Dear Friends

Our goal is to help people live more independent and fulfilled lives.

For almost 30 years Helping Hands has brought help, delight, and priceless opportunities for independence to people who are living with physical limitations that can be utterly isolating and demoralizing. The assistance and deep emotional bond between a service monkey and a human being can bring sunshine to the most dreary-looking future.

And speaking of the future—planning for the next 30 years is a major responsibility of serving on Helping Hands’ Board of Directors. So, for the past seven months we have been on a journey of predicting the future—and plotting a course that keeps us aimed directly at our goal. In 2013, we will finish the tasks we set for ourselves in our 2006 strategic plan, and it is time for us to write the next plan—the one that will be our blueprint for the next five years.

What are the skills our service monkeys will need in the future? What is the best design for a monkey classroom? Where should The Monkey College be located? How will we build it? What is the best way to reach out to people who we can help, and guide them through the application? How can we use the Internet and universal video technology to improve our training and support capabilities? What are our deepest responsibilities to our recipients and the monkeys, and how will we fulfill them?

During this year of prediction and projection we are working together to shape a strategic plan that outlines the steps to the next generation of Helping Hands. It has been a time of deep reflection and exciting possibilities as we have strategized how to expand “more of the same” into That’s Our Future—Let’s get started!

As I write this in August, we are nearing the end of the process, as we prepare to share the results with all of you—the supporters who make it all possible. There is so much yet to do! This is a threshold from which to look back and say a renewed thank you for all that has been accomplished so far, and to look forward with dawning vigor to the many heartwarming stories of love and renewed life purpose that lie in our future.

Sincerely,

Susan Keyes, Chair of the Board

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What a wonderful year 2012 was at Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers. One of the best things about daily life at here at The Monkey College is that we learn to expect the unexpected—and it’s these fantastic surprises that mean so much for our organization. I’d like to share a few of these special moments from the past year with you, our supporters.

First, one of our short films, “Judy and Sophie’s Story” was named as an editor’s favorite on Vimeo and went viral, spreading the word about our organization, and the transformative power of these special monkey helper-recipient relationships to people around the country. This opportunity not only allowed us to reach new donors, but equally as important, increased awareness of our program services to potential new recipients across the country.

Next, we learned of a large (and unexpected) estate gift that had been left to us by a very generous donor in our home state of Massachusetts. It is these legacy gifts that allow our organization to strengthen our financial stability and plan for the future.

Finally, it is always a pleasure to look back on the previous year at the new recipient-service monkey partnerships we created with your support. In 2012, matches like Derek and Chichi, Bradley and Jerri, and Scott and Melanie remind us of the incredible power of the human-animal bond and how important it can be in changing the lives of people who have suffered loss through injury and illness.

We could not accomplish our work without the ongoing support of our donors. Whether it was through individual giving, foundation grants, attendance at a fundraising event in Boston or California, or an unplanned estate gift, our supporters fuel our work every day and allow us to continue to change lives.

Thank you for your continued kindness and generosity.

Warmest regards,

Megan Talbert, President and Executive Director
The most obvious difference between capuchin monkeys and other service animals is their dexterous hands and amazing fine motor skills. This enables them to perform tasks such as:

- turning pages
- scratching itches
- retrieving dropped objects
- inserting straws into bottles
- turning on buttons/switches for remotes, phones, computers, etc.
- repositioning limbs on a wheelchair

Other differences include:

- their long life span of 30-40 years
- small size which allows them to cuddle in their human partner’s lap or nook of their neck
- monkeys have hair, like humans, which helps to alleviates problems with fur-related allergies

Monkeys also have a strong sense of hierarchy which provides the motivation to care for and be cared for by their human partner. Helping Hands trainers and placement staff utilize this natural hierarchy to create a mutually beneficial and nurturing relationship between the monkey and the recipient.

Every day we learn something new from our students. They are loving, curious, eager to learn new tasks, and often make us laugh with their unexpected antics.

— Alison Payne, Director of Training
Helping Hands maintains ownership of its monkeys throughout their lives in order to oversee their ongoing health care and other needs.

Training  Located in the Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation Center in Boston, The Monkey College pairs highly skilled, full-time trainers with monkeys to develop them into competent, reliable service animals. Every monkey is individually trained to perform daily tasks for their recipients within the home environment. These tasks include fetching dropped items (such as a phone, mouth stick, and remote controls) from the floor, helping to retrieve out of reach items, loading DVDs, pushing buttons on TVs and computers, opening bottles of water, turning pages of a book, scratching itches and much more. Working one-on-one, the trainer uses a laser pointer and simple words to direct the monkey’s behavior. Praise, affection, and small food rewards reinforce new skills. Training is customized to each monkey’s personality and abilities. At each level the tasks become more complex and the training environment becomes increasingly home-like to prepare these service animals for life in their recipient’s home. In this area of the program, Helping Hands training staff works with a rotating population of approximately 45-50 monkeys. Trainers are assisted by paid work-study students from Boston University and local volunteers who conduct husbandry care.

