

**You mentioned security – what security measures does Frisky’s take?**

Frisky’s is experienced...but realistic. Even at Frisky’s human safety and health is still our top priority. Concern for this is why we have continued education. At the very beginning of every tour, along with extra staff, the waivers signed and ID checks, all the safety precautions are gone over before the tour begins. In general, we have 10 additional methods of Security at Friskys. First, staff is at Frisky’s 24 hours a day. 2nd, we have surveillance cameras with alarms and recording cameras. 3rd, all enclosures are double or triple locked. 4th, all enclosure doors have 3 hinges. 5th, we have double pane Lexan windows and Lexan is used for tunnels and wherever glass would normally be used. 6th, we have double fencing. 7th, we have warning signs everywhere. 8th, all volunteers sign in and out, this includes a waiver, and work only in areas they have direct training for. 9th, property is fenced and marked with no trespassing signs. 10th, we have trees surrounding and bordering the property for visual blockage.

**How does Frisky’s educate the public?**

Besides the tours, we speak at Schools about the work we do here, and the students and G.T. students who become volunteers are able to share with others also. Tours, newsletters, our website and even the Zoning Hearings are just some of the many ways that the public is educated about Frisky’s. We also give private tours to Educational groups such as the Scouts and School groups. All the volunteers who complete training are sent home with a photo book and lots of educational information to share with family and friends. I ask them all the time if they have shown their photo album lately.

**Sandy D. asks “How can Frisky’s afford to take care of all their animals?”**

To begin with, this small farm is owned by my husband, Scott Robbins and me. Then there are donations. Supporters help financially and there are in-kind donations regularly. Every dollar and every piece of fruit that is donated helps us survive. And of course, let me say that there are no paid staff or volunteers here. All the volunteers are here because they want to make a difference, they are not paid, and we are not paid to work here. In fact, Scott pours about half his pay into the upkeep and expense of this property.

**What type of Donations are needed?**

Frisky’s has a Donation Wish List, a list of items that are needed to run the Sanctuary on a daily basis. This list is found on our Website, on Facebook and in every newsletter we send out. And I believe everyone knows that financial support is critical to our very survival.

**Scott R. wants to know what your pet peeves are.**

That’s easy, people who talk on cell phones in my presence... People who don’t use turn signals when driving ... People who don’t supervise their children when they’re out ... and my number one peeve is people who try to make pets out of wildlife they have found.

**The monkeys seem to be at the center of this Zoning battle. Eileen S. asked why are they so important in this case?**

Because they are exotic wildlife and people do not know a lot about exotics, we are unique and unfortunately, very misunderstood. People do not know enough about the monkeys to understand Frisky’s and the unknown creates fear in some. We have a very disgruntled neighbor, yet many visitors have said they think it would be a privilege to live next door. We are not running a zoo, but offering a sanctuary where these unwanted pets can become part of a large loving family for the rest of their days. We are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty, yet we are struggling to prove that we are innocent, that we are not a health or safety risk to anyone here at Frisky’s. We are not in denial, and we are not irresponsible. We are not taking in animals that we cannot handle. We only accept animals that we have the resources and education for and to be sure, we continue to put the safety and welfare of humans first.

**Last, but very important, a question from everyone who cares about you and the critters of Frisky’s – How are you handling this personally?**

Well, I feel challenged and hurt. I see my doctor twice a year for a complete physical and she’s amazed that my blood work and blood pressure are always perfect. But lately, I see the worry lines deepening on my face and my hair is thinning, I’m losing sleep and stressing over how a couple can cause us so much grief that I fear for our very existence. Our big question has always been....Why? Why would a family go out of their way to be mean and cause grief on purpose? But, let me finish by saying that as long as I can jump....I will continue to jump through all the hoops they put in front of me...I just want to continue taking care of the animals here at Frisky’s. I still believe humans are the most intelligent life on the planet, yet we can so easily be swayed from our natural instincts and experiences by just one person’s comment. Let’s not let a lifetime of experience and lessons be influenced by the nonsense around us. I have been doing wildlife for 40 years, primates for 21. Shouldn’t all these years and the history of the animal care at Frisky’s merit a little respect and acknowledgement?



