



primates helping primates

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grapevine

Welding for Welfare a Success!

Our journey began with the packing of bags, and the final weigh in. Many people had been very generous donating items from our wish list. We decided we would take all essential items which meant a large amount of excess baggage. At the airport it was hard to contain our excitement when all of our bags went through at no extra cost.

Transit through airports and customs was interesting - popcorn machines, dog toys and numerous balls raised an eyebrow or two. We were glad to have a letter from a vet explaining the medical supplies and medicines, resulting in all our gear arriving with us at Palangka Raya.



On arrival at Nyaru Menteng we got straight to work. It was a pretty daunting and overwhelming task assessing the project and working out how we were going to achieve our goals. The objectives of welding for welfare were to:

- Improve the welfare of orangutans at Nyaru Menteng by carrying out cage modifications, and constructing enrichment devices.
- Implement a successful and dynamic enrichment program
- Train local staff in welding and enrichment techniques

The staff were amazing - they welcomed us with open arms, listened to our ideas, and shared their own and we were able to facilitate two great programs.

The welding team was very productive. They repaired many cages and learnt skills under Murray's direction. The welding equipment we took over made a very obvious difference to their ability to carry out maintenance. The Kempy welding machine is top of the range and just what was required. Kempy went out of their way to get us this machine at a much reduced price.

The enrichment team was very excited to receive the balls and feeder bags we brought with us. Some of these were donated by Aussie Dog and Prestige Pets. We came up with a schedule and priority for enrichment. This enabled us to give all orangutans and bears enrichment every week. No small achievement when you are dealing with over 600 animals.

At the end of our four weeks it was very hard to leave. We had become attached to staff and animals. The one thing I know for sure is that we really made a difference. I have no doubts both programs will continue. I will be back in six months to re-evaluate the programs.

The welding for welfare program would not have been possible without the assistance of BOS supporters and volunteers, Kempy, Aussie Dog, Prestige Pets, Colonial Weigh Company, Lypards, Melbourne Zoo vet department, Andrew Atkin (MFB), Janette Connard, Kristy Garard, Dubbo Vet department and many more.

Most of all a big thank you to the team who put their blood, sweat and tears into this project: Murray Ellis, Jennifer Croes, Surip, Kus, Suri, and Leo.

Fleur Butcher

BOS would like to thank Ben Bryant from Western Plains Zoo, Larry Vogelnest from Taronga Zoo and Wayne Boardman from Adelaide Zoo, for their very generous donations of medical supplies to Nyaru Menteng. The supplies were much needed, and very gratefully received.

If you have information you would like to share with other orangutan enthusiasts, please email Belinda Morris at:

belindabessie@yahoo.com.au

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Orangutans Suffer from Anaemia

Sumo came from Jakarta on September 26th 2006 when he was about 8 months old. At first Sumo suffered from chronic diarrhoea and as time went on he became weak due to his lost appetite. After several days, Sumo's condition was critical and the medical team decided to take him from quarantine to the Nyaru Menteng clinic for intensive care.

As usual, the comprehensive check up that is done for sick orangutans to determine their illness was carried out. The results of the tests showed that Sumo had anaemia. Several parasites were found, which had started to destroy Sumo's intestines because he had not eaten any food. Sumo was nursed for several days but did not seem to improve, even after medicinal therapy ranging from anti-parasitic, antibiotic to anti-malarial drugs.



Despite all the efforts made, Sumo's condition got even worse. There was not one piece of food that went into Sumo's stomach, exacerbating his very weak condition and after tests his haemoglobin and protein levels were found to be getting lower and lower. The medical team tried another alternative, deciding to give Sumo a blood transfusion.

