When they’re not roaming the woods beyond, chimps retired from a laboratory enjoy life outside cages at Louisiana’s Chimp Haven sanctuary.

Following an HSUS campaign and an Institute of Medicine finding that chimps are not necessary for most research, the National Institutes of Health announced it would retire most of the approximately 470 federally owned chimps from research facilities. The first began arriving at Chimp Haven in early 2013. “These animals were previously names on a spreadsheet,” says Kathleen Conlee, HSUS vice president for animal research issues. “Seeing them look up at the sky, without having bars over their heads, you can tell they feel relaxed, and they don’t feel like they’re in danger. It’s been amazing to see.”

Later in the year, we successfully lobbied Congress to pass a law so that NIH can continue to invest in chimpanzee sanctuary care (keeping them in labs costs more). And in response to a petition from The HSUS and others, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service proposed protecting captive chimpanzees under the Endangered Species Act, which until now has covered only wild chimps.

To raise awareness and money for retired chimps, The HSUS held a chimpanzee art contest and donated $25,000 to six participating sanctuaries. More than 27,000 votes were cast for the best chimp painting. Jane Goodall served as judge. “All the art was beautiful and unique,” she said. “Just like the chimpanzees!”

Rounded up in a herd, the Bureau of Land Management claimed was trespassing on federal property, Sebastian might have been sent to slaughter. Fortunately, he was rescued and now lives at the Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch, operated by HSUS affiliate The Fund for Animals. In 2013, opposition by The HSUS prevented U.S. horse slaughter plants from reopening, keeping many other horses alive. Just as several plants were on the verge of resuming operations, we filed a lawsuit that temporarily blocked USDA inspections, meaning plants couldn’t operate. Congress later restored a provision to prohibit spending by the USDA on inspections of horse slaughter plants in fiscal 2014.

The HSUS also won victories in its battle to protect Tennessee walking horses from the practice of soring, or using caustic chemicals, chains, tall platform shoes and other cruel techniques to induce pain and force animals to lift their legs high in a gait that wins competitions. A bill to strengthen current federal law against soring gathered more than 300 co-sponsors in the House and Senate, and HSUS attorneys convinced a court in Texas to uphold mandatory minimum penalties for such abuses.

Until recently, violators have been largely unpunished. That’s changing since an HSUS undercover investigation led to the conviction of famed trainer Jackie McConnell for conspiring to show and transport sored horses. “That case was the first domino,” says Keith Dane, HSUS vice president of equine protection, “and it will set in motion a cascade of reforms.”