

TreeHouse Droppings



Bill admiring an orphaned possum



Orphaned (Red) Fox & friend



Gary & "Chill" Barred Owl



Orphaned Peregrine Falcon



Buddy at Blessing of the Animals



Barred Owl (post bath)

In this issue: Director of Operations Update, It Took A Village, Retired!, The Whistle Pig, Interns, Eagles, Volunteers Needed, Seneca the Coyote, Aspen, Owlfest, Education Review, Go Wild! Summer Camp, In Memory Of, Fundraising, Acknowledgements, Gift Shop, Guardian Program, Information, Memberships, Explorers

30+ years of giving back to the wild

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Cheryl Pride &
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TreeHouse Wildlife Center employs
**three full-time, and
*three part-time staff members.

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Social Network

Caitlyn Campbell & Rachael Heaton

Together We Can Accomplish Anything! by Rachael Heaton

TreeHouse Wildlife Center was founded in 1979 by Adele Moore and since then we have grown from a backyard project to a full-blown wildlife rehabilitation and education center. Every year we face new challenges and we do our best to rise up and meet them. The year of 2017 proved to be a very challenging year for the TreeHouse staff and volunteers. I would like to highlight some of these challenges and show my appreciation to our amazing group of dedicated staff and volunteers. Without them, we would not have made it this far!

I'll start off with highlighting our maintenance volunteers, headed by Ray & Robin Riefle who through their blood, sweat, and tears kept TreeHouse standing this year. It all started when it became clear early this year that our raptor complex, (our 98'x60' flight enclosure behind the facility), was beginning to slowly fall apart due to wearing down of the structure as well as some damage being caused by the birds themselves. Much of the lattice work throughout the building was cracking and breaking and the large doors between the 16 enclosures were sagging. This led to incidences where volunteers and rehab staff would discover birds moving between enclosures with other birds they should not be with! On top of this, we experienced an onslaught this year of weasel attacks. What on earth can a weasel do, you say? Believe it or not, weasels are very intelligent and ruthless predators. They can squeeze through extremely small spaces, have strong jaws, and can take down a bird of prey if given the chance. Unfortunately, a bird recovering the strength in its wings in an outdoor enclosure can be a perfect target. A decision was made amongst the rehab staff that the flight cage was no longer safe for our patients and emergency repairs were needed. Our awesome new fundraising coordinator, Kelly, sent out grant applications for emergency funding to help with the costs of repairs.

New sheets of smaller lattice were ordered and one by one our maintenance volunteers, led by Ray, replaced just about every single lattice sheet in our raptor complex. Ray, with his expertise, found a new way to attach the lattice and give it more support to keep it from breaking as much in the future. The crew also repaired all of the doors throughout the flight cage, so they were no longer sagging and provided extra support to keep that problem from happening again. This took countless hours. Months and months of work in all kinds of weather. Thanks to their dedication, the raptor complex is now usable again and the rehab staff have been able to start cycling birds out for release again. Work and repairs are not complete however. Due to the weasel attacks, it has been determined that the entire raptor complex needs to be wrapped in a firm mesh to keep the weasels out. It has also been determined that parts of the roof will need to be replaced. This is currently where the maintenance crew is at on the raptor complex repairs. This has been a costly project, but it would have been even more so if our maintenance volunteers did not give up their free time to repair our largest rehabilitation structure.



Robin and Melvin

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On top of repairing the flight cage, other maintenance issues were going on throughout the center that also needed attention. In July, for instance, a massive storm raged through our area and knocked down one of our giant pine trees on the west side of our property by our fox enclosure. Unfortunately, the tree crashed on top of our fox enclosure, destroying the roof and falling into the enclosure. Luckily, our foxes were all okay and could be housed on one side of the duplex enclosure while repairs were being made. The roof above our main office on our building was also beginning to cave in and had to be replaced. Long story short, we felt like things were falling apart or getting destroyed by events outside of our control!



Storm Damaged Fox Cage

Thanks as well to Bill Crawford, our landscaper who keeps everything looking beautiful. Also thanks to a group of volunteers who started the unending task of clearing the property of honeysuckle.

Thanks to the support from the community, to Kelly's quick emergency grants, and the hard work of our maintenance volunteers, we are still standing!



Construction Crew & Landscaping Members & Volunteers: Ray & Robin Riefle, Melvin McCann, Charlie Deutsch, Rod & Margaret Davis, Steve Yordy, Mike Fessler, John Beehler, John Munsterman, Nicole & Mickey Martin, Jeff Capps, Ken Diekemper, Kelly & Bill Vandersand, Dave Stevenson, Gary Surgeon, Bill Crawford, Friends of Lake Lou Yaeger, Shawn McKaig

Kelly Vandersand, Ray Riefle, & John Munsterman

While all of the above was going on, we were still admitting animals on a nearly daily basis. In fact, this year was another record breaking year for wildlife admissions at our center. I'm typing this in November and we are well over 800 animals for the year at this point with more expected to come as the migratory birds are flying in for the winter. With record numbers of animals coming in plus a backup on birds going out due to the construction work on the flight enclosure, and our rehab staff and volunteers were completely swamped. Every single hospital cage was filed with a patient and we ended up having to bring in new hospital cages to help support the load of animals in our center. Pam and our rehab staff easily worked 10 to 12 hour days, sometimes as long as 16 hours, ensuring that all of the animals were getting fed and that their enclosures were cleaned.

On top of this, our nursery incubators both gave out around the same time, leaving TreeHouse having to find other ways to keep small baby animals warm until they could

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be replaced. We launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise the funds for new incubators and our community came through, providing all the funding we needed to order two new incubators! They have been working wonderfully and we want to thank the public for supporting our center and helping to save the lives of the countless animals coming through our doors.



We at TreeHouse also want to commend the rehab staff for all their hard work and dedication to ensure that the animals got the best care possible given the circumstances. Finally, we want to thank the rehab volunteers who committed to coming out regularly for their shifts to help out. There was a big sigh of relief once the flight cage was open for use again and the birds could start moving outside and then back to the wild!

