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Natalie with Koko

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Natalie with Koko
Dear Friends,

People often ask me: “Is summertime your slow time of year at The Monkey College?” or “Do the monkeys have the summer off?” The answer, in short, is no – our pace at Helping Hands holds steady throughout the entire year.

With so much to do each day - everything from taking care of the monkeys that are “in school,” planning new placements, supporting our active placements and foster care homes throughout the country, or planning for the next 6 months, next year…and even next ten years of our organization’s work, every moment is filled with energy and excitement.

One of the most notable things we’ve been working on this year is expanding our Applicant Outreach and Recruitment Program. We want individuals in need, as well as their healthcare providers and support groups to be aware of our unique services and our eligibility requirements to apply for a service monkey. You’ll learn more about the wonderful response this effort is already yielding in our article about one of our newest team members, Jaye van Dussen, and her work.

Also this year, Andrea Finnerty and I had the privilege of visiting Southern California and New York City in May to meet with several of our donors who are helping us expand our fundraising efforts through smaller, intimate gatherings in their homes. I’d like to extend a very special thank you to Melissa and Dan Berger who hosted us in New York City where we spent an evening with some of our longtime supporters as well as meeting new people looking to become more involved in our work. If you are interested in hosting a similar gathering in your area, please contact our Development office for more details.

Another major effort that is in full swing right now is planning for our annual Festivale event at WGBH Studios in Boston. Since 2009, we’ve worked together with our Board of Directors, volunteers, and event chair, Lisa Flores of Columbus Hospitality Group to grow our attendance and fundraising from one year to the next. Our goal for 2013’s Festivale, which is on Saturday, September 28th, is to raise $100,000 in support of our Training and Placement programs. This year, we have expanded our online auction as part of the Festivale efforts so everyone can participate. Go to our website www.monkeyhelpers.org to get more details and help us reach our $100,000 goal!

In closing, I want to take a moment to thank YOU, our supporters, for everything you do to make all our work possible. It warms my heart to know how many people throughout the country believe in our work and want to make donations to see Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers succeed now, and in the future. Please accept my sincere gratitude for being a part of our team!

Kind regards,

[Signature]

From the Executive Director, Megan Talbert
Jaye van Dussen joined Helping Hands at the end of January as the Applicant Recruitment and Outreach Manager. She brings her background in business and finance along with her experience working for national nonprofits to her role at Helping Hands. Jaye first learned about Helping Hands at a Multiple Sclerosis conference three years ago, when she stopped by our booth to learn more. She came away with a fascination for the work of Helping Hands along with one of our t-shirts that she wore to her first interview with us!

In the last few months, Jaye has reached out to hundreds of organizations and groups that work with people living with spinal cord injuries and other mobility impairments to increase awareness of our monkey helper program and to encourage referrals of interested and qualified candidates. Thanks to advances in technology, Jaye is able to give an online, interactive, real-time presentation, including current program information, eligibility guideline review, short films and a question and answer session to organizations across the country, such as the Florida Spinal Cord Injury Resource Center and the Marionjoy Rehabilitation Hospital. Organizations like these have used these “in-service” presentations to educate staff and patients about our unique program. In addition, in the fall Helping Hands will be a part of the Abilities Expo in Boston and The Academy of Spinal Cord Injury Professionals in Las Vegas.

If you would like to discuss a presentation to your organization, have any questions about our Placement program, or are interested in referring an applicant, please contact Jaye at jaye@monkeyhelpers.org. We will gladly send materials on request.

**Outreach Update**

Helping Hands was thrilled to be featured as the cover story in the July 7th issue of *USA Weekend*. Ned and Kasey were shining stars. The article reached approximately 50 million households nationwide. The response and increase in awareness about us has been wonderful. You can read the full article on our website, www.monkeyhelpers.org.

**In the News**
My name is Scott. In July 2009, I broke my neck in a diving accident at the C3 level and was left completely paralyzed from the neck down with no movement or sensation. As one can imagine, it has been a very challenging journey back to where I am today. While I am still unable to move below the neck, my quality of life has greatly improved. One of the major improvements is due in part to the addition of Melanie, my helper monkey.

