

THE

CHIMP LIFE
 KEITHVILLE, LOUISIANA

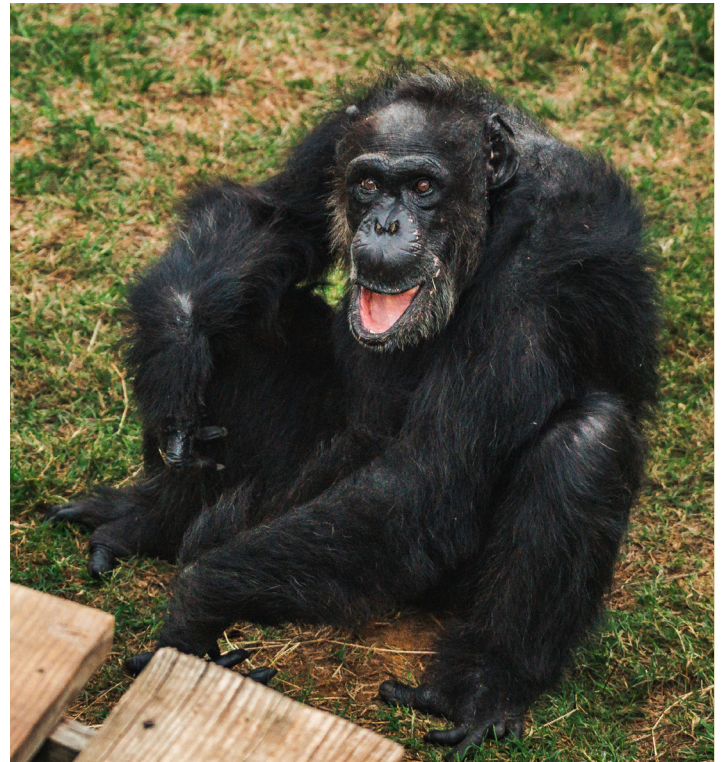
Getting to the **HEART** of Chimp Care

As the world’s largest chimpanzee colony ages, its care team is innovating to ensure happier, healthier golden years.

It’s a typical day of retirement for 64-year-old Jacob, one of the oldest chimpanzees at Chimp Haven. Jacob is part of the largest and arguably rowdiest social group at Chimp Haven, and although this group is filled with big personalities, they are considerate of their eldest member, allowing him to spend his days as he sees fit. For Jacob, whom staff describes as a “ladies’ man,” that means carefully climbing up to the highest level of the structures in his play yard to socialize with groupmates and flirt with the girls next door before retiring early to make a big, comfy nest to sleep in.

Chimp Haven is currently home to more than 300 chimpanzees, and like Jacob, more than 52% of them are considered geriatric (for a chimp, that means older than 34 years old). Just like humans, as the chimps grow older, the complexities of their care increase, and the sanctuary is hard at work preparing for the transition of caring for a large and aging chimp population.

In addition to increasing veterinary capabilities and modifying living spaces and care plans, the team continuously seeks opportunities to innovate



Jacob

the highly personalized care it provides for the chimps as they age. A recent partnership with the Great Ape Heart Project has brought forth a new way to address heart disease, the leading cause of death in captive chimpanzees.

Through training with the Great Ape Heart Project, the Chimp Haven veterinary team recently performed echocardiograms on several of the sanctuary’s residents. Using an ultrasound machine to get a clear look at the heart, the echocardiogram can alert the vet team to heart disease before symptoms appear.





Jake

“Performing regular echocardiogram diagnostics can really be a game-changer in saving and improving the lives of chimpanzees in our care at Chimp Haven – and that’s the goal,” said Dr. Raven Jackson, DVM, Chimp Haven’s Director of Veterinary Care, also known as Dr. J.

In capturing diagnostic images during the chimps’ regular physical examinations, they found most had mild cardiac conditions within the normal range for chimps, but one retiree – 31-year-old Jake – did not fare as well.

“Jake was found to have pretty severe cardiac abnormalities,” Dr. J said. “The good news is, because we were able to capture these detailed images of his heart, we are now providing Jake the therapeutic care he needs.”

Jake’s new treatment regimen includes close follow-up monitoring, including regular mobile electrocardiogram (EKG) readings and blood pressure assessment as well as use of blood pressure medications that are most often prescribed for humans with similar diagnoses.

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“Information is key, and now we can give Jake exactly what he needs,” Jackson said.

While the team is relieved to have uncovered Jake’s cardiac care needs, the process of evaluating the more than 300 chimpanzees at the sanctuary has just begun and will take many months, if not years, to complete.

“With more than 300 chimpanzees in our care, it’s vital that the Chimp Haven veterinary medical team be able to add echocardiogram diagnostic technology and expertise to the chimps’ regular medical exams, but that will take time and money,” shared Dr. J. “Echocardiograms require a great deal of technical knowledge, and the appropriate equipment can cost tens of thousands of dollars.”