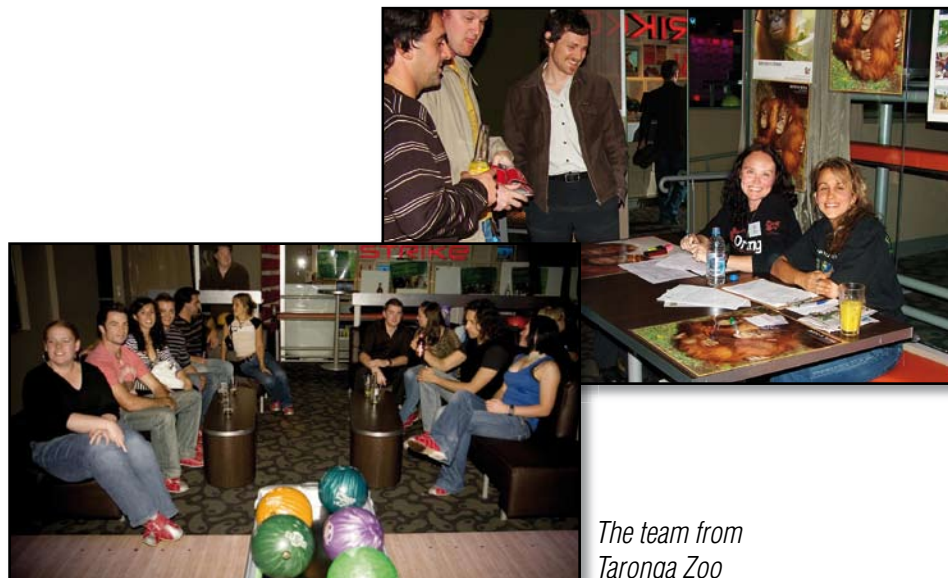
The orangutan who was to be the donor was first checked for compatibility. There were three prospective donors, all of them adult orangutans in rehabilitation in the quarantine enclosure and all had had their health checked and were free from infectious diseases such as TBC and Hepatitis. It was decided that an orangutan called Tejo was the most suitable donor. Quite a large volume of blood was taken, around 400ml, necessitated by Sumo's critical condition. After the transfusion Sumo slowly began to improve, he even started to eat and drink. His haematocrit value and protein levels had stabilised and started to rise to normal. After having the blood transfusion Sumo wanted to drink milk and eat, and his health is now improving constantly.

Untung & May, BOS

Bowling for BOS, a ball of fun

The latest BOS Australia fundraiser by the NSW branch was a 'Bowling for BOS' night on May 24th. Fifty-eight BOS supporters gathered at STRIKE EQ bowling alley at Sydney's Entertainment Quarter for a fun and relaxed evening of ten pin bowling.

It was an extremely enjoyable night, with STRIKE EQ proving to be a fantastic venue. Everyone bowled with great enthusiasm - albeit with varying degrees of skill! Some BOS bowlers actually surprised even themselves with hidden bowling talent.



The team from Taronga Zoo

We had 10 teams competing over two games and at the end of the night we awarded prizes for highest scoring team, highest scoring individual and also to the lowest scoring individual. The best bowler of the night was Paul McJannet with a score of 152 in his first game. For his great bowling efforts he walked away with a beautiful painting of a baby orangutan painted and donated by Maureen Klees. Well done Paul, who also happened to be part of the best team for the night, who for their very high score of 871, won a case of BOS wine. And of course last place always deserves a reward too! Nicole Weller was the evening's lowest scorer at just 45. Good one Nicole!

We also had adoption and merchandise tables set up and found our T-shirts and toy orangutans to be as popular as ever. Our 50/50 raffle was a big success with the winner receiving half the raffle takings and the other half going to BOS. Well done to the raffle winner, Tammy Etchells of Taronga Zoo.

Of course the real winner of the night was BOS - we raised a total of \$1558 to send to Nyaru Menteng! Congratulations to everyone who helped run Bowling for BOS. A big thank you to Jan, Lou, Laura, Lisa, Bill, Wendy, Sue and Mandy, and a very special thank you to David and the staff at STRIKE EQ who were extremely helpful and friendly. Thanks for having us!

Amanda McLellan

Palm Oil Campaign

Palm oil is the number one threat to orangutans' survival in the wild.

Rainforests are being felled at an alarming rate to make way for the plantations, leaving the orangs homeless and starving - in addition to the injuries deliberately inflicted by plantation workers. At least 50 orangutans die each week as a direct result of the palm oil industry.

The Palm Oil Action Group needs your help to stop this devastation. For further information, and details on how you can get involved - from displaying posters and signing petitions to boycotting products and writing letters to companies and politicians - see: www.palmoilaction.org.au

A Personal Experience at Samboja Lestari

After 28 days in the Samboja Lestari jungle, a run away sun bear, laughing with ridiculously nice people and losing about a pint of blood due to mosquito bites, I'd say my stay at Samboja Lestari was extraordinary to say the least. The scope of activities at Samboja Lestari is wide and varied with 53 sun bears, over 100 orangutans, 6 gibbons, the reforestation of an entire rainforest and a comprehensive satellite monitoring system. Seeing endangered species first hand and physically keeping them alive by feeding them and cleaning their enclosures really made me feel like I was making a difference in the world. Although there is so much more that goes into keeping the animals alive and happy, helping them have a full stomach is very gratifying.