**FRISKY’S WILDLIFE AND PRIMATE SANCTUARY, INC.**  
**FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND EDUCATION in JANUARY 2011**

**An interview by Kathleen Murphy, a Gifted and Talented student at Mt. Hebron High School**  
**Kathleen is interviewing Colleen Layton-Robbins, President and Founder of Frisky’s**

**Kerri R. noticed that the monkeys are getting a lot of attention in the local news.**

**Why does Frisky’s have monkeys?**

Frisky’s is here for three reasons, to rehabilitate wildlife, to rescue unwanted pets that can be adopted and to give sanctuary to the exotics, like monkeys, that were former pets but cannot be adopted out. The monkeys are given permanent sanctuary – a lifetime of care and even love, making them feel as though Frisky’s is their home and all the staff, volunteers and other animals around them become their family. We feel we are the answer to poor choices of pet ownerships.

**Do visitors really come to Frisky’s because of the monkeys?**

Actually, most people who visited Frisky’s didn’t know we had monkeys until the Howard County Zoning Hearings began. Now, they seem to be the center of attention at the Zoning Hearings and in the news. People may ask if they get to see the monkeys on the tour, but even with all the attention the monkeys are getting, people usually come to Frisky’s because they need wildlife rehabilitation or to drop off donations.

**Have visitors ever been allowed to play with the monkeys?**

Back when some of our monkeys were just babies, a young monkey was allowed outside the enclosures with supervision and there were some trusted friends who were allowed to come in contact with it. Due to one person’s irrational claims, only trained staff and volunteers come into personal contact with any of the monkeys now.

**Do you still allow the monkeys to play outside their enclosures?**

As I mentioned before, in the early years, when the monkeys we had were very young, we would allow one of them out of its enclosure. This young monkey was outside on the porch or in the back around the buildings and fences, but never really running free, there was always supervision. It was so young then that it depended upon us and wouldn’t go off on its own. We were always with it even when we did not have it by the hand or on a leash. We discontinued that practice in 1999, as it was getting more independent and now all the monkeys remain in their enclosures with the exception of when the Primate Physicals take place. Then they are tranquilized before moving to the infirmary. And as you know, there is always someone here on the property with them 24 hours a day.



**Bonnie H. was worried about the monkeys that are elderly or have special needs like diabetes. If the monkeys were ever moved to another sanctuary, taken away from their home and their family, how could that affect them?**

This topic is painful for me to address. Yes, quite a few of our monkeys are elderly and dependant upon us for the proper medications and care each day. The diabetic monkeys need to be kept stress free because their glucose spikes with stress. Most of our monkeys know Frisky’s as the only true home they have ever had. How many of us know an elderly person, a parent, or grandparent whose wish was simply to remain at home during their final years? Monkeys must feel the same way. This is their home. If they were ever taken away from Frisky’s, many of them might be so stressed out that their health would deteriorate, with others so attached that depression might be unavoidable. Monkeys and animals in general, much like humans, have been known to die from a “broken heart”. Would you do anything to give your family members the best quality of life possible up until their very last breath? Of course you would. I would too, and all the resident animals here at Frisky’s are my family, as well as half the staff too. Also, keep in mind – other sanctuaries are full too - and grouped – survival of the fittest.

**Roscoe F. heard rumors flying around that Frisky’s has taken in bears and a tiger; have you ever had these or other large dangerous animals at Frisky’s in the past?**

There have been many part truth rumors lately. We did have a baby bear at Frisky’s in 1988 for just a couple months, until her proper release could be arranged. We have never had a tiger. Frisky’s property size will not allow for us to sufficiently house such large animals, therefore, we will not accept any animals of this kind in the future either. Even though I wasn’t asked, let me offer to say that when pet baby alligators are seized, they are sometimes kept at Frisky’s temporarily and they are housed in aquariums until they can be properly moved to another facility.

**Are any of the animals that live at Frisky’s dangerous to the volunteers or visitors?**

No, they are not because we always continue reinforcing the two foot rule. None of us, including the animals like someone in our face. So this rule is both for safety and respect for the animals. We don’t trust them and some don’t trust us completely. We can all have unpredictable behavior at times. And again, only a few trained volunteers would be taking care of any cleaning and feeding around the monkeys. And as far as visitors go, they have even more safety features between them and the animals. There is an additional chained link fence between the visitors and the locked animal enclosures. No personal interaction is allowed.



