



THE  
CHIMP LIFE  
KEITHVILLE, LOUISIANA

## Expanding the Chimp Life for an aging chimpanzee colony

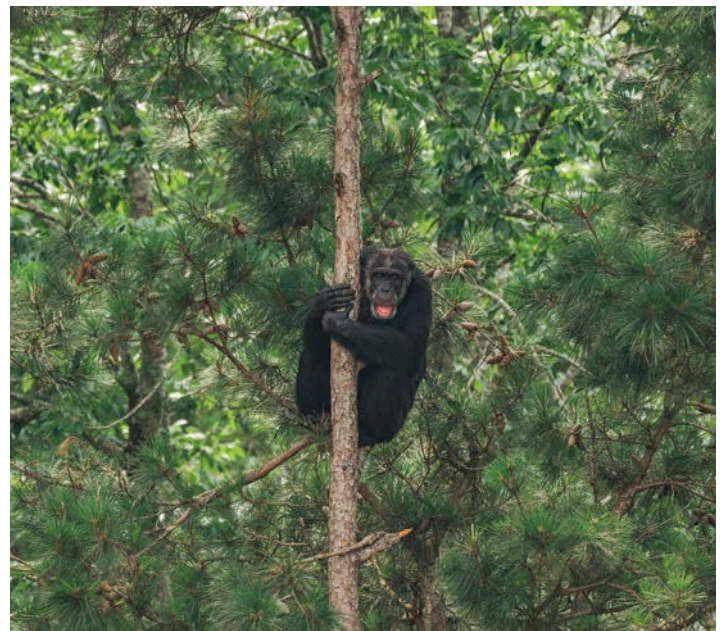
*Over the next several years, nearly 90 percent of Chimp Haven's colony will be considered geriatric (that's 35 years old for a chimp). Here's how the sanctuary is planning for their golden years.*

It's not uncommon for sanctuary visitors to remark that many aspects of retirement at Chimp Haven would be ideal even for humans – fresh, healthy meals delivered throughout the day, lazy afternoons spent with friends at the cabana, and daily activities similar to those you might find on the social calendar of any retirement community (live music performances, anyone?).

Even though Chimp Haven is a retirement community, the sanctuary has always been home to chimps of all ages, from nine-year-old Carlee to 66-year-old Jacob. But today, the colony is approaching an important transition: Over the next several years, nearly 90 percent of the sanctuary's population will be considered geriatric, signaling unique changes to come as many of the chimps enter a new phase of life.

For a chimp, geriatric age begins at 35 years old, and just like humans, as the chimps age their needs change and become more complex. Thanks to the highly personalized, expert care they receive at Chimp Haven, the chimps are leading longer lives, meaning that even as they reach “geriatric age” they could have another 30+ years of retirement to enjoy. The sanctuary is committed to ensuring they continue to thrive and live a life of freedom and choice throughout their golden years.

To do that, the chimps' care teams are pivoting to cater to a growing crowd of older chimps and prepare for the ways their needs will evolve in the future – which means everything from veterinary



*Buster climbs a tree in his habitat at Chimp Haven.*

care to chimpanzee living spaces are being carefully considered through the eyes of an aging chimp.

Chimpanzees experience many of the same ailments humans do as they age, including cardiovascular disease and arthritis. In fact, more than 75 percent of the colony is currently treated for a chronic condition, and as more of the chimps reach geriatric age, that number will continue to grow. To prepare, the sanctuary's veterinary team is ramping up specialized equipment and capabilities like cardiac ultrasounds to monitor heart conditions, laser therapy to ease the symptoms of arthritis, and much more.

And like many human families do, the Chimp Haven team is making over the chimps' living spaces to



*Sassy sits on her structure, which has been retrofitted with climbing aids to assist older and mobility-challenged chimps.*



*Sarah and Sonya do Positive Reinforcement Training, which encourages the chimps to participate in their own medical care.*

better accommodate them as they age, creatively retrofitting furniture and structures so elderly and mobility-challenged chimps can continue to enjoy the physical and social spaces that make life at sanctuary so enriching for them.

