

THE  
  
 CHIMP LIFE  
 KEITHVILLE, LOUISIANA

# Leading with **HEART** for Chimpanzee **HEALTH**



*PICTURE: When rambunctious young Carlee is not in the treetops, she's learning to hold still for an EKG reading with her trainer, a practice that will help keep her healthy for years to come.*

As our closest biological relatives, the chimps deal with many of the same health concerns we humans do. When it comes to heart health, Chimp Haven's dedicated care staff is here with plenty of juice, patience, and humor to guide the chimps to participate in their own care.

When it comes to heart health, the best patients are those who actively and eagerly participate in their own care – and just like with humans, not all chimp patients are created equal.

Maxi, for example, is a heart healthcare whiz. When Animal Care Coordinator Ellen Brady-McGaughey requests an electrocardiogram (EKG) heart reading, 35-year-old Maxi is quick to oblige, eagerly placing two fingers in just the right spots on a portable device.

Other chimps, like 55-year-old Julius, are not as interested. As one of the sanctuary's oldest residents, Julius would (understandably!) rather hang out with his Golden Oldie buddies in his play yard than sit for an EKG reading. But for an elderly chimp like Julius, heart health is one of the most essential components of the medical care provided at Chimp Haven.

Cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death for human adults and chimpanzee alike, and with a large geriatric population, the Chimp Haven team explores every avenue to provide the chimps a long, happy, and healthy life at sanctuary.

By inviting the chimps to participate in EKG training, they can monitor the chimps' heart health without the need for sedation, which often becomes more difficult on the chimps as they age.

Although Chimp Haven uses the same KardiaMobile EKG devices advertised for humans, the process of getting a reading for a chimp isn't quite as simple.

"Chimps are like kids; it's really hard for them to stay still," said Rebekah Lewis, Chimp Haven Behaviorist. "And staying still is exactly what's required to get a solid EKG reading to evaluate heart function using the KardiaMobile device. The device requires the patient to steady two fingers on a reading pad for at



LEFT: Maxi participating in her heart health exam with a tasty sugar-free juice reward.

least 30 seconds. I've tried it myself, and even as an adult putting my fingers in there and holding perfectly still for 30 seconds or even a minute feels like forever. So that's one of our obstacles."

It's a challenge Chimp Haven staff take on enthusiastically, meeting with their chimp training partners every week and celebrating each step the chimps take toward learning the new behaviors. They provide juice, belly scratches, and plenty of praise as the chimps learn to approach, touch, and then hold their fingers correctly on the EKG device.

Some chimps, like Maxi, catch on within days, while other chimps need a little more practice. Regardless of their learning style, staff work together to brainstorm and adjust the chimps' training sessions. The sanctuary's maintenance team has also gotten in

on the action, creating custom training equipment that includes a special juice holder for the chimps.

**"Cardiac disease is common across all great ape species, so the information we're collecting at Chimp Haven has the potential to help chimps everywhere."**

"Cardiac disease is common across all great ape species, so the information we're collecting at Chimp Haven has the potential to help chimps everywhere," shared Chimpanzee Training Program Supervisor Jordan Garbarino. "Not only can we make our chimps' lives better, but we can contribute to the crucial work being done to understand heart health in all great apes."

As more chimps are trained to participate in EKG readings, a broader picture of their health will emerge, allowing their care team to provide preventative care, detect cardiac health issues earlier, and ensure they live long and happy lives at sanctuary.

## The TREETOP TEN Settle in at Chimp Haven

When the Treetop Ten arrived at Chimp Haven after a 1,600+ mile journey from the closed Wildlife Waystation in Los Angeles just before the holidays, the sanctuary team was excited to welcome them to their new forever home. Now, a few months later, they've settled right in and are off to new adventures and new friends this year!



Shy boy, Axel is opening up to his caregivers as he settles in – he never goes anywhere without his favorite bucket by his side!



Mocha & Inky



Denise and Inky are both big, bold ladies who know how to get what they want.



Tequila loves to sunsoak on the climbing structure as the weather begins to warm up and the Louisiana sun comes back out!