Despite the hardships that we experienced this year, our center made quite a few advancements. Staff members, Cait and Rachael, launched a brand-new website (www.treehousewildlifecenter.com) that is easy to keep up-to-date and mobile friendly. Since its launch, we've increased donations from our wish list, as well as membership, volunteer and intern applications. Rachael and Katie Heaton worked to obtain a grant for a much needed new outbuilding that our maintenance volunteers can use as a workshop.

Cait, our Director of Education, revamped our educational programming to provide more options and experiences for groups visiting our center. She also worked hard to improve our education center which now includes a brand-new admissions desk where Cait or volunteers can assist the public when they come inside. Keep an eye out for information about programs she is offering to the public throughout the year for chances to learn more about our native wildlife and see them up close.

Kelly, our new Fundraising Coordinator, has also been hard at work on projects around the center. Through her fundraising efforts in the last year, we now have new side walks around our enclosures. Again, she helped gather emergency funding for enclosure repairs as well as funding for food for our animals! Likely one of her most complicated accomplishments this year was coordinating her first Owl Fest, our largest event of the year, and it was a huge success!



Kelly Vandersand, Fundraising Coordinator

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We also want to recognize our volunteer coordinator, Marcie, for hosting our new volunteer orientations this year and coordinating the volunteer schedules for animal care. Through her efforts, we have gained many new members of the TreeHouse family who have helped us in all areas including animal care, education, and maintenance.



Finally, we have to commend our office manager, Libby, for her efforts over the last couple of years to turn our tiny little gift shop into a much larger and exciting store where everyone can find something. This is the first year where we received phone calls from visitors asking if we had certain items in stock. If you haven't been out recently to see it, we recommend you come by and check it out. Keep in mind that all sales in our gift shop support our center and the animals we care for.

Sometimes, it's hard to believe how far our center has come. We still have a lot of growing to do and a lot of wishes we would like to fulfill. The TreeHouse family wants to thank all of you for your support over the years to help us reach our goals so that we can continue to provide better care to our injured or orphaned wildlife. Thank you!



Juvenile Mississippi Kite

We received many calls concerning displaced wildlife following the July storms, many of which were juvenile species that took some long tumbles from their nests. We gave these youngsters a quiet place to rest and recoup as we tended to their specific needs and injuries. Among the usual storm-related squirrel and raptor orphans, TreeHouse was shocked to receive this young fellow, the first of its kind that we have admitted since our founding year of 1979: a **M i s s i s s i p p i K i t e !**

Mississippi Kites are the sky's aerialists, gracefully sailing on the wing in search of large insects to eat. Mississippi Kites are a threatened species in Illinois. They are an uncommon summer migrant to our area, where they will rear their chicks before making their winter migration to South America. This young bird looks nothing like the sleek pearl-gray adult it will one day be, but nonetheless he is as spunky as we expect in this type of species.

IT TOOK A VILLAGE (and a boat, and a motor, and a trap, and a net)

Water birds are notoriously difficult to capture, especially when swimming is still an option for an injured bird. Water means safety for many avian species, but frustration for rescuers without a boat! Many times we have to wait for the right opportunity at the right time to go out and capture a bird, and sadly sometimes that opportunity never comes. But today we're featuring this amazing rescue by some dedicated neighbors near Old Valmeyer who stopped at nothing to help a pelican in need.

For months this American White Pelican's wing was tangled in a duck decoy and weight, grounded from flight but still able to swim. A group of good Samaritans, John Riechmann, Gayle McCarthy, David Wagner, Jeff Sukup, Dawn Eatherton, and the Henerfauths, plus TreeHouse volunteers Cheryl Pride, and Linda Whittingham banded together and made it their mission to help this pelican who was in desperate need of assistance! They literally worked day and night and came close several times but could not quite catch the pelican. One attempt even included an outing in a paddle boat equipped with a trolling motor. Ultimately the motor died and they ended up having to paddle for an hour to get back home.

Finally they were able to carefully net the bird and saved its life! The pelican was immediately transported to TreeHouse where it received medical attention. We are unbelievably grateful to all those involved, and they deserve all the recognition for their dedication to this patient.

Have you ever seen an American White Pelican before? These birds are currently migrating through our area to their southern overwintering grounds. With their impressive nine foot wingspan, they are a sight to see when gracefully flying over the Mississippi River. Head down to the river to catch a glimpse of these amazing birds before they leave us for the year.



Note the decoy attached to his right wing



RETIRED? by Judy Neiman

I quit my job as a cartographer at the Defense Mapping Agency in St. Louis after 20 years. I decided 20 years was long enough to do the same job. That was February of 1988. I was looking for something to occupy some time when I found a flier at Hawthorne Animal Hospital looking for volunteers at a wildlife center and decided it would be interesting.

Now suddenly it is 30 years later. When I started at 40 years of age the work did not seem that hard and I would often spend six hours at the center. But now at 71 years of age those buckets of chicken and those buckets of water have suddenly become a lot heavier, the hills a lot steeper, the cold a lot colder and the heat much hotter.

So I decided to retire but as Adele can attest to, retiring from TreeHouse is not easy. I still rehabilitate about 30-40 adult songbirds at home and 50-90 orphaned ducklings. Duck season starts in the beginning of may and does not end until late September.



Wood Ducks are kept at my home until they are ready to release at nine weeks of age. The mallards are kept for two weeks until they need to be transferred go to a larger cage at the old TreeHouse facility where Adele cares for them until release. The cage is divided into 2 areas — open and totally enclosed. The ducklings are kept in the enclosed area because ducklings without a mother are not waterproof and may die of hypothermia on a cold May night, so they need to stay dry and out of cold winds. Once they're waterproofed a sliding door is opened where they can access the open area of the cage.

This arrangement has been working for me this past year. I can still do a little rehabbing yet still have time to enjoy my rocking chair.

Thanks to TreeHouse for 29 years of a learning experience.

