



# Forest Chatter



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## From the President ...

**Do you also have the feeling time flies? This edition of Forrest Chatter is already the last one for this year. And what a challenging year it has been!**

Covid-19 has affected and still limits our ability to fundraise, and we continue to implement emergency protocols to protect our orangutans and staff from this deadly virus.

However, your ongoing support throughout the year has made it possible for us to survive this terrible pandemic. For that, we are forever grateful.

With your help, we will start doing limited orangutan releases again. And we are delighted to report that

we could recently transfer eight more graduated Forest School students to a pre-release island. Amongst them: Everybody's darling, Big Boy Beni, and our sweet Meryl (page 2/3).

To help Beni, Meryl and their friends on their next steps towards freedom, we use this year's End-of-Year-Appeal (page 3) to raise money for our orangutans who are currently on or waiting for their move to a pre-release island.

Also, in this edition, we would like to introduce you to the two new babies in our adoption program – Jeni and Monyo. And we would like you to meet Medi, one of our orangutan warriors in the Special Care Unit.

From all of us at BOS Australia, we are so appreciative of your support and for being a part of our family.

Please enjoy the reading – and have a happy and safe holiday season!

Tony Gilding, President



## Welcome Jeni and Monyo!

**Please meet the two new infants in our adoption program: Jeni and Monyo. Tragically, like most orangutans in our care, both have lost their mums.**

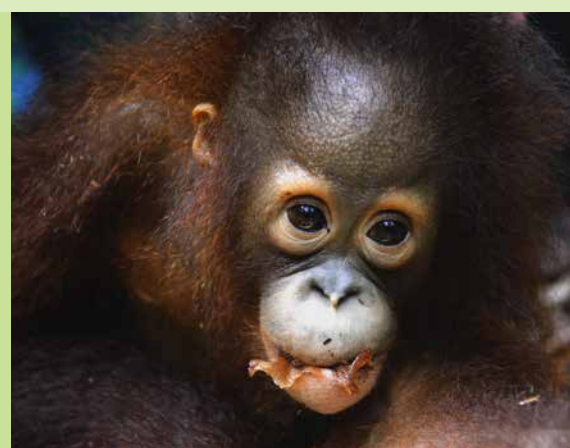
Jeni arrived at our Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre on 24 August 2020. Upon her arrival, the 10-month-old weighed only five kilograms. She had dry skin and wounds on the back of one of her legs. It was evident that she had experienced a traumatising time in captivity.

Thanks to our dedicated veterinarians and surrogate mothers, Jeni adapted quickly to her new environment. The brave and smart little female has recovered fully and is beginning to develop natural behaviours in the Forest School Nursery Group.

Monyo (right, bottom) arrived at our Nyaru Menteng centre on 4 November 2019. A local villager claimed to have found the six-month-old male stranded alone a week before being rescued.

Monyo underwent three months of quarantine with two other rescued infants before joining the Nursery Group. The three formed strong bonds with one another and the other orangutans. As a result, Monyo has grown more confident and can quickly adapt to new environments and faces.

If you would like to support Jeni and Monyo, you can now **symbolically adopt them**. You receive quarterly updates and become part of their journey back home to the Bornean rainforest.







## Jungle School stars have graduated!

**They made us laugh, and they made us cry. The stars of the awarded documentary series 'Orangutan Jungle School' gave us hope. That life can change from tragedy to triumph, with love and dedication from people like our veterinarians, technicians and babysitters. And with help from generous supporters like you.**

We couldn't be more excited to report that Big Boy Beni, Meryl, Obama, Susanne, Sura, Winey, Kejora and Liti are now living a semi-wild life on a pre-release island!

After completing Forest School, they are ready to tackle their final steps towards a free life in the Bornean rainforest, where they belong. What a success for the Orangutan Jungle School stars!

Transporting the eight orangutans to Badak Besar Island in the Salat Island Cluster in Central Kalimantan involved two trips. On 10 November, we moved Beni, Sura, Meryl and Winey; two days later, Obama, Kejora, Susanne and Liti. The river journey by speedboat took about four hours.

Our teams on both trips reported that once they had opened the transport boxes, all orangutans exited immediately to play around the feeding platform. We think we don't need to tell you who instantly aimed for the bananas. Our Big Boy Beni!

His escape to the food storage trying to pull off the biggest banana heist in Orangutan Jungle School history became a classic! As well as the moment he lost his milk privileges because he had gained too much weight. Or when a tree fell on poor Beni, and he broke his femur – who didn't suffer with him?

Then there is sweet Meryl, who is part of our adoption program, and, like Beni, posed for countless glamorous images and video shots that still warm our hearts.

But as the life of all orangutans in our care, theirs started in tragedy. We rescued Beni at two year's old in April 2016, suffering from severe dehydration, worms and a fever. Meryl came to us in early 2015, just eight months old, after being rescued from captivity. Her 'owner' had kept her in a small bag; she was tiny, weak, and couldn't move her swollen right arm.

We found Kejora chained to a door of a shed full of fertilisers and





pesticides at an oil palm nursery. And when we rescued Sura in 2013, three fingers on his left hand were cut off by a machete.