# A PATH FOR **MORE CHIMPS** TO COME HOME TO CHIMP HAVEN

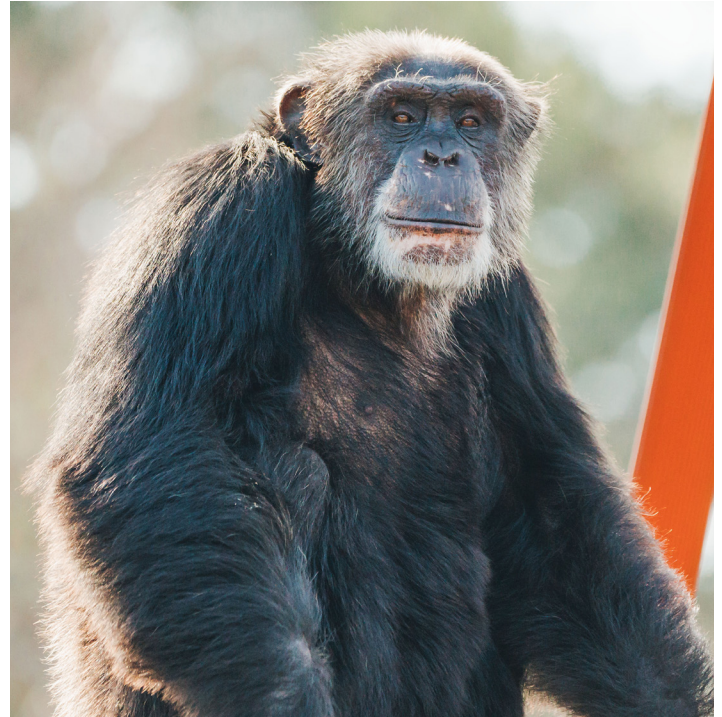
**With the recent ruling in a lawsuit aimed at bringing more former research chimpanzees to sanctuary, a path to Chimp Haven has opened for 30 more chimps.**

While Chimp Haven has welcomed hundreds of chimpanzees to sanctuary since 2005, there are some federally-owned chimpanzees who remain in research facilities after being deemed ineligible for sanctuary retirement. Two years ago, a lawsuit filed by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) against the National Institutes of Health (NIH) aimed to change that for the 29 former research chimps who remain at the Alamogordo Primate Facility (APF) in Alamogordo, New Mexico.

In 2019, NIH made the decision that these chimps would not come to Chimp Haven and would instead remain at the care facility on the Holoman Air Force Base in Alamogordo. The HSUS lawsuit sought to compel NIH to retire the chimps to sanctuary, citing a piece of legislation called the CHIMP Act, which mandates that all federally owned chimpanzees who are no longer needed for research be retired to the federal sanctuary which is Chimp Haven.

**While there are many questions to be answered in the wake of this decision, we are thankful that these deserving chimps may finally have their opportunity to experience sanctuary.**

Late last year, the United States District Court for the District of Maryland ordered that chimpanzees owned or supported by the National Institutes of Health, and protected by the CHIMP Act, cannot be deemed ineligible to retire to sanctuary, opening a path for the 29 APF chimps to come to Chimp Haven. While there are many questions to be answered in



*TJ also came to us from Alamogordo back in May of 2018.*

the wake of this decision, we are thankful that these deserving chimps may finally have their opportunity to experience sanctuary. The timeline for which chimpanzees can begin transferring to Chimp Haven is to be determined, and while we are eager to welcome them home, the sanctuary is currently at capacity and the process of safely transporting chimps cross-country is complex. We look forward to working with partners to understand the best way to get these sweet chimps to sanctuary.

As we await next steps, we celebrate this welcome news for everyone who believes, like we do, that these chimps who have given us so much deserve their time at sanctuary.

## JOIN US FOR A BEHIND-THE-SCENES EXPERIENCE AT THE WORLD'S LARGEST CHIMPANZEE SANCTUARY!

Looking for a one-of-a-kind look at the Chimp Life? Chimp Haven offers exclusive opportunities for private tours on a limited basis throughout the year. These behind-the-scenes experiences include an up-close look at the chimpanzees and their life at sanctuary, led by the staff who know them best. **Learn more and book your private tour today: [chimphaven.org/visit](http://chimphaven.org/visit); (318) 925-9576.**

## A WORK OF CHIMP ART

Painting is one of the hundreds of enrichment activities the chimps enjoy at sanctuary, and now you can take home one of their masterpieces! Shop the collection and show their paintings off on your new favorite water bottle, high-tops, or mousepad: [chimphaven.org/store](http://chimphaven.org/store)



*Please remember to include Chimp Haven in your will or estate plans – and let us know when you do so we can thank you.*