Dear Friends,

Experiencing the unique and heartwarming stories of the people who live with Helping Hands monkey helpers is the most powerful way to understand the change that your support makes in their lives. And 2011 was a breakthrough year for telling those stories across the country—through film, Facebook, Twitter, and our online newsletter. The feedback we have received has been inspiring and our recipients are very proud to share their stories with the people who make their precious lifetime partnerships possible.

If you haven’t had the chance to spend some time with Judy, George, and Sophie by watching "Judy and Sophie’s Story" or our exciting new ‘Monkeys in a Minute’ videos, we invite you to go to our website where our filmmakers, Cary and Ya wolinsky, have created remarkable new inside views into Helping Hands’ mission and the power of the monkey-recipient bond.

The partnership between our recipients and their monkeys, along with the love and laughter that emanates from that special relationship, is inspiring. And so, we continue to strive to share the importance of this most intimate and powerful relationship with each and every one of you so that you too can witness what our placement team and trainers experience when carrying out the work that you support.

You share our belief in our mission, and through these new visual tools, we aim to give you an even deeper understanding of everything that goes into making each placement possible. Moreover, our hope is to reach more potential recipients and to educate those in need about our monkey helper program.

Every time you forward our online newsletter, share our post on Facebook, or re-tweet, you bring us closer to our supporters and open new doors for us around the globe. Most importantly, sharing Helping Hands’ story allows us to expand our mission services and help more people seeking independence and companionship through our service monkey placement program. Thank you for your contribution to making 2011 a remarkable year.

Warmest regards,

Susan Keyes, Chair of the Board
Megan Talbert, President and Executive Director
Capuchin monkeys are known as the most intelligent of the New World monkeys and are native to Central and South America. They are a great size for a home environment, about 6-8 pounds as adults. We utilize the monkeys’ natural hierarchy when forming the bond between a monkey and his or her recipient. A monkey wants to put their recipient at the top of their hierarchy, which makes them want to perform tasks and to work as a team. Coupled with their natural ability to manipulate objects with their hands, feet, and tail, capuchins make the perfect companion for someone looking to regain independence within their own home.

Lisa Flores has been a volunteer for over 10 years. Lisa began her association with the organization as a work-study student while attending Boston University. After graduating, she never forgot about the monkeys, recipients, and team members she met. Five years ago, in her position as the Director of Sales and Marketing for the Columbus Hospitality Group in Boston, Lisa contacted us again. Together with our Board of Directors and fellow volunteers, she developed our premiere fundraiser: the Monkey Helpers’ Annual Food Festival. Lisa reached out to her peers in the hospitality field and put together an evening of delightful food and fundraising, including not only the restaurants she works for but many of Boston’s top culinary spots, too. With so many choices in organizations to support, we asked Lisa why Helping Hands was top on her list.

“Besides that fact that the organization is very well run and it really does what it states it will do, my time volunteering with the trainers and monkeys was incredible. At the time, I remember thinking, wow, the monkeys I was providing care for would one day go on to change someone’s life—that was a wonderful feeling. The love and laughs we received as volunteers made me come back day after day. However, the greater satisfaction came out of knowing that ultimately we were all doing our part to improve someone’s life who had fallen ill or had a horrible accident. I wanted to find a way to still be a part of the team providing the wonderful gift of a monkey helper, even if I couldn’t volunteer with the monkeys directly anymore.” We are grateful to Lisa for all she has accomplished in Boston to create a signature fundraising event—we look forward to many delicious years to come!
The Monkey college
Helping Hands is the only 501(c)3 organization in the world that trains capuchin monkeys as service animals for people living with physical disabilities. The training process that takes place at The Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation Center (also known as The Monkey College) has relied on the same guiding principles for over 33 years. Every monkey progresses through a series of classrooms that vary in size and complexity as they learn increasingly more complicated tasks. Laser pointers and simple words are the primary means of directing monkeys in their task behaviors, and all training is accomplished through positive reinforcement with praise, affection, and small food rewards. Throughout the monkeys’ training, their enjoyment of the process is a high priority.