Editor's note: And thank you Judy for your experience and dedication to our webbed-footed friends! By our estimation Judy has cared for over 2,500 ducks, and untold numbers of injured songbirds.

THE WHISTLE PIG

Working in the field of wildlife rehabilitation, you often get the chance to get up close and see an animal in a whole new light. Take groundhogs for example. Groundhogs, also known as whistle pigs or woodchucks, are not the most liked animal among humankind. They're a giant rodent with big strong teeth that like to dig holes in your yard and destroy your landscape. This is the view that most people have of these curious animals. Yes, it is true that they are a big rodent and yes, they also have strong teeth. Their teeth are built that way, so they can crack open nuts or eat bark off sticks. They also dig holes in the ground, but they do not do this for fun! The groundhog is just trying to make a home for itself and its family, just like we like to have a home for us and our family. Digging in your landscape? It could be just looking for food! After all, the groundhog can't just walk into a grocery store like we can. Wouldn't that be a sight!

The disdain created by our competition with these animals for resources can change when people take the time to get to know them. Wildlife rehabbers get the rare chance to work one on one with these animals and get to know them on a personal level. This year, the staff and volunteers at TreeHouse got an even rarer glimpse into their lives when we admitted a nursing mother and her baby. Let's rewind a little bit first. Before this happened, our hospital had admitted two young orphaned groundhogs. Have you never seen a baby groundhog? They are very cute and look like miniature adults! They can have the same defensive



attitude as adults too. These two orphans were from different areas, one from Alton and the other from Elsay. They were lucky enough to come in just a couple days apart. After all, it's traumatic to be orphaned and then also scary to be raised by yourself with no others of your own kind. The two were being bottle fed at our center with efforts being taken to make sure that they did not become acclimated to people. As we said before, people don't always like groundhogs. It would not be good to release a groundhog into the wild that thinks it's perfectly safe to walk up to a person!

Just a couple days later, we received another call. This time, it was about a groundhog who had been hit by a car while she was carrying her baby across the road in Collinsville. The finders safely contained the mother and baby and took them to their home before calling TreeHouse Wildlife Center. Our Director of Operations happened to be in the area when this occurred and went to the rescuers house to pick them up. The mother was in a box and it was obvious she was not doing well. She seemed so unaware of her surroundings that the rescuers didn't even feel comfortable putting her baby in with her. After some observations, our Director determined that it was safe to put the baby back with its mother before transporting the two back to her house. The baby was very relieved and began to nurse. However, work was not complete. Groundhogs do not often have just one baby. Could there be others? Once finding the exact location of where the mother groundhog had been hit, we investigated the grounds around the

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road. If you're familiar with the Collinsville area, the burrow was off Illinois Route 157 not too far from Walmart. It is a very busy piece of five lane road! Believe it or not, we found the burrow entrance and the back door, also called the plunge hole.

A groundhog burrow is a very impressive network of tunnels and rooms. It is so extensive that it is estimated that the groundhog moves about 700 pounds of dirt to create it. The sleeping chamber of the burrow is found below the frost line where they can safely hibernate during the winter. The burrow may also contain a separate nursery chamber, a waste chamber, and even just a turn-around chamber. Needless to say, once we discovered the burrow entrance, there wasn't much we could do to get any of the remaining babies out if they were hiding down in there unless we wanted to dig out a crater. We sat at the entrance for a while to listen and even tried playing different groundhog calls. We did get a response once, but it was from another adult groundhog. We believe this could have been the father or perhaps another relative, but this groundhog did not show itself and did not respond more than once. After a couple hours of sitting in the dark, we made the decision to check on the burrow routinely in case any remaining offspring decided to come out looking for their mother.

The next morning, the mother and her baby were transported to TreeHouse Wildlife Center. After a thorough examination, it was determined that the mother groundhog had suffered head trauma and that the best care for her would be cage rest with food and water available. Her baby was remarkably healthy and had no injuries. Her and her baby were set up in one of the hospital enclosures where she could rest and safely raise her young one. We then had another thought. This is a nursing mother. Would she take in the two orphaned groundhogs? Well... at that time she was a little bit out of it. Maybe she won't notice that they're not hers? We gave her some time to settle in and then we decided to carefully introduce the two orphans to her. They were just slightly bigger than her baby but not so much that we were worried they would bully him. One of them took to their new mom straight away and started to nurse. The other was a bit more unsure and decided it would rather hide under the towel and wait for us to go away.

Over the next few hours and then the next few days, we observed them to make sure all was going well. Eventually, the other orphan took to its new mom and the new little family would sleep all curled up together. The nursing mother was slowly improving and did not seem to mind the two orphans what so ever. She treated them just like she treated her own baby! We were hoping she could recover quick enough that perhaps we could safely return her to her burrow, so she can raise the young groundhogs in the wild. Unfortunately, her recovery was very slow going and for weeks she was wobbly on her feet. It was not safe for her in the wild and she would be no good to these three babies if she was killed. We continued to monitor her den site in the wild and after about a week, one of the other babies was spotted sitting outside the burrow. However, as soon as our volunteer approached, it shot back into its home! It appeared that they were doing okay. They were just old enough that they could eat solid food and perhaps with guidance from the other adult groundhog that was hanging around, they were going to be just fine. Eventually, we determined that things were going well there and

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decided to leave them be at the burrow and focus our attention to getting the nursing mother back on her feet.

Over the next several weeks, we were able to witness the three little baby groundhogs growing up under the care of this injured mother. Despite her head trauma, she did her very best to raise these little ones. She ate all the time, drank plenty of water, and slept while the three nursed from



her. Like most mothers, there were days where she just seemed exhausted by the three babies sleeping sprawled out on her back or just dragging them around while they were trying to nurse. The little ones played together and absolutely loved to eat the fresh greens that were brought in by the staff and volunteers. Further into summer, it was decided that the babies were big enough to be moved outside into a larger space where they could acclimate to being outdoors. The mother was still a little wobbly on her feet but much better, so we moved her with them. Once outside, the little family became quite wild. Any time a person would walk by their enclosure, they would all run and hide! This is exactly what a wildlife rehabber wants to see.