Dr. J and her team are confident that through additional training with the cardiac experts at the Great Ape Heart Project, they will be able to add echocardiogram diagnostics. The team is still evaluating what additional equipment may be necessary to conduct the exams at Chimp Haven without using borrowed equipment.

As an ever-growing subset of the Chimp Haven colony enters their geriatric years, these diagnostics will be critical to ensuring more chimps get to live long, healthy lives at sanctuary. Just like our 64-year-old “ladies’ man” Jacob, we want them all to live a life of freedom, choice, and exploration well into their golden years.

A LASTING LEGACY FOR THE CHIMPS

Planned gifts are a wonderful way to leave a legacy that ensures the chimps' future. Long-time Chimp Haven supporter Marsha Vaughan shares how she's creating a lasting impact for the retirees and their sanctuary home.

Chimp Haven: How did you first become a supporter of the sanctuary?



Marsha Vaughan: Through my former career as a zookeeper, I helped raise and care for a chimp named Sheba from her infancy. In the 1980s, when Sheba was still quite young, she became part of a non-invasive behavioral research program. It was around this time that I met Linda Brent, a co-founder of Chimp Haven, and learned

about her vision for the sanctuary. I just loved what she wanted to do for these chimps, and of course I was incredibly invested in what would happen to Sheba. Years later, I was absolutely thrilled to receive the news that Sheba and several of her friends would get their chance to go to Chimp Haven. I've been a supporter of the sanctuary, where Sheba now lives, ever since.

CH: How would you describe Chimp Haven to someone who hasn't been able to visit themselves?

MV: Because I worked with great apes for so many years, I have a great deal of respect for their intelligence and a real passion for sharing that with others. I have so much respect for what Chimp Haven does – both in the care that their amazing staff provides for the chimps, but also in how they educate the public about these incredible animals. They've stayed true to that vision Linda shared with me all those years ago and have really kept it alive.



Sheba

CH: As you know, Chimp Haven will be home for the rest of the chimps' lives. Some of our retirees are in their 60s, while our youngest resident is 7, meaning Chimp Haven will provide decades of care for the chimps. How important was thinking about their future to you as you were making your legacy plans?

MV: It's the most important factor for me in thinking about Sheba's future, as well as all the chimps at Chimp Haven. It's critical that we understand just how intelligent they are – how much like us they really are – and acknowledge what they've contributed to human life. And now, the knowledge that they contributed to can be returned to them through medical care, medications, and a good life. We can pay them back now – it's what they deserve.

CH: What are your legacy plans, and how did you go about setting them up?

MV: I want to leave what I have to Sheba through her forever home at Chimp Haven. Everything is set up so it will be really easy – and thinking about her future

and the future of the chimps has given the gift such a meaningful purpose for me. I encourage anyone who cares about the chimps to give it some thought – a gift of any size makes an incredible difference.

CH: That is incredible! When you think about this extraordinary commitment you're making to Chimp Haven, what does that mean to you?

MV: In law, a legacy is something that is received by inheritance or will. In historical terms, a legacy is something handed down from one time period to another. For me, personally, a legacy was "handed up" to me through the incredible, 43-year life journey I've been blessed to share with intelligent, beautiful, beguiling, clever, and playful chimpanzees.

A dear friend of mine wrote the below "definition of a chimp," and I've seen these words and the vision, knowledge, dedication, empathy, a compassion that started the sanctuary reflected in Chimp Haven's staff and leadership.

chimpanzee (chimp-păn-zē') : n. 1. One of the four Great Apes. 2. Sentient; Clever. 3. A touch of humor; A touch of larceny. 4. Endangered in the wild; In great need in captivity. 5. To respect and protect them is the mandate humans must accept in order to call their own species civilized.

– J. Estadt, 1995

For me, the question is not, "Why should I leave a legacy to Chimp Haven?" but rather, "How can I not leave a legacy to Chimp Haven?"

Make a Planned Gift

Create your own legacy by including Chimp Haven in your will or estate plan. Your gift, no matter the size, will play a vital role in securing the long-term health of the sanctuary and will provide care for the chimps for many years to come.

Learn more at chiphaven.org/planned-giving or email Taylor Johnson, tjohnson@chiphaven.org, for more information.

Springtime Brings the Pant-Hoots

Casey and her group experienced an open-top corral for the first time! She's been spending lots of time soaking up the warm sun from the top of her structure.



Eniga was gifted a giant Squishmallow by a generous supporter, and she made the most of it by not only cuddling with it, but also utilizing it as the coziest and fluffiest nest we have ever seen.

December, Mocha, and the rest of Tequila's group have been enjoying the warming weather from the luxury of their forest cabana.



See You at the Sanctuary!

It's a beautiful time to visit the sanctuary. Join us for special events or schedule a private tour for your group. Find more info and plan your visit at chiphaven.org/plan-your-visit.