As the monkeys progress through four distinct levels of schooling, the training rooms gradually begin to resemble a home environment. Distractions and equipment are slowly introduced to the monkeys in a positive, comfortable, and playful manner.

Looking back over the past 33 years much has changed in our world due to technology. Not only does this affect the way we live, it also changes what we teach our monkeys at The Monkey College. While commands such as “fetch” and “flip” remain the same, the objects we use have changed greatly over time.

Over the years, many of our monkeys have learned to use different forms of changing technology, starting first with an 8-track, next cassettes, then CDs, and now MP3 players. The same is true of VCR tapes and DVDs—as the technology changes, so too does the way our monkeys learn to interact with everyday objects.

While living at The Monkey College, all of our animals receive personalized training tailored to their own preferences, abilities, and special needs so that their training years are filled with fun and great amounts of love.

Our dedicated team of placement trainers and volunteers train and provide care for 40-50 monkey helpers every year.

Meet a Monkey
This year a darling little monkey named Bernice started school at the Monkey College and quickly made friends with her fellow simian students and all of our staff. She knows how cute she is too…one of her favorite things to do is to flirt with her own reflection in mirrors!

Bernie’s trainer describes her as cuddly, sweet, and loving. She has just started training, but has already proven herself to be smart and very motivated by peanut butter treats. We know she’s going to make a great companion and helper for a lucky recipient someday!
The Active Placement program is the cornerstone of our mission. Every placement is periodically evaluated by our staff to ensure that it is developing successfully. Over the years, the relationship between the monkey helper and the recipient grows, and Helping Hands ensures that task activities and the interdependence between all the monkey helpers and their recipients continue to progress productively. In addition, Helping Hands provides continuous oversight of the monkey’s health care needs. Along with other forms of mentoring, Helping Hands provides 24/7 telephone support to all our clients for the lifetime of each placement.

Our current Recipient Profile includes:

- Spinal Cord Injury: 55%
- Muscular Dystrophy: 10%
- Multiple Sclerosis: 10%
- Other: 25%

“With constant support from Helping Hands, ChiChi and I have spent our first several months working together and are becoming a team. She does wonderfully fetching dropped objects; however, the greatest gift is her dedicated companionship.” — Derek
“It is surprising to me that after two years, I still learn so much about the monkeys every day I come to work. How they eat their vitamins or whether or not they’ve developed a liking for me... I have really grown strong connections with these monkeys. Thank you so much for the patience and trust that you have invested in me—I can’t express how much I appreciate all these opportunities and experiences.”

— Renée, a former work-study student

ANIMAL CARE ASSISTANTS  We are often asked what it takes to care for and train our wonderful monkey helpers. We couldn’t do it without the help of our network of volunteers, interns, and Boston University work-study students who serve as animal care assistants, a vital part of the daily operations at the Monkey College. They help with the monkeys’ daily diet and husbandry care, including serving meals, cleaning monkey enclosures, and preparing enrichment activities.

Because capuchins are so intelligent, they need constant stimulation while not in training. Jennifer Dowdy, who manages the animal care assistants, works with them to develop and implement new enrichment activities for the monkeys, such as adding peanut butter to the inside of a ball and letting the monkeys figure out how to get every bit out, or giving them a lemon peel that they can use to scent wash.

While animal care assistants do not have the opportunity to work one-on-one with the animals, they get to be around them and can develop close bonds and friendships with many of the monkeys. Because of this, many volunteers stay with us beyond their initial three month commitment—many BU students work for all four years, and count their experience here as one of the highlights in their college careers.
Since 1998, Helping Hands has endeavored to educate school-aged children through our Spinal Cord Injury Prevention Program (SCIPP). SCIPP has been presented to thousands of school children and young adults every year, informing and educating them about safety and the prevention of injuries during daily recreational activities. In 2011, we began the process of updating and restructuring this program.

We are proud to announce our new Youth Education Program entitled “Living Permanently Enabled.” This fun and lively, 30-45 minute presentation includes more information about disability awareness, traumatic injury prevention, and the concept of becoming permanently enabled in one’s own life. Helping Hands staff give an overview of our service animals and then focus on teaching strategies for resilience and making the choice to live permanently enabled. Through interactive activities, film clips, photos, and questions, our staff deliver a dynamic program promoting a message of resilience and awareness in an age-appropriate manner.