Outside, the mother seemed to finally make a full recovery. She was able to run into hiding when a person walked by just like the young ones. She was seen foraging for food and maintaining the provided den box where they slept. After a few more weeks of being in the outdoor enclosure, it was time to start talking about their release. Should we return the mother to the original burrow with her three now grown children? Or should we find a safer place to let them go? The original burrow was off a very busy road. There was a good chance that she could get hit there again. Her three young ones had not grown up next to a road, so they definitely would have to learn fast or get hit. We decided at that point to release the four groundhogs into a remote area that was much safer. Luckily for them, TreeHouse has a friend with a lot of property who absolutely loves groundhogs. He has a creek going right through his land which provides a good water source and he has an old shed with lots of dirt that he thought would be a perfect groundhog home. We packed up the four groundhogs and drove them to this man's property. We hiked out to this old shed, using his makeshift bridge to cross the creek, and turned the groundhogs loose. They all immediately ran under the shed! It was the perfect home for the little family that had a rough start. Now they are safe on a property far from busy roads with a friendly person that leaves fruit out for them by their little shed. We love happy endings!

Editor's note: The name Whistle Pig comes from the fact that when alarmed, a groundhog will emit a high pitched whistle as a warning to the rest of the colony.



Alayna Blum, Ball State University Indiana, Junior



Chris Neukranz, Oklahoma State University, Junior



Rachel Angles, Illinois State University, Sophomore



Madeleine Kaleta, SUNY Oswego, Sophomore

Not pictured
Manasseh Ingram,
University of Missouri
St. Louis, Senior



Kailynne Cruthis, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville



Sara Vettleson-Trutza, Waldorf University, Iowa, Sophomore

INTERN CLASS OF 2017



Rachel Halter, University of Findlay, Junior

EAGLES, EAGLES, EAGLES

2017 proved to be the year of the eagle at TreeHouse—admitting seven so far this year:

Eagle #1 from Venice, IL, flew into a power line, fractured wing

Eagle #2 from Dupo, IL, fractured wing

Eagle #3 from Michael, IL, fractured leg

Eagle #4 from Carlyle, IL, missing talon

Eagle #5 from Carlyle, IL, shoulder injury, emaciated

Eagles #6 & 7 from Litchfield, IL from injuries sustained in a fight.



Retired and looking for something to do one day a week or one day a month?



Oh, so you're not excited about working with animals?
Not a problem!

TreeHouse needs volunteers for the following jobs:

Cage construction, general maintenance, mechanics,
light housekeeping, greeters, landscapers, cooks for
workdays.

Call 466-2990 for details



Mel & Ray building
Emry's eagle nest.

SENECA THE COYOTE

Here at TreeHouse Wildlife Center, our primary goal is to release injured and orphaned wildlife back into the wild where they can live out the rest of their lives as nature intended. Unfortunately, this is not always an option. Sometimes we see animals come in with injuries so severe that the best option is euthanasia. Other times, the animal has an injury that would prevent it from performing necessary tasks to live in the wild but would not prevent it from having a comfortable life in captivity. Every time an animal comes in, our wildlife rehabbers must assess that animal and determine what is best. If the animal is not releasable, but has the temperament to live comfortably in captivity, the next challenge is to find permanent placement. While we do house many permanent residents at TreeHouse, we cannot keep every animal and so must look elsewhere in the hopes of finding a permanent home.

This is the story of one such animal that we admitted in 2016. In August of last year, we received a phone call from the Bi-state Wildlife Hotline that one of their facilities located in southern Illinois had flooded out. They had four young coyote pups whose enclosure was filled with water, they had nowhere to move them. They wanted to know if we could possibly take them to our center to get them out of their flooded enclosure and finish out their rehabilitation. Luckily, we had room at our facility and, so we readily agreed to take in the four pups. One of our transport volunteers from the Belleville area took the call from us, hopped into his truck, and drove down to the flooded facility. He packed the coyotes into crates in the back of his truck and then drove them up to Fairview Heights where he met with TreeHouse staff who could transport them the rest of the way. The muddy pups were quite the stinky bunch and the ride was scary for them, but all was well once they arrived at our center.

Our coyote enclosure is set up as a duplex where we can drop a dividing door to limit animals to one side or the other. We shut this dividing door so that our permanent residents had one half to themselves and the new pups could have the other half without having direct contact with our residents. Coyotes are territorial animals and aggression is even worse amongst unrelated females. Needless to say, our top female coyote Zuni is not too happy with intruders! For this reason, we have to keep all new coyotes separate from her and her coyote friend, Apache. We do however want the young coyotes to have some interactions with the adults for proper socialization with their own kind, so we typically house them at least next to the adults. The pups loved their new, much drier home which included a large digging box, a swimming pool, a den box, and raised platforms.

Our initial goal of course was to release all four back into the wild as a group. Unfortunately, we ran into an issue that became clear over the next several days. Though three of the pups stayed away from us as we approached the enclosure, the other one did not. This big female, who seemed to be the top coyote of the four, had no fear of humans and would run up in excitement every time we approached the enclosure. We did our best to deter this behavior, walking in with walking sticks to provide a barrier, spraying with the hose, clapping our hands or stomping our feet.

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We did all we could to try to show her that humans are dangerous, and she should stay away. Unfortunately for us, animals can often see right through you. After all, we at TreeHouse love animals and would never do anything to hurt any of the animals in our care. This young female seemed to sense that and took all our efforts as a form of play. She started playing with the water from the hose for instance. This is not something that a wildlife rehabilitator likes to see. We want wild animals to live natural lives. An



animal with no fear of people however is in danger of getting hurt if it approaches the wrong person. It can also be a danger to people if it tries to play too roughly or take food from people. Unfortunately, after a few weeks of attempts to make her wild, it became clear that it just wasn't going to work. It was determined that the other pups could be released but she would sadly have to stay behind in captivity. This was a difficult decision that we had to make because now she had to say goodbye to the other pups she had grown up with. Coyotes are also quite common animals with a bad reputation, so we worried that finding a facility who

could give her a permanent home would be difficult. The other pups, now grown coyotes, were loaded up and sent out for release while she had to stay behind in the enclosure. The poor young female went through a mourning process at the loss of her coyote pack but we did not let her think on it long. Now that the others were gone, we were free to start working with her and show her that we would be her pack now.

