



# **STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2029**

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Project Chimps was founded in 2014 to provide lifelong exemplary care to former research chimpanzees at its sanctuary on 230+ acres of forested land in the Blue Ridge Mountains of north Georgia.

Project Chimps has an agreement with the medical research facility that has the largest population of privately-owned chimpanzees in the world, which allows us to bring the lab's chimpanzees to permanent sanctuary.

As we maintain our focus on exemplary standards of care and quality of life for the chimps, we will continue the process of transferring these intelligent and sentient beings from the research center to their new home at Project Chimps, where they will spend the remainder of their lives.

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## Mission

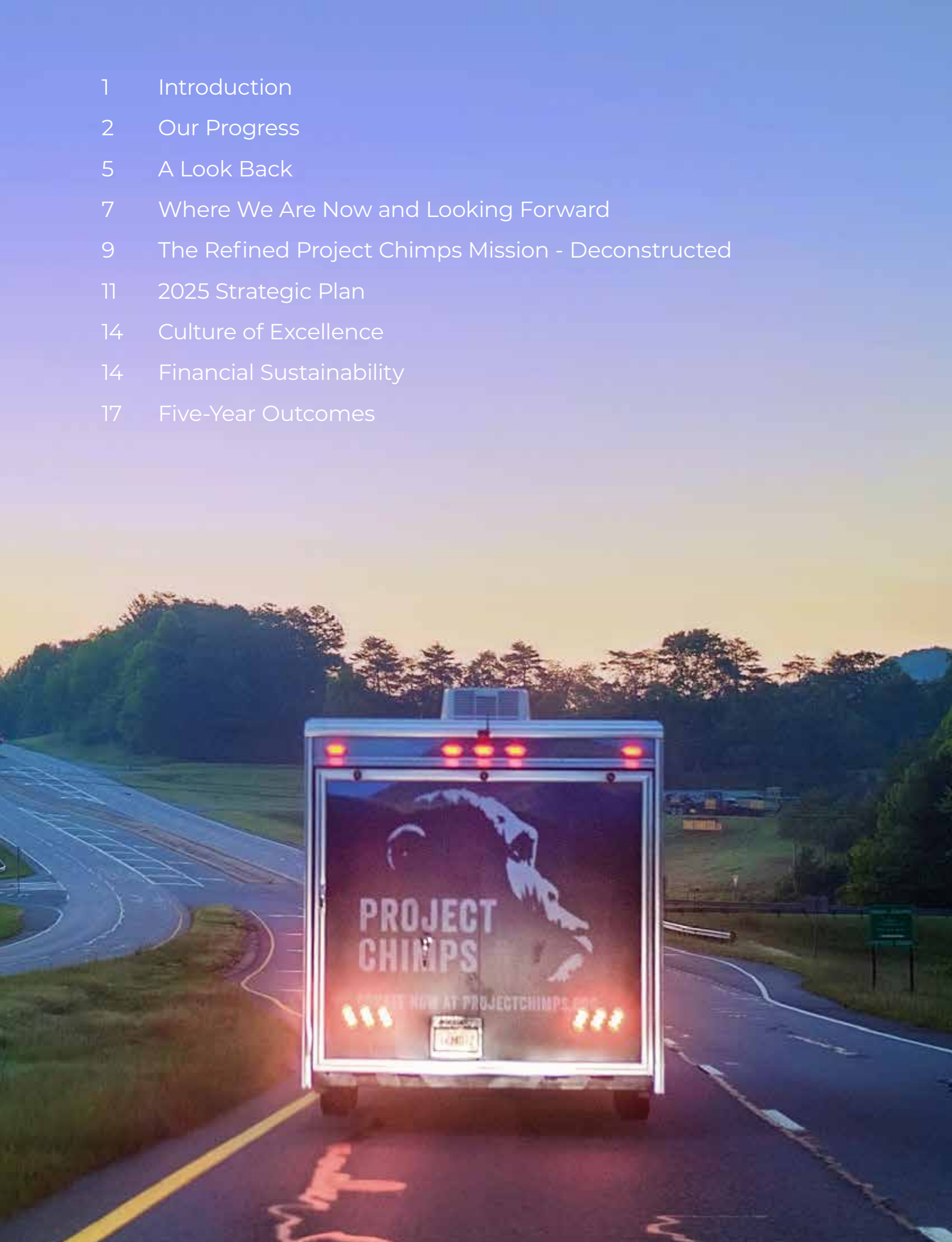
To provide exemplary care to chimpanzees in need while educating and inspiring humanity.

