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## **Rescued Animals Benefit from Special Gifts this Season**

### ***Local animal group awards nearly \$60,000 to sanctuaries***

Jenkintown, PA—The American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS) is getting into the spirit of the holiday season by awarding nearly \$60,000 in grants to care for rescued animals. Sanctuaries across the U.S. that provide haven for animals released from research facilities will receive donations ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000 by Christmas.

As the first animal protection organization in the U.S. dedicated to ending the use of animals in science, AAVS includes in its mission providing direct assistance for animals formerly used in research.

These grants not only help the animals, but allow supporters to make dedicated gifts to sanctuaries that they know adhere to high standards of animal care. One hundred percent of donations to AAVS's Tina Nelson Sanctuary Fund are funneled directly into the grant program, which carefully vets potential recipients.

Particularly at this time of year, says AAVS President Sue Leary, "We caution donors whose kind hearts may be exploited by outfits that call themselves sanctuaries when they are not." Before donating to a sanctuary, she suggests people should check to make sure the animals in its care are prohibited from breeding, which only exacerbates the problem; that they are not commercially traded (bought or sold); and that they are cared for properly.

Among the sanctuaries receiving AAVS grants this month are two that serve a particularly hard-hit group: primates. Monkeys are widely used in invasive research, but are occasionally released after experiments that might include implanting hardware in their skulls for neurology experiments. Both Mindy's Memory Primate Sanctuary in Oklahoma and Jungle Friends Primate Sanctuary in Florida care for some real hard-luck cases, such as monkeys that have had coils surgically implanted in their eyes to record eye movement.

Two Chester County, Pennsylvania sanctuaries—Ryerss’ Farm for Aged Equines, in South Coventry Township, and Chenoa Manor in Avondale—are also among the grant recipients. Ryerss’ Farm cares for 80 horses, including several who were once used in pharmaceutical production. And rabbits, who might otherwise have been euthanized after being used in experiments, now call a naturalistic setting at Chenoa Manor home.

Other awardees include Animal Farm in California, Peace River Refuge & Ranch in Florida, and International Primate Protection League in Georgia, which has a male and female gibbon pair who recently celebrated 25 years out of a research laboratory.

“We know that animals used in research suffer immensely,” said Tracie Letterman, Executive Director of AAVS. “It’s gratifying to know that we can play a part in rescuing animals from research, and help provide a home where they can live out the rest of their lives free from harm.”

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The American Anti-Vivisection Society (AAVS) is the oldest non-profit animal advocacy and educational organization in the United States dedicated to ending experiments on animals in research, testing, and education. Founded in Philadelphia in 1883, AAVS pursues its objectives through legal and effective advocacy, education, and support of the development of non-animal alternative methods.

The Tina Nelson Sanctuary Fund is a special gift program of AAVS. Established in 2005, it honors the memory of a former Executive Director who loved visiting sanctuaries for AAVS. Tina Nelson died at the age of 48.