While we began teaching her proper manners for life in captivity around people, we placed an ad for her on a website for wildlife in need of permanent housing at educational facilities. Much to our surprise, we received an inquiry within 24 hours! The Children's Museum of Connecticut, located in West Hartford, had just lost their educational coyote and were looking for a new one to fill its place. They had a nice enclosure with a pool and things for her to jump around on. Their enclosure wasn't huge however, so they also committed to walking her twice a day behind the facility to help her get her energy out. It seemed like a good fit and we were just relieved that there was a facility out there that could take her! Of course, the next question is, how in the world do we get her to Connecticut?

It was decided that we would transport her up to Connecticut closer to the summer of 2017 as they have a much harsher winter up there and this little girl did not grow a

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thick winter coat. This was likely due to the fact that our winter in 2016 was very mild. This gave us some time to start preparing her to make the long trip. We started off with introducing a harness to her. When she first saw the harness, she wanted absolutely nothing to do with it and even bared her teeth at it! Luckily for us, this coyote was very food motivated and over the next few days, we associated the harness with treats. Eventually, we got her to stick her head through the harness on her own! She finally became so comfortable with it, that the end result was she would jump up onto a platform and hold still while we put the harness on her. She would then get lots of treats! The next step of course was the leash. The leash didn't bother her at first until she realized it limited how far she could go. She became so confused that she just stopped moving all together as we tried to walk her around in the enclosure. Over time and with more treats, she became more comfortable with it as well.

Now you would think that this was all done. She was leash trained! Not the case. Coyotes are different from dogs in that they are naturally neophobic, or afraid of anything different. The next step would prove to be one of the most difficult steps for this little girl. That step was walking through a doorway. "You want me to do what?!" it seemed like she was saying. Well you have to walk through a doorway to actually go places! For a long time, she would put on the breaks in front of any doorway or gate and we would have to pick her up and carry her through it, which she was completely fine with. Once we were through the doorway, everything was all sunshine and rainbows again. During her first trip outside the enclosure, she rolled in the grass and then in a leaf pile. She wanted to go every direction at once but would stop in her tracks and not move if there was something she had never seen before. Often, we would just have to pick her up and move past it until she became comfortable. If we didn't pick her up, she'd give us a "coyote hug." This is exactly like it sounds. She'd stand up on her hind legs and wrap her front legs around you and just stay there. She became well known for this and began doing it any time she wanted affection.

Over time her fear of doorways and gates slowly went away but such a feat always required a treat in reward and she expected it. Now you're probably wondering, haven't you given her a name yet? The truth was that no, we had not named her. At TreeHouse, we typically do not name animals that we are not going to keep. If we did, we would have run out of names a long time ago! Naming an animal also has the risk of creating a bond between the animal and our volunteers who may not want to let the animal go when it is ready. We also were originally wanting the facility in Connecticut to have the option of naming her because she was going to be living with them long term anyway. However, the facility in Connecticut eventually told us that they wanted us to provide a name for her. After much deliberation, we decided to name her Seneca, which keeps with the theme of our other two coyotes who are Zuni and Apache. They're all named after native American tribes.

Seneca was beginning to love her walks around the TreeHouse grounds. She became so comfortable with the leash that she began to become a leash puller, which took some work to correct. The next step was to become comfortable going in and out of a crate so

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that she could be safely transported by car. Remarkably, she caught on to this quickly. It was so quick that she treated the crate like a treat button, running in and out of it. During this time, the animal curator from the Children's Museum in Connecticut made the trip to the Saint Louis area to meet Seneca in person. We held our breath as we introduced her to him for the first time and much to our relief, she loved him! She gave him her famous coyote hug and let him walk her around the grounds. It was meant to be.

It was getting closer and closer to the time when she would have to make the big trip to Connecticut. We started taking her on short field trips. Her first car ride was quite scary, but she got to explore a whole new area and see a big lake! We were careful to only take her out to places where people don't normally go as we could only imagine how it would look, seeing us walking a coyote around on a leash. We want to push the idea that wild animals should be respected for their wildness and it was true with her too. People may get the wrong idea, that coyotes are just like dogs, seeing her walking on a leash. However, that is far from the truth. For instance, most dogs love to make people happy! The coyote? She could care less if we were happy with her or not. Either there were treats or there were no treats and that dictated her behavior. We were still her friends of course and she loved to play with us but that was not enough motivation to work for us. She only worked for food.

She did a few more short car rides to different places before it was time to make the big trip. Our Director of Operations arranged with the animal curator of the facility in Connecticut to meet somewhere in Ohio so that the coyote could have a non-stop trip with brief breaks instead of having to stay anywhere overnight. She made a couple brief stops at quiet rest stops but otherwise spent most of her time in the crate with plenty of bones to chew on to keep her busy. In Ohio, she met up with her new caretaker and after a long walk around, parted ways with her friends from TreeHouse Wildlife Center. This would be another big change for her. We were all hopeful that it would go well. She was taken all the way to Connecticut and we received news that she had arrived safely.

She was a little nervous at first but after a few days, she settled in nicely at her forever home with her new friends. The public came out to meet her in Connecticut and see their new coyote ambassador. There she can teach people that coyotes are not all bad! They're just trying to survive in a harsh world just like us. We were so happy that this worked out and that she is now safe in a forever home where she has a purpose!