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Project Chimps' 2025-2029 Strategic Plan is a road map for achieving the mission of the organization over five years. As we look to the future with vision and realism, we will respect our past, be of service in the present, and assume responsibility for the future. Before we can chart a course forward, we must first take stock of where we've been.

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The chimpanzees make a 12-hour journey from the lab in Louisiana to Project Chimps in the Blue Ridge Mountains of north Georgia. Tristen, cover, chooses to relax inside.



# OUR PROGRESS

Since 2019, Project Chimps has grown its population to exceed the number of chimps still housed at the New Iberia Research Center (NIRC). Throughout this growth, our priority has been to ensure the physical health and mental well-being of the chimps in our care, necessitating a growth plan that aligns with our capacity, staffing and funding each year.

While we would like to be in a position to accelerate the number of transferred chimps to their new home at Project Chimps, we have been, and will continue to be diligent, in ensuring that standards of care remain exemplary and are not compromised, and that we can guarantee a safe and healthy environment for each chimp upon arrival, and for the remainder of their lives at the Project Chimps sanctuary.

## Adjusting to the Growth in Our Costs of Care

The 2019-2024 Strategy did not account for an occurrence that was beyond our imagination: A global pandemic. The COVID 19 pandemic generated a ripple effect of impacts that we still feel today, requiring us to pivot from our original vision of expanded capacity, staffing and chimpanzee population



Aerial view of the first habitat at Project Chimps. Phase One includes a 6-acre outdoor habitat surrounded by five chimpanzee villas.

to an approach that would maintain financial viability and quality care standards. Both the pandemic and the inflation that followed significantly impacted our cost structure and staffing recruitment and retention. The cost of care rose from \$22,000 to \$33,000 annually for each chimp, increasing our focus on sustainability, while maintaining our hope and vision to bring more chimps to Project Chimps.

Through disciplined cost management and innovative identification and implementation of new revenue streams, Project Chimps has emerged from the last five years with its strong leadership still in place. The leaders of the organization have a solid financial foundation and a clear understanding of what they need to do to balance the priority of exemplary care with a manageable rate of growth.



In 2024, we opened the Cedar Tree Annex Habitat, connected to the main building with a sky bridge. This 2-acre yard became extra special when Gracie, a chimp who has resided at the sanctuary since 2016, began going outside daily. Up to that day, Gracie would choose to stay inside the building while the other chimps would rush outside to forage, play, or sunbathe. By providing Gracie with a new option, she now joins the other chimps whenever they are in the Annex.

**A LOOK BACK FROM 2019 TO NOW**

- 95 Chimps in Residence
- \$5M+ Raised in Capital Funding for Phase 2 Construction
- Donations Exceeding \$16M
- 5,740 Students Visited
- 185 Tireless Volunteers
- 65 New Chimps

# A LOOK BACK



## Finding their Forever Home

The Humane Society of the United States (the HSUS) led the fight to end medical research on chimpanzees, alongside many other organizations and supporters in the animal welfare community, including Project Chimps founder, board chair and noted animal law attorney Bruce Wagman. The HSUS then became a founding financial supporter of Project Chimps in October 2015, providing the capital needed to purchase a 236-acre property in the Blue Ridge Mountains of north Georgia, at below appraised value and market price. This property was originally developed as a gorilla sanctuary and had some of the needed infrastructure in place to repurpose immediately for chimpanzee housing.

## Key lessons learned and impacts – 2019-2024

- **Pandemic** - The impacts of the pandemic were complex, multi-faceted and enduring.
- **Fission-Fusion** - As a methodology, it was determined that a fully implemented version of fission-fusion (a society where chimpanzees can choose where and who they live with) would impact quality-of-life and present challenges related to feasibility and risks.
- **Capital Project** - Original expansion concepts have been adjusted to ensure adequate operational funding, staffing and resources to continue exemplary care for every chimp.
- **Staffing** – Indications are that incremental investment in staff is delivering a return in the form of stronger recruitment and retention of talent. Staffing quality will remain an ongoing challenge due to circumstances outside of Project Chimps' control (e.g. availability of affordable housing), and the long-term costs to maintain quality staff must be accounted for.

