

TreeHouse Droppings



TreeHouse's Resident President
for 2013 is —
Chuckles the Red Fox who's
checking out his new digs!

The amazing Mr. Gray Fox
has arrived



In this issue: President's Aerie, Rehab Ramblings, Animals Do Make Us Human, Bobcats, Foxes, Coyotes, Warning for Early Spring, Surprise!, *The Bird With No Name*, Jasper Finds a Surprise!, Planters, Open House, Nature Nuts, Ameren's Community Connections, Past, Present & Future, Building Progress Report, Wish List, Acknowledgements, Memberships

30+ years of giving back to the wild

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(Office manager)
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(Environmental Education Director)
Rachael Heaton*
(Intern)

**Amanda Dixon &
Trincy Nyswonger**
(Weekend Interns)

TreeHouse Wildlife Center employs
**one full-time, *two part-time staff
members, and *one intern
paid through a grant.
All other staff are volunteers.

Active Volunteers

Judy & Jack Neiman
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PRESIDENT'S AERIE by Eric Bloemker **for Chuckles**



Open House attendees elected Chuckles the President by a huge margin. I accept the vote of the members, and congratulate Chuckles, vowing to support his new leadership into the new year, TreeHouse being of the animals, by the animals, and for the animals. We, the People, are here to serve the animals, and educate the people about those animals. It is what TreeHouse does best – caring for the animals and educating the people. We could not do this without countless hours from our staff, volunteers, and charitable contributions from our members and supporters. I thank you, and the animals thank you.

It was great seeing so many members and new members at Open House. Thank you for making it a success again this year.

In a short time, TreeHouse has quietly been growing and expanding since starting the move to Dow from Brighton. Most of our permanent residents, vital to our education programs, now reside at Dow. We still have much to do in terms of building new rehabilitation cages. The cages at Brighton have served our operations well over the years, but nature has given us a real challenge. We must get the new flight cages built at Dow as soon as we can raise the funds required for the major construction.

And we still will not be done. Fawn pens, waterfowl rehab, and the avian ward all need our attention. All are in need of volunteers and funding. We look forward to forming new partnerships and expanding memberships to make all of this possible. And we'll need your help. Tell your family, neighbors, friends, and co-workers about TreeHouse. Invite them to come see the facility, bookmark our website, "Like" our Facebook page, and download our free iPad app.

Take your friends on an eagle outing this winter. Drive along the Great River Road to see eagles roosting in the trees on the bluff, soaring in the thermals, and even snagging a fish from the river. Stop by TreeHouse. You can always count on seeing our eagles. Those who have never seen an eagle up close are in for a real treat, especially the young. Tea, coffee, or hot chocolate will be available for purchase to keep you warm on those cold winter days – ideal for eagle watching.

Become an ambassador for TreeHouse. Talk about us. Get others involved. As always, we thank you for your support.

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Gift Giving

TreeHouse does not receive its funding from Federal, State, or local governments. We rely on the generous contributions of members, supporters, and local charitable foundations.

We understand the hardships many of our members are going through with the tough economic times. We appreciate whatever you might be able to give to enable TreeHouse to continue its mission of caring for injured or orphaned wildlife through rescue, rehabilitation, release, and education programs.

You can maximize your gift-giving by checking if your employer participates in charity matching. We can also accept stocks. You will avoid the capital gains, and TreeHouse can benefit from your generosity. We also maintain a wish-list of items needed.

Talking to others about your support of our mission helps. Our grassroots organization grows through you. When you talk about TreeHouse, others listen. Join our Facebook page, share our news.

Deer Release — Several orphaned fawns were released in rural Macoupin County.

Pictured on the photo to the right are the deer wranglers and support staff



Rehab Ramblings

by Pam Lippert

Updates from the spring newsletter. The Trumpeter Swan that was pending from the last newsletter was released this spring on an area lake along with a Mute Swan. The Mute immediately flew off, while the Trumpeter stayed a few weeks before leaving.