A new building addition will open at the sanctuary this spring, and, in addition to providing living space for our latest arrivals from Alamogordo, will include critically needed flex space for chimps receiving or recovering from medical treatment. The team is carefully evaluating how it might designate space for more special needs in the future, all with the aim of meeting this moment for the chimps and providing them with the highest caliber of care for years to come.

Of course, even with a dedicated team of humans to cater to your every need, nothing beats the support of a trusted chimp friend, and that camaraderie is perhaps the most important component of life at sanctuary that you help provide the chimps.

When Peggy Sue's arthritis flared up this winter, her normally standoffish groupmate, Esmerelda, surprised staff by becoming a dedicated and attentive caregiver to her friend, helping Peggy Sue move in and outdoors and rarely leaving her side, even as her symptoms began to resolve with veterinary care.

And 63-year-old Alamogordo newbie Henry Danger surprised everyone when he waltzed not only into his new life at sanctuary, but also into the alpha position of his new social group like he'd been waiting his whole life for his moment.

Year after year, the chimps continue to show us what retirement is all about – and with incredible resilience, prove that it's never too late for new beginnings.

As many of the chimps approach their next chapter, we're committed to walking with them every step of the way, ensuring their golden years contain all the expert care, friendship, and freedom of choice they've always enjoyed at Chimp Haven. We're so grateful to have your support in the next phase of their retirement.

# New Beginnings for the Alamogordo Chimps

*A look back at the Alamogordo chimps' first year at sanctuary*



*Like many of the Alamogordo newbies, 52-year-old **Montessa** had likely only lived in small, same sex groups before coming to Chimp Haven. That all changed when her trio of girls was introduced into a larger group with boys at sanctuary. In their new group, the ladies continue to have a lot to say, and when they combine their efforts, they are a force to be reckoned with.*



*Sixty-three-year-old **Henry Danger** stepped right up when he and his buddies were introduced to a social group with girls for the first time ever at Chimp Haven. Henry made fast friends and quickly took on the role of alpha, proving it's never too late for an "oldie" to start a new adventure.*

*When the boys and girls first met, there was some initial apprehension, particularly by **JD Jiggles**, but the whole group was playing, panting, chasing, and embracing in no time. Soon after JD and Socorro had a sweet play session in their bedroom.*



***Shogun** is a big sweetheart who sometimes doesn't know his own size and strength. As he scrambled to know how to react to his new friends, he may have come on a little strong for the ladies, but groupmate Henry Danger calmly stepped in to smooth things over.*



*Spicy lady **Socorro** spent ample time screaming at the boys across the hallway before they got the chance to officially meet; once they were introduced into a new, larger social group, her walls came down and she and timid JD Jiggles had the sweetest play session.*

# Hear the pant-hoots for yourself!

*Chimp Haven opens its doors a few times each year for special opportunities to visit the chimps and their sanctuary home.*



Carlee

## **Chimpanzee Discovery Day | April 18**

Join us for a family-friendly fun and educational morning with the chimps! Observe chimp families in their forested habitats, hear chats from staff, learn at interactive stations, and take a hayride tour.

## **Chimp Chat | April 18, May 29, May 30, June 13**

A special tour with a behind-the-scenes look at life at the sanctuary and in-depth conversation with experts on the Chimp Haven staff.

## **Brunch in the Wild | May 16**

An unforgettable way to experience life at Chimp Haven with behind-the-scenes access and a beautiful seated brunch with views of forested habitats and the chimps who call them home.

## **Schedule a Tour**

Private tours are available on a limited basis; contact the team to schedule yours.



**Learn more and plan your visit!**

[www.chimphaven.org/plan-your-visit/](http://www.chimphaven.org/plan-your-visit/)