Interns working in the nursery

ASPEN'S TRAINING by Cait Campbell

When we present programs to the public, we often receive curious inquiries on how we go about training our animals for outreach education. Much of it is habituation from daily handling and feeding, especially with our ambassador mammals and reptiles. But our training mechanisms differ when our birds of prey are involved. In fact, we train them very similarly to how pet handlers train dogs!

Bird training stems as far back as 1700 B.C. during a time when falconry, the sport of hunting with birds of prey, was commonly used. Bird handlers incorporated operant conditioning, where reinforcement or punishment was used to increase or decrease the frequency of a behavior. There are four different methods that fall under operant conditioning, which help to build connections between the handler and the animal. While we have always worked toward establishing a trusting and working relationship with our ambassadors, we are excited to move some of our bird training program forward by incorporating all positive reinforcement sessions with our residents. Positive reinforcement involves the addition of a pleasurable stimulus (in this case, special food treats) following a desired behavior, which makes it more likely that that animal will perform that behavior again. We can attest to the amazing things this type of training accomplishes through one of our newest resident animals, Aspen.



In the spring we received Aspen, a non-releasable female American Kestrel Falcon, who had been kept too long with her rescuer before finally being brought to us. In that time, she imprinted on humans rather than birds, and now associates herself with people. While it is a sad psychological issue, we decided to create a positive out of it and test her as our guinea pig for our new positive reinforcement training. We started small by hand feeding and working a form of clicker training so that every time she calmly took food from us, she would hear a “click” and learn to understand that she did what we wanted her to do. We call that sound the bridge, as it would eventually be used to “bridge the gap” between the behavior we wanted with the reward. Slowly we went from hand feeding, to her leaving her crate and coming to our gloved hand, to coming to us when given a cue in her free flight enclosure! Aspen will now sit calmly as we put on her “work equipment” for programs and self-crate herself! We are so passionate about truly establishing a strong and trusting relationship with our birds and allowing them to choose to come with us on programs, and we are excited that Aspen has shown us that it works. Look for Aspen as she makes her program debut in 2018!



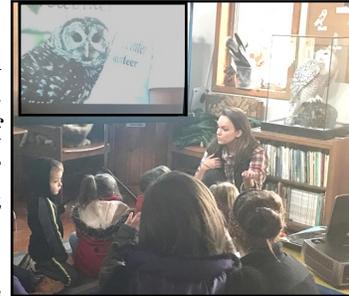
OWLFEST 2017



Education — A Year in Review by Cait Campbell

As not only wildlife rehabilitators but also environmental educators, I like to think that TreeHouse is gifted with the special purpose to serve as a voice for those who cannot speak. We are advocates for the environment's flora and fauna, for the patients we admit, and in the everyday interactions we have with the general public regarding wildlife both big and small. From every phone call we receive, to every social media inquiry we reply to, to even a casual conversation in the local grocery store with someone who commented on our TreeHouse-monogrammed shirts, we are always educating. Education is a way of advocating for animals we care for, acting as a voice for them, and we are oh so lucky to be honored with such a special purpose!

Education is also one of the pillars that TreeHouse is founded on. Each year we grow our educational programming a bit more via onsite and outreach programs to meet the needs of interested local communities and to share the stories of our backyard friends. And 2017 proved to be one of the biggest years for us in not just rehabilitation, but education!



We kicked off the year by official unveiling our six onsite staple education programs for visiting school groups, each with a bit of a different twist to offer something for every age. We focused on establishing a curriculum for our center to follow and we're excited to continue developing it as time goes on. We presented close to 100 programs this year, visited as an informational booth at many local festivals, and were even featured with some of our resident wildlife on the St. Louis news! We are always excited about the possibility of working out a new type of program based on the interests of our supporters, so this year we began branching out our outreach programming to offer educational presentations on not just native birds, but mammals, reptiles, and insects as well. Onsite public workshops on an assortment of topics have also been a focus this year. While this has been a little slow-going, we are hoping to really establish a following for these affordable events as we move into 2018.

Creating and strengthening partnerships with other local environmental groups has been a high priority of the center throughout 2017. We were honored to be the guest presenters at the National Great River's Museum's "Masters of the Sky" program in February, one of our biggest outreach program partnerships to date! TreeHouse also teamed up with The Nature Institute in Godfrey, IL, working as collaborators and presenters at each other's events. Many local nature centers and preserves have served as a place for release for many of our patients, and this year McCully Heritage Project in Kampsville and The Watershed Nature Center in Edwardsville offered their wonderful land as habitat for wildlife releases. Public releases are great events for public education about wildlife and habitat protection, and there's nothing quite like seeing an animal return to its rightful home. We are humbled by our continuing relations with these and many of the other wonderful organizations doing amazing work in our area, and look forward to successful futures with each and every one of them.

There are big things ahead on the education front for 2018. I am positively pleased by the success of our programs this year and look forward to continue sharing with others what we are so passionate about here at TreeHouse Wildlife Center.

GO WILD! Summer camp

And just like that, another year of our Go WILD! Summer Camps have ended!

We had a great time learning about the native wildlife of Illinois and all the cool adaptations these special mammals, birds, and reptiles have. We learned about issues facing wildlife and how we as citizens can help to protect these species all while having fun doing crafts, games, and of course getting some up close encounters with our education ambassadors.

With your continued support, we look forward to hopefully offering these camps again next year for our young, budding wildlife lovers. Want to attend a family event at the center? Stay tuned to our Facebook page and website for future programs.



Fundraising in 2017

If you have visited TreeHouse during 2017, you might have noticed several new features. We received many donations and grants to fund the building of a new multi-purpose pole barn and sidewalk system. The multi-purpose pole barn will allow our maintenance volunteer team a place to work and store their tools. The sidewalks will allow visitors with mobility difficulties the ability to enjoy touring our outdoor enclosures and all visitors to keep dry during inclement weather.

Other fundraising campaigns allowed TreeHouse to replace our incubators and purchase a blood lead testing machine. Incubators are critical to the care of many of our tiniest patients. Incoming babies will spend time warming in an incubator before they begin their journey through the nursery and onto release. The blood lead testing machine will allow for our staff to immediately test an animal with suspected lead poisoning. This increases the odds of survival for the animal and reduces our medical lab costs.