After being made aware of Helping Hands several years ago, I immediately recognized the benefit that a monkey like Melanie could provide someone in my situation. Melanie was placed with me in September 2012 and has become an integral part of my life. She is able to assist with tasks I am no longer able to complete—scratching an itch on my face, repositioning my sip and puff wheelchair controller or positioning my water bottle straw in front of my mouth. Simple tasks that most people take for granted have become so important to my daily routine. Have you ever tried to sit still and ignore an itch? It’s not easy, and now I no longer have to wait for someone to scratch it for me. I have Melanie!

Perhaps most important, though, is the companionship and emotional lift she provides me. She does not see the wheelchair, she does not see someone who can’t help himself, she sees a companion that she feels the need to keep clean through grooming and sit with for company. Whether watching TV together or sitting outside enjoying the sun, she is never more than a few feet away, always full of energy, ready to assist with what tasks I might need. She has further ignited the fire in me to regain use of my arms and hands so that I can one day assist her with her grooming!

I am extremely grateful to the staff and trainers at Helping Hands for their assistance in my recovery and continued support they have shown me. Additionally, the organization is able to provide financial assistance towards Melanie’s care, which is crucial given my financial situation.

Finally, I am sure to always mention Helping Hands when meeting others in my situation. More people need to be made aware of the wonderful service that the helper monkeys provide.
Meet a Monkey: Heidi

Heidi is an adorable little monkey in training at The Monkey College whose favorite toy is an orange stuffed hamster. She is popular with her primate classmates as well as with our staff and volunteers because of her gentle and sociable nature. Heidi is currently training in the Cubicle, the first stage of our monkeys’ learning process. Her favorite task is “bucket” - throwing an item into the trash. Heidi loves her baths and really enjoys splashing around in the water and bubbles. She will make a wonderful companion one day due to her sweet and gentle disposition.

Participate in our National Online Festivale Auction

The clock is ticking down to the Monkey Helpers’ Annual Food Festivale Online Auction opening on September 6th. Bidding on items is a great way to support the organization, purchase some amazing deals, and share the work that we do with people across the country.

This is also a great way to get involved as a volunteer, even if you are outside the New England area. By donating or securing an item, gift certificate, or service, you’ll be helping to raise money for our Training and Placement programs. Because the Online Auction reaches supporters nationally and internationally, we are looking for items and services both inside and outside the New England Area. Being a part of the Festivale Auction is also a great way for businesses to gain valuable exposure to all of our supporters as well as an audience of 220,000 subscribers through Bidding for Good.

We have already received some terrific items, such as a Microsoft Surface, Disney Park Hopper Tickets, various luxury hotel stays, and fabulous restaurant gift certificates!

Looking for ideas? Visit our website, www.monkeyhelpers.org/festivale to find all the information you need, as well as some great suggestions. If you are able to connect us with donations for the auction, please contact Erica Noyes at erican@monkeyhelpers.org, 617.787.4419 x105.

DON’T FORGET

If you are planning to attend Festivale on Saturday, September 28th in Boston, MA, tickets are already on sale. Purchase yours today to take advantage of discounted pricing that ends on September 13th. Go to www.monkeyhelpers.org/festivale.
Creating priceless partnerships.

Visit our new website www.monkeyhelpers.org

News & Events
Apply for a Monkey
Meet Our Monkeys

Features Include:

Special thanks to The Ludwick Family Foundation who provided a grant to support the new website!

Megan Talbert, Executive Director
Andrea Finnerty, Director of Development and Communication
Alison Payne, Director of Training
Jennifer Dowdy, Placement Trainer, Manager of Husbandry Staff and Volunteer Development
Erica Noyes, Development and Communication Associate
Allyson Migneault, Placement Trainer/Veterinary Technician
Jessica Raider, Placement Trainer
Natalie Shelton, Placement Trainer
Skott Wade, Office Manager
Marie Waitkevich, Associate Director of Healthcare, Veterinary Technician
Jaye van Dussen, Applicant Recruitment and Outreach Manager
Joe Murphy, Husbandry Assistant

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