Socialization/Foster Program  The Socialization Program provides foster homes to raise monkeys from birth through adolescence until monkeys are ready for training. They learn to interact in a home environment and develop their readiness for training at The Monkey College. Through this program the organization also coordinates supportive homes for monkeys who have entered their twilight years or who require closer medical supervision.

Youth Education  Since 1998, Helping Hands has educated thousands of children about safety and ways to help prevent spinal cord injury by bringing informative and engaging educational programs to schools, camps, and youth groups across the country. In 2012, the organization renamed the program “Living Permanently Enabled”. It is a fun and lively 30- to 45-minute presentation focusing on disability awareness, traumatic injury prevention, and the concept of being permanently enabled in one’s own life. Through interactive activities, film clips, photos and questions, the organization’s staff delivers a dynamic program promoting a message of resilience and awareness in an age-appropriate manner.

Placement The Placement Program is a comprehensive program that includes two categories: New Placement and Active Placement. The New Placement program phase begins when we receive a written application and references. Through a deliberate and careful process that includes telephone interviews, a home visit, and a readiness assessment, we gather detailed information about each applicant. After this rigorous selection process our team matches approved applicants with monkeys in training to select the right monkey for the individual and the environment. When the final match is made, our Placement Team arranges to spend up to one week conducting on-site training in the recipient’s home. Our staff also works closely with state officials to acquire all the appropriate permits to receive and house a Helping Hands service monkey. During the Placement Week, our Placement Team focuses on helping a recipient bond with his or her new monkey helper. They also conduct additional training to customize the monkey’s skills to the recipient’s specific needs and environment. Our staff teaches the recipient and his or her family and other caregivers about how to care for their new service animal, and about the monkey’s behavioral, health, and diet needs. All modified equipment and additional supplies needed for the monkey’s housing and care, are provided by Helping Hands at no charge to the recipient. During the first year of a new placement Helping Hands staff advisors carefully monitor progress and provide instruction to ensure the long-term success of each relationship.

During the Active Placement phase of the Placement Program, Helping Hands continues its commitment to all monkey-recipient partnerships by routinely evaluating each placement to confirm that it is developing successfully and to actively address the ongoing needs of each placement. Recipients can reach staff by phone 24/7 for consultation, guidance or advice.
One of the most wonderful monkeys residing at The Monkey College is Daisy. The trainers laughingly refer to her as Miss Popularity because Daisy becomes fast friends with every other monkey she meets. Upon initially meeting another monkey, Daisy will gently approach and smack her lips in greeting as if to say “Welcome to The Monkey College.” She is also quite popular with our volunteers who enjoy her silly behavior when enrichment activities and food are being passed out to the monkeys. Daisy often curls into a ball and starts rolling around laughing.

Daisy has learned many tasks in her time at The Monkey College. She is currently learning how to itch her trainer’s face more effectively with a soft cloth. She tends to only want to itch in a downward motion so she is working hard in school to learn to move the cloth in both directions. Daisy loves new toys that have levers and movable parts, and she especially enjoys anything with buttons that can be pushed. We know that her sweet and playful manner will again make her a great companion to someone in the future.

Meet a Monkey

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By having a monkey helper you don’t have to ask for help. When you drop something and can’t pick it up, the monkey is there to do it and you don’t have to go and ask someone. It makes a huge difference in independence.

— Wendy Lethin, Co-Founder of the Semper Fi Fund
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, they are 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.
Our Mission Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers is a non-profit human services organization that helps adults with spinal cord injuries and other mobility impairments live more independent and engaged lives by providing them with a highly trained capuchin monkey to help with their daily, in-home tasks. The only organization of its kind, Helping Hands breeds, raises, and professionally trains these special service animals, carefully matching them with appropriate recipients across the nation, and provides active support and care for the duration of each placement.

Since 1979, Helping Hands has raised funds to support these tax-exempt activities, so that it can provide monkey helpers to individuals in need across the country without charge to the recipients. Helping Hands also offers a youth education program that teaches children about spinal cord injury, injury prevention, disability awareness, and the human animal bond.
In 2012 Helping Hands experienced another successful year financially. Our unrestricted revenue increased $432,138 or 34% from $1,259,581 in 2011 to $1,682,720 in 2012. Within this category, our Grant Income was particularly strong with an increase of $225,919 or 33%, led by significant grants from the Bernice & Milton Stern Foundation and Foundation Robmar, both long-time supporters of Helping Hands. We are sincerely grateful to these Foundations and all of our major donors for their ongoing support of our mission.

