee population for the remainder of their lives, ensuring all retirees have access to things that make them happy and healthy such as good food, behavioral enrichment, nesting materials, and friends. We believe sanctuary is the optimal place for chimpanzees retired from biomedical research, and we're on a mission to bring them home for the peaceful, enriching life they deserve.

### **How many of the retired chimpanzees have moved to sanctuary?**

Chimp Haven has successfully welcomed home more than 450 chimpanzees — 133 chimps have moved since 2018 — an extraordinary accomplishment, given the complex logistics of chimpanzee introduction and sophisticated social dynamics within chimpanzee communities.

### **Will the chimps ever be returned to research?**

No. All of the chimpanzees at Chimp Haven are permanently retired and will live the rest of their lives at Chimp Haven. In 2007, Congress passed the Chimp Haven is Home Act prohibiting their return to research.

### **Is any research conducted on the chimpanzees at Chimp Haven?**

The chimpanzees are retired from biomedical research and no invasive studies are ever conducted at Chimp Haven. The primary goal, every day, at Chimp Haven is to ensure each individual chimpanzee is experiencing the best quality of life and has an enriching retirement at the sanctuary. Our behavior staff often conduct chimpanzee wellbeing studies by simply monitoring and recording chimp social behavior. The results of these studies provide our animal care team with important information that allows Chimp Haven to better understand and care for our aging chimpanzees, ensuring successful social integration when introducing chimps to new groups.

### **Are the chimpanzees healthy?**

We are home to chimpanzees with a wide variety of individual health needs and age ranges. Older chimpanzees often require medications to manage heart, kidney or liver disease as well as arthritis. Some chimpanzees come to Chimp Haven with pre-existing conditions and chronic health problems that require long-term care. Chimp Haven's veterinary staff provides expert medical care and appropriate medication to treat the chimpanzees. The behavioral staff monitors the psychological health and behavior of the chimpanzees. Our shared goal is to help the chimpanzees feel happy, healthy and comfortable for their retirement years.

### **Does Chimp Haven have capacity to provide sanctuary to all NIH-owned and supported chimpanzees?**

Chimp Haven is currently expanding to make room for every chimpanzee deemed eligible for transport to sanctuary. Construction is underway and the first chimpanzee housing areas were completed in 2019. We have space now to continue transitioning chimpanzees from research facilities to sanctuary through 2021. We always take a summer transfer hiatus to avoid extreme temperatures, and will resume transfers in fall.

**Why doesn't Chimp Haven breed chimpanzees? Aren't they endangered?** Chimp Haven works diligently to prevent chimpanzee pregnancies because our objective is to be a place of retirement for chimpanzees who are currently living in research facilities. Any space that is taken by a new birth replaces the space and resources that could be provided to a chimpanzee awaiting retirement.

### **How many chimpanzees are still awaiting retirement?**

Chimp Haven expects to welcome an additional 11 chimpanzees from research facilities in Fall 2021, and awaits decisions from the National Institutes of Health regarding eligibility for additional chimpanzees to come to sanctuary.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**For media inquiries, please contact:**

*[chimphavenmedia@pciipr.com](mailto:chimphavenmedia@pciipr.com)  
(312) 558-1770*