Currently we can only present in New England. If you are interested in hosting or sponsoring a Helping Hands Youth Education Program for your classroom or organization, please email Erica Noyes at encan@monkeyhelpers.org or call 617-787-4419 ext 105.

In addition, Helping Hands coordinates loving, supportive homes for monkeys who have entered their twilight years or who need closer medical supervision than the typical recipient might be able to give them. Each of these Special Needs Homes is unique, and, in most cases, monkeys can still provide limited assistance to individuals with mobility challenges. By arranging these individual partnerships, Helping Hands works to keep its promise to the monkeys we have raised—providing the most appropriate, safe, and loving environment that ensures each monkey’s quality of life and happiness throughout his or her years.
"Proud to serve those who have served our country."

**MILITARY OUTREACH PROGRAM** In 2011, we received a grant from the Ludwick Foundation to help us create and promote an outreach program that specifically explains our unique service to the community of veterans living with disabilities. This grant allows us to broaden and expand our ability to share our services with individual veterans and those serving our veteran community. We are grateful to be able to develop the tools to add another component to our Placement Program so that more veterans can benefit from an experience similar to Tim and Webster’s.

**Tim and Webster, CA** U.S. Marine Corps (retired) 28 year old Tim Jeffers was injured from an IED explosion on May 18, 2006 while serving our country in Iraq. After recovery and rehab abroad and back in the states, Tim learned about our program through Helping Hands’ collaboration with the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund. He received his Helping Hands service monkey named Webster in May 2008. Their story was featured in a February 2010 issue of People Magazine.

“Although I am injured, he looks up to me as his protector. I don’t feel so depressed with him around. It is nice someone is excited every time I come home. I would do anything for this little guy just like he would do anything for me.” — Tim

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The 2011 Board of Directors for Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers for the Disabled, Inc.:

Susan Keyes
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Andrea Rothfelder
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Kelly Doherty, OTR/L MOT
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Erica Noyes
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Jennifer Dowdy
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Marie Waitkevich
Associate Director of Health Care/Veterinary Technician

Jennifer Evans
Placement Trainer

Allyson Migneault
Placement Trainer/Veterinary Technician

Natalie Shelton
Placement Trainer

Joe Murphy
Husbandry Assistant
We are proud to share that 2011 was one of the strongest years financially that Helping Hands has had in over seven years. This success is the culmination of implementing sound and fiscally prudent strategies that continue to strengthen every aspect of Helping Hands. Our unrestricted revenue increased 6.2% from $1,185,528 in 2010 to $1,259,582 in 2011. At the same time, our expenses increased by only 4.9% from $1,109,931 in 2010 to $1,163,839 in 2011. We ended the year with a positive net cash position of $431,000, an increase of 188% over 2010. At the end of 2011, Helping Hands had total net assets of $2,631,345 compared to $2,312,294 at the end of 2010, an increase of over $295,000 or 12.6%. In addition, we continued to carefully manage our administrative expenses, so that our ratio of revenues expended for program services was 93%, substantially above the non-profit industry norm of 80%.

In addition to the unrestricted revenue, Helping Hands received several significant restricted donations. In October, we received a second $100,000 gift from the Charles Evans Foundation. This endowment gift establishes a permanent fund to provide a grant each year for “the training, care, housing and placement of capuchin monkeys to provide daily assistance to people living with spinal cord injury or other mobility impairments.” The Ludwick Foundation provided a grant of $100,000 for capital projects that is earmarked for capital equipment and web site development and will be spent in 2012. A grant from the Starr Foundation of $40,000 provided support of services for veterans with disabilities. In addition, The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation provided a $14,000 grant to help us complete major repairs required to our building’s roof. We are sincerely grateful to these Foundations and all of our major donors for their continued support of our mission.

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We also received an estate bequest this year of $153,000. Because of this gift to pay down our line of credit, leaving Helping Hands debt free (except for our mortgage). The balance of the funds was added to our unrestricted investments, which continue to increase and value and provide additional support for our programs. Our unrestricted investment portfolio, which follows a conservative investment strategy, provided a 3.8% total return in 2011, ending the year at $536,133.