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Babs, LB and Loretta engage in "Sanctuary Gossip" on the platform in South Peachtree Habitat.



# WHERE WE ARE NOW

Project Chimps conducted an internal analysis to identify current barriers to success, which has informed the strategic plan going forward. We learned from that review that we have:

- **High standards of care for the chimps**
- **Organizational strength and positive treatment of staff**

Employee recruitment and retention are a hurdle for multiple reasons. Additionally, the sanctuary is still relatively unknown even in the local area. There are opportunities for engaging a larger audience and embracing strategy that could expand awareness and attract new donors. In addition to focusing on expanding the sanctuary infrastructure to support more chimps arriving from the research center, attention must also be given to maintenance and upgrading of existing facilities.

# LOOKING FORWARD

Building on the substantial achievements in the last five years of our previous Strategic Plan, our board of directors and leadership staff crafted the 2025-2029 Strategic Plan to define Project Chimps' mission and goals for the next five years. The plan identifies goals, strategies, key initiatives and tasks by drawing from several sources and lessons learned, including:

- **Management Interviews.** Managers have been a critical part of this process, bringing their expertise and observations to the table to identify achievable departmental goals to advance the organization toward the shared mission.
- **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis (SWOT).** New goals were refined to address current priorities and constraints. The SWOT analysis helps us formulate initiatives that will directly leverage strengths and pursue opportunities while mitigating weakness and threats where feasible.
- **Strategic Planning Committee Review.** The committee provided a thorough review of the previous strategic plan, identifying areas of new and continued focus, as well as recommended revisions and exclusions for the new plan.
- **Development Assessment.** Project Chimps contracted with Coxe Curry to conduct a development assessment for the organization. This assessment, combined with the addition of new communications and fundraising staff informed the list of key initiatives and tasks that will drive revenue and awareness as part of the new plan.

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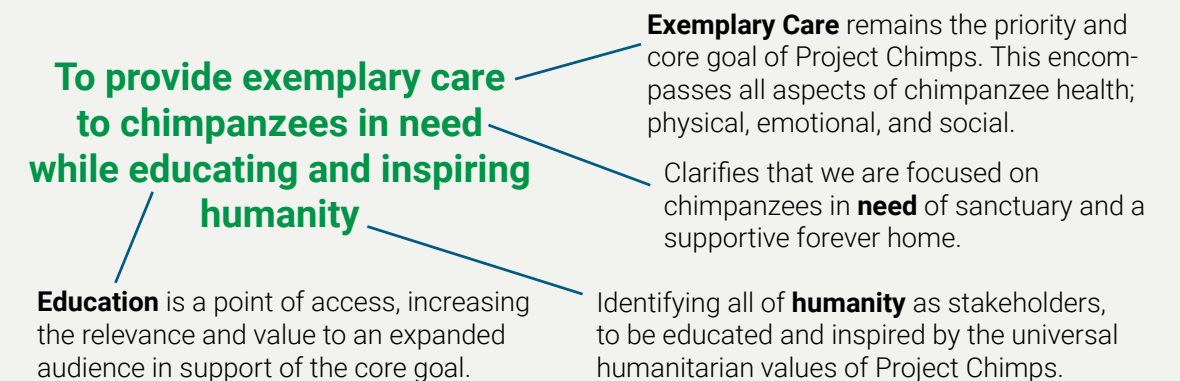
Alpha Prince enjoys looking out on his group from the tires during a celebration day where the chimps are thrown a party with enrichment items.



# The Revised Project Chimps Mission

## – Deconstructed

The formulation of the new Project Chimps Mission incorporates references to education and inspiration – new components that were identified as critical to driving the awareness and fundraising needed to address higher operating costs and future growth aspirations. The diagram below provides a breakdown of the Mission and the thought behind each reference.