These are just a few traumatic experiences the new graduates went through before their lives changed, thanks to our amazing staff and your generous support.

It's a long journey from rescue to release, starting with health checks, treatments, quarantine and a lot of tender loving care. Nursery Group is next, where the orphans learn their first skills while playing, exploring and making friends.

In Forest School, the stakes are higher. Lessons in climbing, nest building, identifying safe and nutritious food sources, recognising predators – our surrogate mothers give it their all to teach the little students how to be wild orangutans and stimulate them to express natural behaviours.

Once they can master the basic survival skills and have grown into strong juveniles, sometimes too hard to handle for our babysitters, we move them to socialisation complexes. We temporarily house them in groups in large cages to practise their socialisation skills with new individuals until it's their turn to take the next big step on their journey to freedom: the transfer to a pre-release island.

Pre-Release islands are artificial, forested islands surrounded by water. Since orangutans don't swim, they are protected and can't escape. Our Post-Release-Monitoring technicians visit the islands daily, provide supplemental food, collect behavioural data, and intervene if one fails to adapt, gets injured, or falls sick.

When the students prove themselves capable foragers, adept climbers, innovative nest builders, and appropriately wary of humans, we know they are ready to return to their true forest homes.

If you are missing some of your favourite Orangutan Jungle School stars on the recent trips, don't worry. Taymur, Jelapat and Co. are almost there. They just need a little more practice before they can enjoy a semi-wild life and hone their skills on a pre-release island. We can't wait for that day to come!



## Support our island bunch!

If you would like to support our newly graduated orangutans on their final steps back home to the Bornean rainforest, please consider **giving to our End-of-Year Appeal**.

Your generous donation will help provide the necessary supplemental food, cover veterinary visits, post-release monitoring and routine daily patrols in the forest.

In addition, you help prepare the next generation of Forest School graduates for their future move to a pre-release island.

Thank you so much to all of you who have given already and made the recent transfers possible! We can only change the life of orangutans like Beni and Meryl because of you. And we will not stop until each eligible orangutan in our care can live a free life in the wild or a semi-free and species-appropriate life on a protected sanctuary island.

# HELLO, I AM MEDI



**Medi is one of our dedicated Orangutan Warriors. He works in the Special Care Unit (SCU) complex at our Samboja Lestari Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre in East Kalimantan.**

### How did your career at BOS begin?

I started my career as an animal care technician at Wanariset Samboja, the original location where the BOS Foundation was founded.

When working at Wanariset Samboja, I cared for several adult orangutans we categorise as 'un-releasable'. We cannot release them for various reasons, such as underdeveloped natural behaviours from prolonged captivity, chronic infectious diseases like tuberculosis and hepatitis, or physical disabilities.

### Do you have a special memory from that time?

Once, three orangutans escaped from their enclosures. They fled to the old area of Wanariset and quickly

moved far into the forest. After trekking for a while, I found them eating close to one another. They instantly recognised me and, to my surprise, were willing to return to their cages without protest. I think they easily complied because I had cared for them daily and built up strong relationships with them.

### Please tell our readers about your work in the SCU complex.

The SCU is a large complex that can accommodate around 50 orangutans in separate enclosures. BOS built it specifically to accommodate orangutans suffering from infectious and potentially deadly diseases, such as tuberculosis and ORDS (Orangutan Respiratory Disease Syndrome). The complex is located quite far from other facilities in Samboja Lestari.

As the supervisor of the complex, I witness first-hand the many challenges of orangutan conservation and the sad reality

that some orangutans, due to their conditions, will never get the chance to taste true freedom.

### Do your past experiences help you with your current work?

My time as a technician in Forest School and the Socialisation Complex taught me a lot. I learned how to feed orangutans, clean cages, manage teams and nebulise orangutans suffering from ORDS.

I am more focused now when interacting with orangutans. Working with BOS made me realise that this is not just an ordinary job but rather a calling to better appreciate nature and all its creatures.

### What are your aspirations for the future?

Hopefully, the work my friends and I are doing will produce the best results for the orangutans we care for. I believe we can all provide a better life for orangutans. So, let's do it together!



**BOS Australia**  
primates helping primates

**Borneo Orangutan Survival Australia**

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**Thank you for your continued support.**



## We love hearing from you!

We know you've been spreading the orangutan word, so why not tell us about what you're up to? Email [contact@orangutans.com.au](mailto:contact@orangutans.com.au) or post your photos online at [facebook.com/bosaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/bosaustralia) or [instagram.com/bosaustralia](https://www.instagram.com/bosaustralia)

## Can you help us?

Your donations provide food, shelter, protection, medicine and companionship for orangutans in our care. Visit [www.orangutans.com.au](http://www.orangutans.com.au) to help us help them.

Donations by cheque are payable to Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Australia at PO Box 3916, Mosman NSW 2088.

Make a one-off or regular payment via direct debit or by credit card either online or by calling us on +61 2 9011 5455. We now accept **Paypal** donations too! See the link on the homepage of our website.

Save paper and the environment and opt-in to receive our e-letter via email at [contact@orangutans.com.au](mailto:contact@orangutans.com.au)