

Story Book Farm

PRIMATE SANCTUARY



Spring into Summer 2021

Dear Friend,

I hope you are coping well during these difficult times.


Thank you so much for your unwavering support as we continue to look after our 24 monkeys and lemurs.

We have much good news and some sad news to share.

Three Amigos

We have, for some time, been planning to introduce our Japanese macaques Maximus and Darwin and, since Julien died, Lexy. We have renovated the enclosures that we planned for them and the introductions finally took place a few months ago.

Whenever there is more than one monkey in an enclosure, a hierarchy will develop. One monkey will become the 'alpha' and, to our surprise, it has turned out to be Max. As far as we know, Max has never been with other monkeys before in his life. Darwin, since his arrival at the sanctuary has, at least, always been surrounded by monkeys in enclosures adjacent to his, allowing him to study their behaviours. Lexy, in her relationship with Julien, was quite dominant. However, she now follows Max around and seems to be quite smitten. Darwin is content to hang out with both of them and they are all happy to groom each other – the ultimate test of acceptance and mutual respect.

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We are always glad when we can successfully group monkeys together who don't have a familial bond so that they don't have to live alone.

You may be wondering what happened to the relationship that developed between Pierre and Darwin. Pierre had become somewhat of a surrogate father figure to Darwin despite being of different species – Pierre a baboon and Darwin a macaque.

Among the monkeys who we now house in our new building, "*George's Haven*", we have two olive baboons – Judy and Johnny. While we were completing the construction of *George's Haven*, Judy and Johnny were housed in an enclosure on one side of Pierre. It soon became clear that the baboons recognised that they 'spoke the same language'. If Judy and Johnny were ever out of Pierre's sight he became agitated. We realised that they needed to be kept close together. In the *Haven* they are housed next to each other so they are able to communicate and have visual access to each other at all times – indoors and out. Unfortunately, it is not possible to put them all together in the same enclosure as the two males would likely fight over Judy.

We have been busy renovating and upgrading the oldest part of the sanctuary building which is over 20 years old. We have added more windows, improved the lighting and upgraded the electric wiring throughout the sanctuary. **This has meant that we had the space to move Boo & Gerdie, our rhesus macaques, into a much larger enclosure** and where they are surrounded by other macaques.

We need to sedate the monkeys in order to move them and, as we now have a new medical facility onsite, we can perform a full health check on them at the same time. You may remember that Gerdie had a fist-sized tumour removed from her abdomen a year ago. During her recent healthcheck we were relieved to discover that the tumour has not grown back at all. However, both Boo and Gerdie have gained some weight over the winter (sound familiar?) so we are putting them on a diet and are hoping that they will get more exercise in their new spacious indoor and outdoor enclosures.

Remembering Remi

The medical facility has been getting quite a bit of use in the last few months. In March we noticed a lump behind our beloved ring-tailed lemur Remi's jaw. After a full physical health assessment it was determined that, unfortunately, he had many lumps and Stage 5 Lymphoma.

As Remi had otherwise been in good health, we decided to pursue chemotherapy. Remi is one of only a handful of lemurs to have had the opportunity to receive chemotherapy, so we were entering new territory and we hope to help other lemurs with lymphoma in the future.

After extensive consultation with small animal and pediatric oncologists, exotic animal cancer specialists and pharmaceutical companies across North America, our veterinarian came up with a plan and sourced hard to find drugs individually tailored to Remi's situation. The plan was to give Remi a combination of IV and oral therapies. As he needed to be under general anaesthesia for the IV injections, we were worried how he would handle this. Initially Remi was a great patient and tolerated things quite well – eating well, being active and even gaining some weight.

As a team, we continually assessed Remi's welfare with every treatment to ensure that we were making decisions that were in his best interest – to prolong his life while ensuring he remained comfortable. We also took x-rays and performed a cardiac ultrasound to make sure his heart could handle the chemo drugs as well as doing blood work while he was sedated. This was probably the most we have medically intervened with a primate in our care and is probably one of the most involved lemur treatments ever recorded. However, sadly, the cancer progressed too quickly and as soon as we saw that Remi was no longer comfortable, we chose to give him a dignified and compassionate passing and euthanised him. Ending another being's life is never an easy decision to make but we felt it was the most humane option and a gift we could not deny a friend.

Remi arrived at the sanctuary in 2010 along with another ring-tailed lemur named Buddy. They had been kept together in a birdcage at a pet shop in BC. When legislation in BC made it illegal to own exotic animals, they were both brought to the sanctuary. Buddy died in 2018.

Because of his early years at the pet store, Remi enjoyed and welcomed the company of humans. Although it is an accepted policy at the sanctuary not to physically interact with our primates, Remi's outstretched arm entreating us to give him a back scratch could not go unnoticed. As a sanctuary, we do what we can to improve the lives of all our primates and meet their needs.

We are glad that we were able to provide Remi with the best quality of life in the time he had left and were able to keep him his joyful, social self for as long as possible. He will be missed.

Back to good news

We are making preparations to accept another Japanese macaque. She is two years old and is coming from a facility where she has not been accepted by the troop after her mother died of complications from a C-section. We are hoping that she will be a good companion for Lexy (who had a baby taken from her), Darwin and Max. As I mentioned earlier, it is not easy to introduce monkeys from different backgrounds but, in this instance, this little girl was not accepted by her own family. We hope she will be happier here.

With all the structural and electrical improvements we have made to the old building, it has been an expensive few months. **But these changes have improved the environment for many of our primates. There is still more work to be done so that more of the enclosures can be upgraded.**

Unfortunately, because of COVID-19, we are unable to hold our monthly Open Days for the second year in a row. I know many of you support us by being part of our Foster Program and would love to come and visit the monkeys, but at this time it does not look likely that we will be able to welcome you this year.

I hope you can help us continue to improve the lives of our monkeys and lemurs and help us to prepare for more who may need an appropriate new home. As I said in our last newsletter, we never know when the next monkey is going to need refuge. I'm glad we are in the position to welcome a new little girl to the sanctuary family.

Thank you for your continued support. Thank **you** for being part of the Story Book family.

Wishing you a safe and sunny summer.



Daina Liepa
Board Member

P.S. Even though you are not able to visit, you can follow our monkeys' antics in Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or visit our website at **www.storybookmonkeys.org**