**Education is a critical pillar of the Mission. We will educate the public to grow sustained and compassionate support for Project Chimps and the societal imperative for sustained exemplary care for our chimps.**

Proceeding from our Mission, we identified three key focus areas as our goals for 2025-2029:

### GOAL 1

Uphold and enhance an environment for a thriving and growing community of chimpanzees

### GOAL 2

Continue to build a culture of excellence for staff, volunteers, interns and supporters that educates, and promotes the importance of this sanctuary

### GOAL 3

Ensure Project Chimps' long-term financial sustainability

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Arielle loves to fish treats such as apple sauce or peanut butter out of the artificial termite mound.



These goals are the product of a collaborative effort that combined the expertise and input of our board members, staff, volunteers and founding supporters. We established a dedicated planning committee that included leadership and board members to set our initial direction, and then incorporated the vision and knowledge of staff managers to identify key initiatives and priorities to achieve these goals.

Together, we will implement this plan to realize our mission to provide exemplary care to chimpanzees in need while educating and inspiring humanity.

## 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2025 Strategic Plan is organized around our focus and commitment to the following goals:

### **GOAL 1**

#### **Uphold and enhance the environment**

We will uphold and enhance a physical environment and social structure that will enable chimpanzees in need of sanctuary to choose where, how, and with whom to spend their time, while continuing to identify opportunities to raise and promote the highest quality of life.

### **GOAL 2**

#### **Continue to build a culture of excellence**

Project Chimps has succeeded in establishing an internal culture of excellence, and we will continue to build that culture to sustain a passionate and high-performing team. This goal expands the cultural influence of Project Chimps to include our supporters in a way that will leverage that influence to benefit the sanctuary over the long term.

### **GOAL 3**

#### **Ensure Project Chimps' long-term financial sustainability**

We will ensure the organization's long-term financial sustainability and increasing operational strength through progressive, revenue-generating programs, a comprehensive fundraising plan and ongoing informed management of current and future expenditures. Operational strength will enable capacity and population expansion at feasible/manageable levels, which will be tied to resource and funding availability, without compromising care standards.

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As a sanctuary, we strive to limit human interaction with the chimpanzees. Guests have the opportunity to observe the chimpanzees in the habitat as part of our annual Discovery Days open house.



## Uphold and Enhance the Environment

Providing exemplary care to chimpanzees in need of sanctuary continues to be our absolute priority and responsibility. These amazing, sentient beings inspire us to create a physical environment and care program that will allow them to be their true selves.

At Project Chimps, we have expanded the outdoor habitats to include the Cedar Tree Annex, which is facilitating habitat sharing among different social groups and increasing the amount of time that chimps can choose to be outside. We will continue our efforts to create a new and innovative model for captive chimpanzee care and evaluate the multifaceted impacts of the approach. Additionally, we will work to exceed and drive best practices in multifaceted impacts with an emphasis on both the physical and mental health of the chimps. This will include our ongoing endeavor to provide them with choices that increase their autonomy, expand their social groups, and give them control over their physical environment.

## Strategies and Key Initiatives

- **Enhanced Environment.** Construct additional habitats with unique features and interconnecting structures that promote autonomy and travel, subject to funding and space availability.
- **Thriving Community.** Streamline and optimize the introduction process to encourage chimp-to-chimp engagement by increasing staff skills in behavioral management and chimpanzee group formation.
- **Growing Community.** Continue to relocate chimpanzees from the research facility to the sanctuary- contingent on preserving exemplary care quality standards and operational funding availability and sustainability.
- **Upholding the Community.** Maintain the standards of the facility and care levels by proactively forecasting and addressing infrastructure and staffing needs.

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Our volunteers are the backbone of the sanctuary, allowing us to operate with a limited staff focused principally on chimpanzee care and welfare.



## Culture of Excellence

We will continue to build a culture of excellence for staff, volunteers, interns and supporters that educates, and promotes the importance of this sanctuary.

Project Chimps has realized success in creating a culture of excellence within the organization. Going forward, we must now expand this culture beyond the organization as a means of driving awareness, generating revenue and building our reputation as a thought leader in sanctuary care among the full range of stakeholders.

Concurrently, we will continue to develop our reputation as an innovative, well-managed and fulfilling workplace for current and future staff members. We will strengthen our reputation by raising our profile as a sanctuary that delivers best practices and exemplary care to our retired chimps.