As a result of our strong financial position this year, we were able to improve the benefits for our staff, adding new 401K and insurance options. In making these commitments, the Finance Committee believed that these new options will help us to attract and retain qualified trainers and professional staff.

Our financial goals for 2012 continue to be conservative and realistic. While the national economy and financial markets are better than they have been in recent years, there is still a high level of uncertainty surrounding economic and tax policy due to the upcoming elections. This will affect all non-profit organizations such as Helping Hands. With strong financial controls and a focus on maintaining positive cash flows, we believe we will be well positioned to take advantage of new opportunities and weather any potential storms. —Lynn Trimby, Treasurer
We are grateful to all the generous individuals, foundations, and businesses for their support of Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers for People with Physical Disabilities. We cannot list every donor who contributed their time, talent, or made a donation, however, we are thankful to everyone who made 2011 a successful year.

We would also like to thank all the federal, state, local, and municipal employees who make their donations through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC # 11996). The Arthur J. Willard Charitable Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization, and your contribution is tax deductible. Your gift will significantly enhance the lives of people living with physical disabilities.

Thank you for being a part of our team.
Helping Hands thanks Gil Gomes, Brad Keyes, Erica Noyes, Robert Scott Roper, and Cary Wolinsky for many of the photographs throughout our annual report.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE MONKEY COLLEGE ONLINE

We are using Facebook as a way to interact with our supporters, and also to provide an easy way for people to tell others about Helping Hands. By ‘liking’ us on Facebook, you can receive updates from The Monkey College and help expand awareness of our program at the same time.

We have also added some great new features to the website (www.monkeyhelpers.org) this year so that we can continue to focus on enlarging our online community. We hope you have enjoyed visiting our Monkey Gallery, reading about our Helping Hands team and have signed up for our eNewsletter list. There are still many additions we are working on so that our community of supporters can continue to be virtually connected to us. Be sure to stop by to see all the new features being added throughout the coming year.

IN MEMORY OF MEL SEIDEN

After learning about the passing of their cherished mentor and friend, Marie-Christine Jaeger-Firmenich and Urs Jaeger, Anne and Michel Bardy, and the Foundation Robmar made a donation to Helping Hands in his memory. Mr. Seiden had been a supporter of the organization in recent years, and Helping Hands decided it would be a fitting tribute to name a part of The Monkey College in his memory. In April, the Training Apartment was named the Melvin R. Seiden Training Room, to honor the life, spirit, and memory of this remarkable philanthropist and man.

In a life marked by professional accomplishments and enriched by friends and organizations about which he cared deeply, Mel Seiden touched the lives of many. The eldest son of Katherine and Murray Seiden, Mel attended schools in New Jersey before graduating from Harvard College in 1952 and Harvard Law School in 1955. He served in the United States Navy from 1955 to 1958 and retired as a Lieutenant. Mel said he had been inspired by the life of Paul J. Sachs, who, after a successful career at Goldman Sachs, became associate director of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard. Mel began his investment career at the Loeb Rhoades & Co., then in 1962 funded Seiden & de Cuevas, where he served as chairman and president until 1986. During the 1970s, he was a chairman of several venture capital funds. Mel was also a trustee of various Merrill Lynch mutual funds and investment companies between 1981 and 2002, he was most recently a consultant and director of Edge Management.

After retiring from active work and the financial field, he devoted himself to art and philanthropy. Mel had an iconoclastic turn of mind, an astonishing memory, and delightful wit. He was kind and thoughtful in conversation, a wonderful companion, friend, and mentor, and a devoted husband. His legacy will be deep and lasting.
Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers for the Disabled, Inc., established in 1979, is a national non-profit 501(c)3 organization that breeds, raises, and trains capuchin monkeys to assist individuals living with physical disabilities within their home environments.

Helping Hands provides lifetime active support for each service monkey and his or her human partner through interactive mentoring of the placement, and close supervision of the monkeys’ behavioral, nutritional, and veterinary needs.

Relying on private contributions, Helping Hands provides these specially trained service animals and their lifetime support free of charge to our recipients across the country.