Our volunteers have spent many long days working on emergency repairs around the center. The fox enclosure suffered damage following a storm in July and our flight cage needed emergency repairs both inside and out. Donors provided some funds for repairs to the fox cage and the National Anti-Vivisection Society provided funds through their emergency repair funds grant.

Finally, our Spring Baby Shower and Owl Fest were huge successes. Our Spring Baby Shower guests donated many of the supplies needed to get through the record number of orphans this year. The weather for Owl Fest didn't keep visitors from attending. Saturday was a beautiful fall day and despite the cold, wet day on Sunday, we still had a group of hearty visitors attend.



IN MEMORY...

We are heartbroken to announce the passing of our resident Pileated Woodpecker, BeeGee. BeeGee joined the TreeHouse family in 2014 following a wing injury in Wisconsin. Release was attempted multiple times, but it was found that BeeGee was unable to properly fly and maneuver for successful survival. BeeGee was transferred to us and quickly became a staple figure in our education center. He greeted guests with his obnoxiously loveable calls and constant drilling on his insect-filled stumps as well as his metal enclosure (which our live-in interns always enjoyed at 5 a.m. in the morning). BeeGee was a volunteer favorite and served as a fantastic educational bird. Our education center will be a little more empty without this bright fellow in our lives, but we will cherish the memories he has given us in his last few years with our organization.

A big thank you to TreeHouse friend, Linda Wolf, DVM who helped to facilitate BeeGee's transfer to our center and donated his enclosure in memory of Meghan. Linda was BeeGee's longtime sponsor.



This chainsaw sculpture by the Itchy Brothers in Grafton is the result of money collected in memory of Martha Grimont, conservationist, and grandmother of Rachael Heaton. Photos don't do it justice so please visit our Education Center to see this special tribute for yourself.

OWLFEST DONORS

Home Depot, Alton	Arlington Greens Golf Course,
B. David Duncan	Granite City
Casino Queen	Rolling Hills Golf Course, Godfrey
McCully Heritage Project	Oak Brook Golf Course, Edwardsville
City Museum, St. Louis	Grafton Harbor
Missouri Botanical Gardens, St. Louis	Dora's Spinning Wheel, Alton
Randy & Linda Irwin	Chicago Bears
John Tomlinson	State Street Market, Alton
Shedd Aquarium, Chicago	Melvin & Shirley McCann
Ray & Robin Riefle	Bill & Sandy Crawford

OWLFEST VOLUNTEERS

TreeHouse Volunteers plus:	Bill Goetten
Kohls Employees, Alton	Tyler Goetten
Alpha Phi Omega-SIUE	Rebecca Bemrose-Fetter
Samantha Au	Elizabeth Weber
Rachel Huwe	Kristina Heaton
Mattie Santoni	Craig Heaton
Ryan Drone	Katie Heaton
Katie Terziovski	Dr. Ellen Helmers, Hawthorne Animal
George Diak	Hospital
Connie Yordy	Alpha Phi Omega at Illinois College
Granite City High School Biology Club	

OWLFEST RAFFLE WINNERS

BUCKET RAFFLES

Falcon wood carving – Helen Holbert
 Drone with Camera—Jim Ruggles
 TH Blanket — Dolores Ullrich
 McCully Heritage – Ruth Huber
 Waterfowl photos – Barry Temple
 Casino Queen Package—Helen Holbert

BASKET RAFFLES

STL Adventure Pack — Ellen Steen
 Shedd Aquarium — Tim Lyons
 Golf Package — Robin Bruce
 Crawford Wine Basket — TerryWhitley

Grafton Harbor Wine Basket —
 Bobby Owens
 Marvel Plushies — Chas. Keef
 Microscope — Elizabeth Weber
 Stereo — Brenda Casey
 Boy's Basket — Liz Gerber
 Girl's Basket — Janice Wasser
 Owl Basket — Brylee Piper
 TreeHouse Christmas Ornaments —
 Tom Reyne
 Baker's Dozen Products—Katie Heaton

THANK YOU!

Widman Construction
 Candy Crafts
 Christmas Wonderland
 Old Bakery Beer Company
 Riverbend Photography Group
 CNB Bank and Trust, Alton
 Fuzzy Llama, Inc.
 VFW of Alton
 1st United Methodist Church VBS
 Crystal & Spice Shoppe, Belleville
 Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery
 Metrologistics
 Family Campers and RVers
 Forest Releaf of Missouri
 McCully Heritage Project
 Alexis Bell

Mississippi Valley Library District's
 summer reading program
 Tractor Supply, Alton
 Patrice Vaeth in support of Stevie the
 Great horned Owl in honor of
 Lee Kaskulas
 Sixth Street Diner, Wood River
 Forrest Keeling
 Sabastian Vucinovich —
 Capstone Project
 Emily Baima — Girl Scout Gold Award
 For the small mammal rehab cage
 Cole Shirk—TreeHouse YouTube video
 Faith & William Pautler
 Family Foundation

Thanks to all those groups and individuals who provided much needed donations of time, cash and supplies!

WORKDAY VOLUNTEERS

Phi Kappa Psi
 Children's Tribe
 Faith in Action

Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church,
 Collinsville
 New Life Christian Fellowship, Hamel

CAMPAIGN DONORS

Spring BabyShow donors
 Kick the Lead Out campaign donors
 Storm Damage campaign donors

Gladys M. Davis
 Barry Temple

Thanks to
 Hawthorne Animal Hospital's
 doctors, vet techs and staff in
 Glen Carbon for all your help.
 We couldn't do it without you!

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We take exceptional care of pets!

Looking for a gift for a nature lover? Did you know TreeHouse has a Gift Shop? We are open year round and have seasonal gifts such as Christmas ornaments, and bird feeders, apparel, scarves, jewelry, home décor, and children's items. All sales benefit the animals at TreeHouse.