We will build upon our foundation of excellence within the organization by maintaining a results-oriented culture dedicated to exceptional performance. Our ability to achieve our mission of exemplary care will rely on maintaining organizational capacity, through continued investment in staff and strategic volunteer engagement. As we go forward, we remain committed to fostering a work environment that embraces diversity and inclusion in a unified approach to delivering quality care and mutual respect to the chimpanzees, our volunteers, and one another.

Beyond the organization, we will make efforts to raise awareness, deepen engagement and deliver value to our current and prospective supporters by educating our audience on the Project Chimps story and our mission to honor humans' moral imperative to care for these retired research chimpanzees.

## Strategies and Key Initiatives

- **Build Upon Excellence.** Maintain and strengthen the organization-wide philosophy and performance that supports the mission and goals of the organization.
- **Strengthen Organizational Capacity.** Sustain strength and stability through continued staff investments and strategic volunteer engagement to enhance recruitment and retention.
- **Raise Awareness and Deepen Engagement.** Develop and tell a compelling story for the full range of potential audiences to engage them and enlist their support. This will include the local, statewide, and national communities, donors, institutional supporters and prospective partners.
- **Deliver Value Through Education.** Identify and implement educational initiatives that provide new points of access for deeper engagement with all members of the public while positioning Project Chimps as a thought-leader in the development of a culture of excellence that delivers best practices and exemplary care.

## Financial Sustainability

We will ensure Project Chimps' long-term financial health and sustainability and increasing operational strength through progressive, revenue-generating programs, a comprehensive fundraising plan and continued efficient and thoughtful management of current and future expenditures.

Project Chimps has allocated resources to scale its fundraising and communications operations with the goal of building awareness and financial strength. As the organization gradually reduces its dependence on HSUS funding, we will position the organization to meet forecasted increases in operational costs by establishing a strong foundation of recurring donor revenue, high-capacity donor engagement and growth in alternative revenue streams.

Through continued sound financial management and revenue growth, Project Chimps will secure the flexibility to gradually increase its chimp population without compromising our standards of care. Financial strength will also enable Project Chimps to consider incremental facility expansion projects while also addressing capital infrastructure upgrades as they are needed.

- **Comprehensive Fundraising Plan.** Develop and implement a best practice fundraising plan that engages and solicits support from the full range of prospective donors at appropriate levels of engagement.
- **Alternate Revenue Streams.** Continue innovating to identify opportunities to generate revenue and provide budget relief.
- **Fiscal Responsibility.** Maintain the organizational culture of sound financial management practices that incorporate opportunities and consider risks in forecasting.



Mandy drinking at the lixit water fountain



# FIVE-YEAR OUTCOMES

**2025**

The kitchen expansion is completed allowing for storage and preparation of meals for up to 150 chimps. Meanwhile, we increase the volunteer recruitment process to capture longer-term commitments and begin the next phase of chimp transports from the lab to the sanctuary.

**2026**

Major capital improvements on the original buildings are completed. Board recruitment has resulted in new members to represent the sanctuary in the Atlanta community and reflects the diversity of the staff.

**2027**

Chimps continue to be brought in from the lab and integrate into the existing groups. Virtual field trips educate students across the country.

**2028**

Construction of the additional outdoor habitats for the chimps has been completed. Preparations are made to maximize the chimp population.

**2029**

Chimp groups continue to arrive as space allows and harmoniously merge with existing families. Salons and other offsite educational fundraisers are conducted on a regular basis throughout the country.

Through teamwork and the support of our community, near and far, we can accomplish great things for the chimpanzees in our care. As our youngest chimps are only just teenagers, the sanctuary will need to flourish for another 40 years. By increasing our audience and educating the next generation, we can ensure the chimps will receive the backing they need for decades to come. When this strategic plan reaches its end in 2029, we hope to have welcomed several dozen more chimps to the sanctuary life, trained a new group of caregivers, and introduced thousands of students to the wonders of getting to know their closest genetic cousins.

We will achieve the goals of this Strategic Plan because ...

...it's their time to live.

Lancelot loves to climb to the crows nest in the South Peachtree Habitat to get a good view of sanctuary life.

# IT'S THEIR TIME TO LIVE



Almasi enjoys just hanging out near a hammock in the Peachtree Habitat.

Follow her story and those of the other chimps by connecting with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. You can also subscribe to our newsletter and our online blog at [projectchimps.org](http://projectchimps.org).



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