



Generosity from supporters like you aided in Valeria's survival.



In July, 2010, Gordian a 15 year old male Coquerel's sifaka was paired with a 12 year old female, Antonia. The pair was released to free range, and all believed that an infant would be arriving soon. But the breeding seasons came and went, and each year our hopes were dashed by the announcement of the same sad news: Antonio was not pregnant. By the summer of 2014, we were starting to realize that Antonia at 16 years of age, was passing out of her prime breeding years, and then disaster struck! On the morning of June 13th, Gordian was discovered with a broken leg!

Initially, DLC Vets fashioned a simple splint which normally would have worked just fine, except Gordian kept tearing it off! Eventually, we had to turn to the specialists at the NCSU School of Veterinary Medicine. On July 1st Gordian was operated on, and returned from Raleigh the proud bearer of a sifaka proof, yet heavy and cumbersome, metal splint which, in effect, was bolted to his broken leg. By the end of July, Gordian and Antonia were back together, and although Gordian could move around the cage well with his clumsy splint, he could not jump, and all figured that this breeding season, which peaks mid-summer for sifaka, would be another bust.

But a near miracle occurred, somehow Gordian and Antonia managed to breed despite the presence of the heavy brace on his leg, and in early November the Vets announced the joyous news that Antonia was pregnant! From that point on, based on a history of two problematic pregnancies, Antonia was very closely monitored. On the morning of 28th of January, Antonia's keeper noticed that she seemed to be in labor. Over the next several hours, everyone took turns watching her progress, but none more so than

the attending Veterinarian, Dr. Bobby Schopler. Sifaka labor is generally short and sweet, with infants arriving in an hour or two. By 4:00pm, five hours after labor had started, Antonia has still not delivered and she was looking very uncomfortable.

Dr Schopler had seen enough, and ordered that Antonia be brought to the DLC operating room for a Caesarian. By 4:30pm, a crew of Veterinary professionals including Dr Schopler, our Vet Tech and two interning Vet Students were suited up to perform the operation. At approximately 6:50pm, an elated Dr. Schopler handed the alive and kicking infant to Vet student Gaenor Griffiths for her to dry and clean. It soon became apparent that the operation had been a smashing success, and Gordian and Antonio were the proud parents of a thriving 107g female infant!

In a day or two, Antonia and the infant (soon to be named Valeria) were moved from the Vet recovery room to a rolling cage where they had visual access to Gordian. Valeria was weighed every day for the first week of life. She was gaining weight, but Antonia was struggling to recover from her operation: it turns out she had a relatively minor infection. The Vets started treatment and by Valentine's Day, Antonia was back to having a normal appetite, and Valeria was beginning to thrive.

On Feb 18th, the slow process of introducing Antonia and Valeria to Gordian began. Intros lasted one or two hours a day at first, and Gordian slowly and steadily gained the trust of both infant and mom. Finally, he was allowed to gently pull the infant off of Antonia, onto his belly for some gentle father daughter grooming and general bonding. By March 2nd everything in the group was so peaceful that Gordian, Antonia and Valeria were allowed to remain together overnight. Gordian and Antonia have proven to be gentle and attentive parents to Valeria, and thanks to our amazing Veterinary Department, the family is thriving! - David Haring, DLC Registrar/Photographer