Candy Crafts

So getting some inspiration, I've designed a new style owl hat for adults. There's only a few to choose from this year so if you like them let the staff know! Which color is your fav?



THE GUARDIAN PROGRAM

The Guardian Program allows donors to exclusively sponsor a resident animal for one year renewable. Supporting a resident animal's food and care allows TreeHouse to allocate other funds toward animals receiving rehabilitative care.

Our resident animals help us serve the community through environmental education. All of the TreeHouse resident animals serve an important purpose. Some are outreach and education animals for events and programs, while others serve as foster parents to orphaned wildlife in our rehabilitation program. Most importantly, all help educate visiting guests by viewing them up close in the comfort of their enclosures. All of the resident animals at TreeHouse have a unique story and are here because they are non-releasable.

2017 GUARDIANS

Julie Whitmire	Phoenix the Kestrel
Col. Stephen Miller	Issac Newton the Turkey Vulture
MetroGistics	Cricket the Broad-winged Hawk
Marine Elementary's 2017 5th Grade Class	Hazel the Hognose Snake
Victoria York	Mad-Eye Moody the gray Screech Owl
Mary Rotz	Sandy the Axolotl
Eric Bloemker	Karrion the Turkey Vulture
Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery	Emrys the Bald Eagle
Robert and Sharon Barrows	Howie the Great horned Owl
AAA Auto Club of Missouri	Bubbles the African Sidenecked Turtle
AAA Auto Club of Missouri	Tucker the Yellow Mud Turtle
AAA Auto Club of Missouri	ChiAAANE the Blue Striped Garter Snake
Doris Harlow	Libby the Red-tailed Hawk
Remi and Rhys Reinking	Leia the gray Screech Owl
Lee Ann Kaskutas	Stevie the Great-horned Owl
The Ray and Robin Riefle Family	Ozzy the Bald Eagle
Erin & Aaron Heil	Heady the Barred Owl
Cheryl Gerber	Jack the Barred Owl

Interested in sponsoring a resident? Contact TreeHouse at [618-466-2990](tel:618-466-2990), email us at treehouse.kelly@gmail.com or visit our website Guardian Program page at <http://www.treehousewildlifecenter.com/sponsor-an-animal>.



Wish List

Paper towels
 Liquid Laundry Detergent
 Dryer Sheets
 33 gal. trash bags
 Plastic animal kennels (all sizes)
 Sponges
 Welding gloves
 Fishing nets with handles (all sizes)
 Garden hoses
 Sweatshirts & sweatpants
 Cash donations
 Tractor with scoop or
 (Mechanical) Bobcat

Did you receive a gift card you're not going to use? We can use gift cards from any store

If you have an animal in need of rehabilitation, call
(618) 466-2990 Dow
 or the
BiState MO/IL Wildlife Hotline at
www.wildlifehotline.com or
Toll free (855)-945-3435

If you have questions about becoming a volunteer, or if you would like to book a program, please call
(618) 466-2990

or check out our website at
www.treehousewildlifecenter.com

TreeHouse Wildlife Center, Inc.
23956 Green Acres Road
Dow, Illinois 62022



Company Gift Matching

Many companies offer Charity gift matching programs.

Ask your employer or check our website for a list of employers who will match your contribution to TreeHouse

<https://smile.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/WO7XQLGTC48E>
 For TreeHouse's wish list on Amazon

IN MEMORY OF



Dr. Phil McKinney
(Hawthorne Animal Hospital)

Jerry Geisen

Mark Meyer
(Former TreeHouse volunteer)

Freddie G. Dhue, Jr.

Ruth Nickols,
Conservationist
(Libby McGinley's mom)



John Becker
(Former TreeHouse Volunteer)



Audrey Wiseman
(Former TreeHouse
volunteer & painter of
our foyer cabinet)

Mary Nagle
(Marcie Nagle's mom)



Photo left: Newborn possums (the size of a dry navy bean) in their mother's pouch.

Photo above:
Ring billed Gull hooked with a fishing lure

TREEHOUSE WILDLIFE CENTER MEMBERSHIP

TreeHouse receives **NO** state, federal or county funding.
Our only funding comes through you, the concerned public.

One way of helping TreeHouse operate is through purchasing a membership.
You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have helped us
give something back to the wild.

TreeHouse Membership — \$20.00/year

Senior Citizen Membership — \$15.00/year

TreeHouse Wildlife Explorers Membership for kids — \$15.00/year

Lifetime TreeHouse Membership — (a one-time donation) \$1,000.00

TreeHouse is registered as a non-profit corp. 501 C (3). All contributions are tax deductible

- I would like to **renew** my membership to Treehouse Wildlife Inc.
- I would like to **become** a member of TreeHouse.
- I would like to make an **additional contribution** to TreeHouse.
- I would like to make a **donation** to the **TreeHouse Building Fund.**

Please check the appropriate box and mail this form with your donation.

\$15.00 \$25.00 \$50.00 \$ _____ Other

- I would like information on becoming a **volunteer**

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail Address _____

**Remit via Pay Pal or Mail check to:
TreeHouse Wildlife Center
23956 Green Acres Road
Dow, IL 62022**

**If you would like to receive an expanded online color version of
TreeHouse Droppings by e-mail, please send your e-mail address to
treehousewildlifecenter@gmail.com**

TreeHouse does not sell or share our mailing or e-mail lists with anyone



TreeHouse Wildlife Explorers is for kids aged 14 and under, and it's designed to teach kids about wildlife and the natural world in a fun and engaging way.

Members will receive a one-page monthly newsletter keeping them informed and in the loop about the animals being cared for at TreeHouse; a personalized membership card to be used for special offers and discounts; and an invitation to a special annual event just for TreeHouse Wildlife Explorers and their families.

**YES! I would like to join the
TREEHOUSE WILDLIFE EXPLORERS
My \$15 membership dues are enclosed**

Name _____

Date of Birth _____
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Make checks payable to:

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and send to

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attn: Jennifer Yordy