**Kim W. asked “what happens to an orphaned or injured animal after I drop it off?”**

*They are rehabilitated to care for themselves so they can live the life they were meant to live.*

**What happens during rehabilitation?**

*To rehabilitate a wild animal means that animal is kept in a manner so it can live naturally in the wild, so that it can eventually be returned to nature. When the injured or orphaned animal is brought to Frisky’s, I immediately take it to the infirmary to see what condition it is in. Any injuries are attended to and the animal is kept until it is able to go back out. Health, weight, size and how the animal reacts to this change in its life all are deciding factors in the timing and ability for it to be released. The entire time the animal is at Frisky’s, it is treated as a wild animal, not a pet. Speaking around the animals and human contact of any sort are kept to a bare minimum, so they do not become friendly or trusting of humans (imprinting). We would like for them to live their life outside, free, and on their own as they were meant to be. Wildlife Rehabilitation is getting them back to what is normal for each animal.*



**Can Kim find out what happened to the animal she brought in?**

*Yes, I always assure the visitors who drop off the wild animals that they can call in a few days to check on the status of the animal. They are never allowed to visit wildlife after dropping it off. We don’t want imprinting.*

**Sarah B. was wondering what types of animals come to Frisky’s that can be adopted?**

**Why can’t all the animals at Frisky’s be adopted, like the monkeys?**

*There is a difference between exotic wildlife and exotics. State, county and different covenants determine what exotic wildlife is and what is acceptable as pets. Such as, in certain parts of Prince Georges County you cannot own ferrets and in other areas of the same County you can. Here at Frisky’s we offer many adoptable animals. Rabbits, chinchillas, sugar gliders, hamsters, gerbils, ferrets, exotic birds, and hoof stock such as goat, sheep, donkeys, llamas, this is just to name a few. Monkeys are not adoptable here in MD., and more states are changing their laws to be included in this non-pet primate issue.*

**What would Sarah have to do to adopt an animal?**

*She must have species specific experience and be willing to offer the animal a lifetime home. There is an adoption form and a fee that is a quarter to a third of what the pet would sell for in pet stores. If she does not have the experience needed, she can always volunteer at Frisky’s to learn to care for that animal.*

**Linda A. had multiple questions about the driveway and property.**

**Who owns the trees alongside the driveway and why are they protected?**

*The original owner planted those evergreens in 1950 and her wish was for them to remain at the welcoming entrance to the properties. So, she legally protected them, in 1981, declaring that the 10’ drive with easement on each side would remain intact with the trees, with both homeowner parties agreeing before any trees could be removed.*

**Why did you allow your neighbor, Mr. Wyekoff, to cut down some of the trees?**

**Was it because they were on his side of the driveway?**

*I didn’t give him permission. By the time I saw it happening and got down to the driveway to try to stop them, they had already taken down four trees. The law says that they have to replace them, but seriously, how do you replace an eighty foot high tree? My heart was broken at the sight of the trees down, but they don’t care.*



**Who maintains the driveway?**

*Frisky’s maintains the driveway all year round, plus we remove fallen tree limbs when needed, plow the snow and take care of any ice. In the event of heavy snows, we have a contractor on call. My husband Scott maintains the entire property. Like me, Scott never has any time off. He works a ten hour day, five days a week as a mechanic and welder for a contracting company. Then he comes home and helps with whatever needs to be done. On the weekends his days are spent entirely working on the property, taking trash to the landfill, cleaning up the grounds, making necessary repairs, as I said before, pretty much whatever needs to be done. He does all the cooking for the two of us and even cooks for all the animals on the weekends. Some days it’s hard for him to find anytime to spend with the animals, or with me, his wife.*

**Why did you choose this location for Frisky’s.**

*I feel we all need and deserve sanctuary. This is a nice area. I searched a long time before finding this property. I wanted to stay in Howard County, yet I wanted the property to be off the road and private for us, yet easy for the public to find us when needed. We wanted this to be win, win, win. This property belongs to me and my husband, Scott Robbins, this is our home It is a sanctuary for animals in need, and a place for people to bring in the injured and displaced baby animals in need of rehabilitation. When we moved here, zoning said this area had to have 3 or more acres per parcel, so we were sure that we would always be surrounded by small farms like ours. Now we find ourselves next to a housing development. As we said before, we are not in denial, life changes and we adapt.*

**Colleen, we know you’ve been asked many, many times, by many different people “Since you don’t take a paycheck for all the work and care you give, why do you do it? ...and why do you do it full time?”**

*It is very rewarding to be needed and even more rewarding to know how to give exactly what is needed...yet, I strive to learn how we can give and do even more.*

*As for why I do it full time, it’s because the animals need care full time. Everybody I meet here loves animals and we have many volunteers and supporters to help. Those who truly want to help, always find a way.*