The Bald Eagle that was shot in the leg in Clay County is now in the flight cage and its release is pending.



Trumpeter Swan pre-release

Animals DO Make Us Human

It was chilly as I stood outside the door to the department where I work at a correctional facility. I was monitoring the “move”, that ten minute period every hour when inmates are free to move from one location to another within the prison. Once the “move” is completed, inmates must stay where they are until the next one. As I was watching people move back and forth, I noticed a tall man moving in my direction. He was carrying the small box that usually held a twelve pack of soda and it was clear from the way he moved that he had a purpose. As he got closer he pushed the box towards me and hurriedly said in a voice choked with emotion, “I’ve had him for a while but I can’t keep him anymore and I don’t want to talk about it.” He then abruptly turned and started walking away from me but not before I saw the tears. As he moved away, he yelled over his shoulder, “His name is Jimmy.” I looked into the box and saw a small cottontail rabbit cuddled in a nest of old t-shirts. There was a handful of freshly picked clover next to him. I sighed and carried him into my office with me.



Inmates are not allowed to have pets, yet this is not the first time I’ve been given an animal. How an inmate obtains a baby animal and cares for it are varied, but what is constant is the deep emotional connection that is formed. There are not a lot of options for inmates to provide or receive nurturing while in prison; this is particularly true for men. For them, the opportunity to love something and to provide for its needs is priceless. Sometimes it’s a chance for redemption, to provide better care for this little animal than what they provided for their family, their children, while on the streets. Sometimes it’s a way to connect with those same family members by providing a positive topic of conversation. Sometimes it’s a novelty, a way to break what can become a mind-numbing pattern of boredom. But often it’s simply the chance to express compassion, emotional connection, and nurturance.

At work I am usually addressed as “Doc,” but more and more often I am also the “animal lady”. People know my love of animals is strong, and I have become the “go to” person for any animal-related issues that might arise at work. Thus, the inmate who had “Jimmy” knew exactly whom to approach even though he and I had never had a conversation before. And while our exchange was brief, I know this to be true. In the future he will come to me to talk about the people-related concerns in his life. He will share with me at least a piece of any darkness he may carry inside. He will feel safe doing so because he has already trusted me with something precious to him. Because of a small, fluffy bunny, I have become more human to him and he has become more human to me. As Temple Grandin has said, “Animals make us human.”

Belle & Bobbie by Jennifer Yordy, Intern

If you've been following TreeHouse on WordPress, YouTube, or Facebook over the past six months, chances are you've heard something about Belle and Bobbie. For those of you who don't know the story, however, I'll give a recap.

Back in March, we admitted a bobcat that apparently had been hit by a car near Belleville. Pam picked the bobcat up from the couple who rescued her, and a full examination by Dr. Myer of Hawthorne Animal Hospital showed her to have a concussion, but no broken bones. She was brought back to TreeHouse for rehabilitation, and over the first few days she was in and out of consciousness. We administered fluids until she began eating and drinking on her own, and before long she was ready to move from her large steel cage in the isolation ward out to the exercise room.

Head injuries can be tricky in wildlife rehab. Often an animal will appear perfectly healthy when it is in a confined environment, but when the animal has more freedom of movement it becomes clear that there is lingering neurological damage. A head injury might result in an impaired sense of sight or hearing, or it might cause problems with balance. Especially for an animal like a bobcat, which relies on its skill as a hunter to survive, it is vital that these senses be in perfect working order. Before we could consider releasing this bobcat, we therefore needed to get her in a large outdoor enclosure where we could assess her physical condition and verify through observation of her behavior that she was not suffering from any neurological problems.

At that time, we had been working on construction of a new outdoor bobcat enclosure for our longtime resident bobcat, Tigger, who sadly passed away just days before we admitted "Belle", as we began calling our new patient. Although it was unfortunate that Tigger was never able to enjoy the new enclosure, the timing could not have been better for Belle—we completed construction just as Belle was ready to move outside.