Before I arrived I wasn't sure what to expect. To my surprise I found out I would be staying in one of the beautiful rooms at the lodge (with air conditioning no less!). I loved the outdoor atmosphere, the beautiful natural garden and sitting up in the lodge tower overlooking what I call the 'instant rainforest' and orangutan islands.



I got into a daily routine which kept me busy. A traditional breakfast of nasi or mie goreng (fried rice or noodles) and toast was at 7 am. After that I would start work with the technicians. I would eat lunch at the lodge and afterwards teach an English class if there weren't any other guests. Indonesians love to laugh and really are eager to learn English. Class was definitely a highlight of the day. At 4 pm when the work day was over I would go back to the lodge, read, draw and hang out with the staff.

My first week there I worked at the sun bear sanctuary. Jobs included feeding the bears in the large enclosure and the reintroduction cages. We would also spray out cages and care for the injured bears. They would eat papaya, coconut, sugarcane, sweet potatoes, snake

fruit, pumpkin, watermelon, pineapple, bananas, sour sop, and other fruits which are mostly locally grown. BOS focuses largely on the development and sustainability of the Samboja village community. BOS provides jobs, opportunities in agro-forestry (growing fruits and vegetables between existing planted trees) and a market for locally produced handy crafts.

The rest of my time I worked in the orangutan cages. I had to wait to pass a quarantine period to make sure I didn't have any diseases I could pass on to the orangutans.

My first encounter with the orangutans was definitely more emotionally moving than I thought it would be, but it was awesome at the same time. As I walked up to their raised cages and saw them close up it felt as if I was the new kid walking into a classroom in one of those teen movies. They were pressed up against the cage and sizing me up. It shocked me how each one was its own being like different students in a class. They had different skin colors, body types and even hairstyles. Before, I thought an orangutan was an orangutan but our genetic similarity comes through in ways more than just appearance. Each morning, jobs are feeding and cleaning the concrete slab underneath the cages. I got chills as I looked down to see a few of them reach their rough hands out to get fallen fruit. They looked like hands of human prisoners trying to grab at my feet. I had to look up to see their bodies to reassure me they weren't. As I spent more and more time with the orangutans I saw they clearly had different personalities. While cleaning underneath the cages I got a healthy dose of these personalities. A new volunteer for them is a new target for spit, pee, mouthfuls of water, chewed up banana stems and whole banana stems... right on the head. Those tend to leave a little bump.

After a week in the cages I worked on one of the islands where the orangutans with hepatitis live because they cannot be released into the wild. They were fixing up the island and putting in enrichment which consisted of a system of poles and ropes throughout the island as well as rope nests. I worked with the technicians and the three other volunteers moving – or trying to move – iron wood poles and swimming in the moat to clear weeds. The technicians had so much energy and kept us laughing the whole time with their flips into the water and Indonesian ballads.

It was hard to leave Samboja. I can't thank everyone enough for being so nice to me and treating me like family.

For more information go to www.orangutan.or.id

Katelyn Feit

A Container of Care

Currently caring for over 600 rescued orangutans, Nyaru Menteng is in desperate need of supplies, so BOS Australia is organising a 'container of care' to be filled with donated goods and shipped to Indonesia. Many of the supplies required are common household items and others might be donated by vets, camping stores, garden outlets, or medical clinics. Items required include blankets and towels; nappies, toys and babies' bottles; toys and play equipment; bandages, medical supplies and vitamins; laptops, cameras and tools. For more information, the entire 'wish list' and drop off points, please see our website www.orangutans.com.au or call Rebecca King on 0418 995 022; Peter Carpenter on 0411 108 686 or 9596 3441; Fleur Butcher on 0407 511 567 (after Oct 22) or Fiona Martin on 9285 9212.

Keep an eye on our website:

www.orangutans.com.au

for upcoming events, new merchandise, and updates on campaigns and ways you can help the orangutans.

Sukamara and her new baby boy

One of the 48 orangutans that were returned from Thailand to Indonesia at the end of last year turned out to be pregnant. Sukamara was in such bad shape that she was too weak to move. It seemed as if the long journey had taken away most of her strength. The medical team expected her to give birth shortly after her arrival in Nyaru Menteng and therefore put her in a special cage right away.

Days passed and although Sukamara didn't show any signs of an approaching birth her general condition improved thanks to the nutritious food that was given to her on a regular basis. On the 10th of January Sukamara finally gave birth. The birth took place in the cage and was without incident. Sukamara loves her baby son so much she doesn't want to let go of him for even a few seconds.