**Robin H. remembers that you helped the neighbors, the Wyckoff’s, move in next door and believes they came to visit several times, even bringing out-of-state relatives to see the animals, is that right?**

*Yes, that’s correct.*

**What happened to turn this all around?**

*I’m not completely positive. But once I did have to tell him that he was hanging around too much. He seemed to be here so often while I was showing animals to be adopted. He just kept coming over. I asked if he needed anything and he said he was just hanging out. I told him not even my family can just hang out. I’m not sure if that had anything to do with it, only he knows the reasoning behind this direction he has taken.*

**Regarding the changes made to the property over the last ten years, Peggy C. wants to know why there were new sheds and run-ins added?**

*We put up new sheds to have protected areas for supplies, so that Frisky’s property would look neat, clean and be organized. The run-ins were put into our pastures to give animals a place to get out of the weather when needed. These sheds did not need building permits. Without the sheds, we would have lawnmowers, tools, hay, animals, donations, feed, bedding and smaller enclosures all exposed to the weather, the neighbors and visitors.*

**There is a large fenced-in pasture at the front of Frisky’s, why does it remain empty?**

*Frisky’s used to keep horses in the front pasture, and we’ve had a donkey and a llama also, but right now it is empty. It is no longer the quiet sanctuary it once was. With the new development going up around us, there have been construction noises starting very early in the morning and continuing throughout the day, which is very stressful for all the animals.*

**While applying to become a volunteer, Janice E. wanted to know the following:**

**How can I become a volunteer?**

*Anyone interested can find an application on our website.*

**What does Frisky’s look for in a volunteer?**

*They must be fast, efficient, reliable, trustworthy, dependable and can see a task through. They must want to be a nurse, a maid and waitress whenever needed*

**What takes place during the 80 hour training for the volunteers?**

*Familiarity for them and the animals. Orientation includes learning where everything is, knowing what is expected of you, from me, the staff and the animals. I need to see if you can complete chores with ease and comfort. Learning security measures, such as making sure all gates and doors are locked after passing through. Learning safety practices and emergency procedures. At the end of the 80 hours of training, they are evaluated to see if they are a good fit with Frisky’s.*

**Will I be given a choice in what kind of work I want to do?**

*During the evaluation, the volunteers are asked what area they were the most comfortable in and the most uncomfortable in. They are also asked what area they would prefer to work in. We have volunteers that only want to do cleaning. Then we have volunteers who prefer to work with chinchillas, gerbils, rabbits and the other adoptable animals. Everyone is different and treated so.*

**What interaction do the volunteers have with the different animals?**

*We delegate responsibilities to responsible people, not just to anybody. Each volunteer is treated as an individual and given duties that he/she can take responsibility for. This may mean cleaning out papers in the bottom of a bird cage, sweeping floors, or a volunteer could be responsible for the feeding, watering and exercising of rabbits. I take most of the responsibility for the daily care of the wildlife and the monkeys. The remainder of the chores is delegated as need be.*



**What’s the hardest thing to teach the volunteers?**

*For the volunteers, I’d have to say the hardest thing is not talking around the wildlife. But the most difficult thing to get through to everybody else, like the public, is that we are here for the animals – they are not here for us!*

**Matt D. asks “How often are the tours given and what are the visitors able to see and learn?”**

*We have between four to six tours a year. Our Director of Community Outreach schedules the tours and we post the schedule for the public on our website, on Facebook and in our newsletters. They are shown the difference between adoptable exotic animals and exotics that need sanctuary. They are given information on caring for injured and misplaced wildlife and told how they can properly transport the wildlife to Frisky’s if they ever need to.*

**Why does Frisky’s have tours?**

*To educate the public. For example, if the public learns why they shouldn’t try to make pets out of wild animals, then it makes our work easier. Hopefully this will help them become responsible adults who go on to teach others not to make pets from animals that should be left in the wild. The public needs to be educated to make changes in the way that animals are treated. We want them to know and understand what we do here at Frisky’s for all the animals. Safety on the tours is very important. We take photos and check IDs of each visitor before the tour begins. Each visitor must sign a waiver. We talk to them to educate them before we go near any of the animals. We find that 15 is a number we can handle at one time, this includes the visitors, the tour guide and at least one other volunteer. We need to be able to properly supervise everyone and not stress the animals. We are always very clear that we are not a pet shop or a zoo. Frisky’s is our home, mine, Scott’s and the animals, and we all need our privacy respected.*