With three levels, multiple den boxes, and plenty of open space, we thought that the new enclosure would provide the perfect conditions for us to observe Belle and assess her condition and prospects for release. It soon became apparent, however, that Belle was not going to let us observe her doing anything. We knew that she was getting around because we would place her food in different locations around the enclosure and

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it would always vanish, but any time humans were around, Belle was hiding deep in her favorite den box. She was very defensive of this den box, baring her teeth and snarling at anybody who came near, but she would never actually come out of it.

Despairing of ever catching her in the act of moving around, we put out the word that we wanted to install a trail camera in her enclosure so that we could capture on video what she would never let us see in person. Almost immediately, a generous donor, Rich Edelman, responded with the funds we needed, and we began the process of selecting and installing a camera in the enclosure. The camera we purchased would take still images and video, and it had infrared capabilities for night use. We were all buzzing with excitement to see what the camera would show us, but none of us could have guessed that the excitement had barely begun.

On the very day that I installed the camera, while I was working in the far end of the enclosure, a volunteer who had come in to do some mowing walked past the den box and heard some strange sounds coming from inside. After listening closely for some time, we realized with shock and delight that what we were hearing was the meowing of a kitten! Apparently, Belle had been pregnant when she was admitted. She had been so secretive throughout her rehabilitation that we had seen no indication that she was expecting a kitten, and even in the full-body X-rays that were taken when Dr. Myer examined her there was no sign of pregnancy, as it was too early for the fetus to be visible on a radiograph.

The moment we began to suspect the presence of a kitten, we immediately took steps to eliminate any source of disturbance, limiting noise and restricting access to the area of the enclosure to a few core caregivers. Wild felids are typically excellent mothers, but stress can cause them to be unable to care for their young or even in some cases to abandon them, so we made sure that Belle had absolute privacy during these first few critical days. For this reason, it took us a full day to obtain visual confirmation of the existence of the kitten. Even then, it was several days before we could say with confidence that there was only one kitten.

The kitten was soon dubbed "Bobbie", since at that point we had no idea whether it was male or female. We decided from the beginning to take a completely hands-off approach, leaving the rearing of the kitten entirely up to its mother. It is extremely difficult to maintain the natural behavior required for release into the wild in hand-reared carnivores, especially in single animals

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with no siblings. If Belle had succumbed to the stress of the strange circumstances in which she found herself and had abandoned her young kitten, we would have considered intervening, but, fortunately, Belle proved to be an excellent mother.

I could go on for twenty pages talking about all the incredible (and adorable!) behaviors and interactions we witnessed between Belle and Bobbie thanks to our trail camera, but luckily I don't have to. The best videos are available for anyone to view on TreeHouse's YouTube channel, for which there is a link on our website.



Our number one priority with the bobcats was to ensure that they would both be able to return to the wild as soon as Bobbie was old enough to take care of himself, so we erected a privacy fence around the enclosure and strictly prohibited visitors and even volunteers from that area. A handful of interns and volunteers were responsible for all bobcat care so that we could keep the number of humans they got used to at an absolute minimum. These caretakers also made every effort to enter the enclosure only once a day, so as not to disturb the bobcats any more than necessary.

Ultimately, Belle resided at TreeHouse for about seven months. In October, one week before Bobbie reached six months of age, mother and son were released in a wildlife conservation area near Valmeyer. Their release site was deep in optimal bobcat habitat—plenty of dense vegetation, steep slopes, caves, and spring-fed streams. We couldn't have designed a better place for them to live.

In the actual moment we opened the crates to let them go free, it was—as is often the case with mammal releases—a bit anticlimactic. After a minute in which they both seemed to debate whether they were safer inside or outside their crates, Belle took her first cautious peek out. Slowly and deliberately, alert and testing the air at every step, she stalked off into the woods in the direction opposite the spot from which the humans were watching. Bobbie apparently decided that his crate was the safest spot, and in the end we had to unscrew the top in order to get him to leave. As soon as the top was removed, though, he took off like a shot, without a backward glance. A video of the release is also available on YouTube.