Although all the people that take care of Sukamara and her baby have only good intentions, she doesn't trust anyone. It seems as if she is afraid that someone wants to take her baby away from her. Every time someone comes near the cage Sukamara takes her baby and jumps to the upper part of her cage so that no one has a chance to touch her son.

Both mother and baby appear healthy and are in a good physical condition. Occasionally, the infant tries to let go of his mother but Sukamara always keeps a tight grip on him. He wants his mother to let him go so that he can play for a while, but Sukamara is afraid of losing her son, so she never loosens her grip. Sukamara is probably traumatised and still remembers the time when she was a baby and hunters took her away from her mother. Don't worry, Sukamara, you and your child are safe here.

By BOS Nyaru Menteng

Just how bad is the situation?

Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre, Indonesia - When staffers here rescued an infant ape from an oil palm plantation in 2004, her hand had been hacked off, probably by a machete blow that killed her mother, and workers had planned to sell her as an exotic pet.

"She was traumatised," said Lone Droscher-Nielsen, a Danish woman who in 1999 founded the Rehabilitation Centre on the island of Borneo. It is the world's largest facility dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of any great ape. "Almost always when we get infants they have seen their mothers killed," Droscher-Nielsen said.

For the baby orangutan, later named Kesi, a Swahili word for "child born during hard times," and the world's remaining wild orangutans, traumas have become common. Their habitat continues to disappear as logging companies fell Indonesia's rainforests at a frantic pace. Plantations producing palm oil have expanded as demand soars for the oil's use as biofuel and in products as diverse as chocolate, detergent and lipstick.

According to official Indonesian data, logging has recently taken place in 37 of 41 surveyed national parks, a February U.N. report stated. Companies also skirt national laws limiting logging, and as much as 88 per cent of all timber cut in Indonesia is illegal, the report stated. The toll on Borneo's wildlife is visible at Nyaru Menteng, a sprawling clump of buildings and large enclosures tucked into Borneo's jungle in Central Kalimantan province. As forests are cleared, orangutans often go hungry and venture into oil palm plantations and farms, upsetting owners who kill them. Other locals hunt mothers to sell their young to middlemen, who then sell them as pets and exotic attractions.

Last year the Nyaru Menteng centre confiscated 80 infant orangutans from homes and plantations and rescued 223 adult animals, the highest number since the facility opened eight years ago. Currently, Nyaru Menteng shelters more than 600 orangutans at rehabilitation centres throughout Borneo.

Often young orangutans arrive at Nyaru Menteng injured and abused. One recent arrival had been raised on fried chicken and soda, a far cry from its wild diet of fruit and bark. Another was missing the middle and ring fingers on each of its hands.

After a short quarantine period to screen for diseases, employees begin the difficult task of teaching infants to survive in the wilderness, a learning process normally carried out by mothers over a six- or seven-year period. The centre employs dozens of local women to teach the infants everything from nest building to how to react when they see snakes. (Since some snake species in Borneo are poisonous, they should flee.)

On a recent trip into the rainforest surrounding the centre, two dozen orangutans in 'baby school' swung through the canopy and tussled on the ground near a group of local women. "The hardest thing is to get them to build nests in the trees," said Maya, a woman in her 20s, as several orangutans clung to her legs. "Since we can't climb the trees, they only want to build their nests on the ground."

Once the infants have learned basic skills, the centre forces them to forage for food, a process that prepares them for release to the wild. But as Borneo's forests shrink, finding suitable release sites is difficult and even wild adult orangutans often spend months in captivity before being freed.

"The goal is to protect the forest habitat," said Iwan Wisibono, a World Wildlife Fund campaigner in Jakarta. But Central Kalimantan province is a poor part of Indonesia, and for many people protecting the environment is a low priority.

A 3-year-old Kesi waved the leathery stump of her left arm vigorously through the humid air. Despite her handicap, she has learned to climb trees and would be moved out of 'baby school' soon said Rifentik Tuta, a communications manager at the centre. "In a few years, she'll be able to return to the wild," she said. "If there's any place to release her."

*Craig Simons
Excerpted from AJC.com*

Donations to BOS-Australia can be made in a number of ways:

Via our website using your credit card www.orangutans.com.au

You can send a cheque or money order to **PO Box 341, Chadstone Centre, Chadstone VIC 3148**

Or to be an ongoing supporter and setup a direct debit, please contact us on **(03) 9877 0377**