What interests YOU?

Over the past 35 years, we have continued to build upon what we do best – train and place our unique service animals with adults across the United States living with mobility impairments. As we celebrate our 35th anniversary, we want to hear from you! What stories interest you most? What aspects of our program are you still curious about? What questions remain unanswered?
Contact Erica at development@monkeyhelpers.org with your thoughts and questions – we always welcome your feedback.

Support Helping Hands Twelve Months a Year

On average, it costs $525 per month to provide care for and train one of our service monkeys. This includes trainers’ salaries, facility maintenance and utilities (those monkeys love their baths!), and of course food, vet care, toys, healthy treats, and snuggly blankets for each of our students. In addition, every month our team is working on new placements while always providing 24-hour active placement support, too.

Becoming a Monthly Sustaining Donor is the easiest way for you to make a big impact and spread your gift over 12 months of smaller donations. Monthly gifts of $15, $25, or $50 or more create important steady funding to Helping Hands throughout the year and help us provide all of our services at no cost to our recipients.

Join us today and become an important part of our priceless partnerships January through December! Visit www.monkeyhelpers.org, click on support us, and join the growing community of Monthly Sustaining Donors.

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Natalie with Koko

Meet a Monkey: Rudy

Rudy is one of our resident monkey "writers" – she lives to draw with Jennifer, but also loves to take baths. She is a current training penguin and one of the more complex tasks she is working on is learning how to "hand" (reaching a hand on a regular basis) to Jennifer. Rudy was born in 1997 and is 17 years old.
Dear Friends,

As many of you know, 2014 marks the 35th Anniversary of Helping Hands’ first placement. This year also marks the first year of the organization’s 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. Last year, our Board of Directors worked tirelessly to develop this new organizational roadmap that addresses the future needs for our recipients, service monkeys, staff, volunteers, and facility — and includes a fundraising plan to support our annual budget and a host of special projects over the next five years. We look forward to sharing details about our new Strategic Plan with you, our supporters, over the next several months.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank our hard working and dedicated Board of Directors who give so much of their time and talent to make Helping Hands a robust organization. Our Board works every day to support the staff and monkeys, understand the future needs of the organization, and to make sure that we’re planning not just for next week, or next month — but for what Helping Hands will need to succeed five and ten years from now. The staff at Helping Hands is grateful to have the steadfast support of this terrific group of people.

Wherever you are around the country, I hope you and your families have made it through a long and grueling winter and have fun plans for the coming months. With opening, spring sports being played, and vacation travel season upon us, all of us at The Monkey College wish you and your loved ones the very best for a safe and exciting summer.

Warmest regards,

Megan Talbert
From the Executive Director: Megan Talbert

Recipient News: Carla and Ashley

In the winter newsletter, our Meet a Monkey section introduced service monkeys Carla and Ashley. We now get to continue that story, as she has been placed with Carla! We checked in with Carla to see how she and Ashley are doing together.

Tell us a little about yourself.

I am married to a wonderful police officer and we have a 17 year old daughter who is currently a freshman in college. I have a spinal cord injury from a car accident in 1992. I read about your program last summer in USA Weekend and thought that this might be a good program for me. I am not getting any younger and I am home alone during the day — it is nice to get out of the house, get up off the ground, like my phone. When it drops, it just sits there, waiting for someone to come pick it up. I thought that it would be great if I had a monkey to both pick up the phone and to keep me company.

So you applied to Helping Hands?

Yes. I didn’t want to get my hopes up that I would actually get accepted into the program when I first applied. I was worried that there would be so many applicants and that I wouldn’t be picked. I was thrilled to learn that after the application and the interviews that I would be paired with Ashley. I was nervous about the placement week — I thought that the staff was going to be intimidating. After all, they had all this knowledge and I knew nothing about monkeys. They were amazing! They arrived with Ashley and they were so nice, patient, and encouraging — the experience was wonderful. I can call or text the staff anytime and they answer all my questions right away. Now, the staff is like family! And Ashley is the perfect fit for our family — I could not have asked for this experience to be better.

What is life with Ashley like?

I didn’t think she would adapt to us as quickly as she did. Anyone who knows me will tell you that I light up anytime I talk about her. Just sitting with her and spending time with her lifts my mood — feel less anxious and less lonely. There are no words for what Ashley does for me emotionally and mentally — beyond doing all the tasks she was trained to do.

She is a big presence in my life without her.

She gives me kisses — all I have to do is ask for a kiss! She loves to draw — we give her a pen and paper and she draws! Ashley is our “Ashley Art” that I have put up in the house. She loves going through pockets and zipping and unzipping. And she loves anything with buttons — today, while pressing buttons on the remote, she managed to change my TV to Spanish.

I got a presentation to a group of preschoolers in March about life with Ashley and was able to give out Monkey Hugs to the kids. One little boy gave me his monkey a bath in the sink because I told him how much Ashley enjoyed her bath.

Is there anything you want to share with our readers?

Of course you have to have patience, but think that anyone who has been through a traumatic physical experience should look into a monkey helper. Outside of the physical tasks that they can do, the amount of happiness, joy, and peace that a service monkey can provide to someone who is living with a mobility issue...there are no words to describe it. I can’t thank Helping Hands enough for bringing her into my life. I cannot express how much Ashley means to me. She is the best thing to happen to me in a long, long time. She is a forever part of our family, for sure.

Thank you for being a part of our community! We hope that you enjoy receiving our print Newsletter twice a year. Did you know that there are many other ways to stay connected with Helping Hands? Join us virtually or in person and get up to date information on our programs and see the impact of your support!

Visit our websites for more stories, videos, information, and to sign up for our monthly eNewsletter — monkeyhelpers.org

Like us on Facebook — facebook.com/monkeyhelpers
Follow us on Twitter — twitter.com/monkeyhelpers
Look for our auction on Bidding for Good opening in October — biddingforgood.com/monkeyhelpers
*New* Connect with us on LinkedIn — tinyurl.com/mlinked

Save the Date for Festival! Join us on Saturday, October 25th at WGBH Studios in Boston for an evening of food, friends, and fun! Enjoy tasty bites from restaurants Mistral, Moco... Sorellina, Teatro, L’Andana, Ostra, and many more. Complimentary cocktails, specialty wine, selected beer from Lagunitas, all while dancing the night away to the beats of the band Placed Out. Proceeds benefit the training and placement programs. More information to follow — visit monkeyhelpers.org/festival for updates.

Host an event in your area! — Would you or someone you know host to host a fundraising event and introduce us to your circle of friends? Contact the Development Office for more information: development@monkeyhelpers.org

Visit us in your community — We will once again have a booth at the Boston Abilities Expo in September. Stop by and say hello! For other ways to get involved, check out the Volunteer Opportunities on our website.