During this same period our expenses increased $161,610 or 14% from $1,163,839 in 2011 to $1,325,449 in 2012. Along with the usual inflationary increases in salaries and benefits, we spent more money this year on technology, upgrading our computer systems and designing implementing new website, all of which will enhance our programs and effectiveness. With increasing repair costs for our old washing machines, the Finance Committee also authorized the purchase of new a commercial machine, much to the delight of our staff. Although our overall expenses increased, we continue to keep our administrative expenses low. As a result, our ratio of revenues expended for program services was 93%, substantially above the non-profit industry norm of 80%.

Although we never plan for contributions from estate bequests, we have nonetheless been fortunate to receive them from time to time. In 2012 we received a bequest of $285,000 from the Estate of Faith Senecal. These unexpected funds allowed us to film additional footage for future videos, however, the Finance Committee decided to add the majority of the funds to our unrestricted investments, which continue to increase in value and provide additional support for our programs. As a result of these additions and the appreciation in our investments (approximately 9% in 2012), the value of our unrestricted investments ended the year at $722,444. In addition, we have $275,000 of restricted investments for a total investment value of $997,444.

Overall the organization is in a very strong financial position. Helping Hands ended the year with total net assets of $4,155,320, an increase over last year of $285,310 or 7%, and a net cash position of $422,000. In addition, we continue to be debt free, with the exception of the mortgage on our building. With strong financial controls in place, the Finance Committee meets regularly to monitor revenue and manage expenditures.

In May, the Board held a retreat and authorized the expenditure of funds in 2013 for a new Strategic Plan for the organization looking forward for the next 3 to 5 years, which will include a 5-Year Business Plan. One goal of the Plan is to continue to strengthen Helping Hands’ long-term financial sustainability. We are optimistic about 2013 and continue to focus on providing a solid financial platform to support recipients and their monkeys. — Lynn Trimby, Treasurer

93 cents of every dollar donated is spent directly on program services.
Thank You for Being Part of Our Team

We are grateful to all the generous individuals, foundations, and businesses for their support of Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers for the Disabled, Inc. Their support and donations enable us to create priceless partnerships. We cannot list every donor who contributed their time, talent, or made a donation, however, are thankful to everyone who made 2012 a successful year.

We appreciate all the federal, state, local, and municipal employees who make their donations through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC # 11196) or Independent Charities of America.

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To our entire Corporate Partners Program, a special thanks for their continued support of the work we do! Without the commitment and generosity of these organizations, the work we do would not be possible. We appreciate and welcome their ongoing support and commitment. A list of Corporate Partners can be found on page 15 or on our website at www.monkeyhugs.org.
Thank you to the 29 members of the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America, New England Council, who gathered at The Monkey College to paint the interior of the entire building in November. New England Council president Nigel Costoloe, Catchlight, Inc., organized the entire day and helped to coordinate painters from nine different companies.

With paint and color design generously donated by Benjamin Moore, nearly 300 hours were donated in repainting three floors of our building with low VOX paint that is safe for both humans and monkeys alike. The in-kind value of this one day painting blitz is estimated at $20,000.

Since 1979, many projects and advances to the program have been accomplished because caring individuals made provisions for our monkey helpers in their wills to ensure people would always have the option of turning to Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers when seeking enhanced independence and companionship.

Remembering Helping Hands in your will or trust is easy to do. Simply provide a specific dollar amount or specified percentage of your estate assets.

Naming Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers for the Disabled, Inc. as partial or sole beneficiary of your IRA, 401(K), 403(B), or other retirement assets is another way to include our organization in your estate planning efforts.

Since retirement plan assets may be subject to both income and estate taxes if left to heirs, estate planners often recommend that you designate all or a portion of the assets to a charitable organization such as Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers for the Disabled, Inc. By leaving such assets to Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers for the Disabled, Inc., you can pass other assets to your heirs which may lower the tax burden. Please speak to your accountant or lawyers for specific advice about your situation.

For any document in which you are naming Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers you can use this information:

**Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers for the Disabled, Inc.**

541 Cambridge Street
Boston, MA 02134
Tax ID # 13-3146988

To find out more or to notify Helping Hands: Monkey Helpers for the Disabled, Inc. about adding us to your bequest, call us at (617) 787-4419 ext. 114 or email Andrea Finnerty at andrear@monkeyhelpers.org.