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Watching through the lens of the trail camera over the course of half a year, we witnessed Bobbie grow from a squirmy dark blob at the back of the den box into a wild and rambunctious young bobcat. We saw his first steps outside the den box and his first attempt to reach the ground level of the enclosure. We watched him snuggling with his mother, being bathed by her, and later ambushing her for rounds of play-fighting. As with all carnivores we release, we needed to be sure that he was capable of hunting to provide food for himself, so we also observed his first encounter with live prey and his first—and second and third—kill.

When we released Belle and Bobbie, several people asked me if I was sad to see them go. Although I can understand why someone might think I would be sad—of course I grew attached to them as I cared for them and watched their lives unfold—I can honestly say that their release wasn't even bittersweet. It was only sweet. A successful release to a habitat like the one Belle and Bobbie were sent to is exactly what a wildlife rehabber hopes to achieve for every animal. If I could write the perfect ending to Belle and Bobbie's story, it would be this: "And they never saw another human as long as they lived."



Belle cautiously peeks out of the crate



Belle stalks off into the woods while
Bobbie bolts from the crate



Release photos by
Thomas Rollins Photography

The Fantastic Mr. Gray Fox by Amanda Dixon, Intern

Every time a visitor to TreeHouse takes one look at our newest resident fox, the gray fox, I usually hear the exclamation of, "He's beautiful!" and he truly is. In comparison to his neighbor, Chuckles the red fox, our currently unnamed gray is quite unique in appearance. Having a mostly gray body with some red around his face, ears, and legs, he makes for a most interesting looking animal.

Our little friend ended up here in a most unfortunate way. He was the only surviving member of his litter, the rest, including his mother, presumably having been killed by some type of predator. In the attack, he must have suffered some sort of nerve damage. He often loses the ability to move his back legs properly, especially when he gets excited or nervous. That doesn't stop him, though; I often see him scurrying around his enclosure, going in and out of his giant log or up and down the ramps with not much trouble.



Most people seem to be rather unfamiliar with gray foxes, including myself; I had never actually seen one until one arrived at TreeHouse. They are quite a bit different from the red fox, *Vulpes vulpes*, as the gray fox, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*, is not even of the same genus. Differences in coat colors, markings, facial shape, and size can help us identify each fox species. Gray foxes do share territories with the red fox, and they live in a wide range

throughout the United States, including Illinois. They are solitary animals, preferring to hunt alone as opposed to in packs like many other wild canids. They prey upon smaller creatures, such as rabbits, voles, and birds. Also included in their diet are insects, nuts, and berries, making them omnivorous. The gray fox is largely nocturnal as well, usually making appearances during the nighttime hours.

Gray foxes are animals that are known to be monogamous, meaning male-female pairings will mate for life. Litters are usually born in the spring months and can have between one to seven kits. Hollow logs or trees and burrows are often popular den sites for the gray fox.

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At first when he came to TreeHouse, the gray fox was very shy and would just hide out in the giant log in his enclosure. Now, he is much more curious and is beginning to take an interest in those who come to visit him. He'll often poke his tiny head out of one side of the log to look around, and once he feels it's okay, he will come say "Hi" and take a closer peek at everyone watching him. After learning more about him and gray foxes, I really do find him rather fantastic, and I hope you all do, too.

Warning for Early Spring by Judy Neiman

When spring comes and Easter rolls around many farm stores often offer baby ducks for sale. I know how cute and adorable they are, but they are not good pets nor are they toys for children. Please think before you buy.

They are fluffy and cute for about two weeks. Then they start to get big and dirty and very stinky. They need a good sized cage with supplemental heat for four weeks before they can go outside and regulate their own body temperature.

Most domestic ducks do not fly well, if at all. They need a body of water that is kept open during the winter, or they need to be locked up at night. If you release them at a park or some other lake they are literally sitting ducks for raccoons, coyotes, foxes, owls, and dogs.

These are often heavy ducks that develop leg and foot problems. Some of them become completely crippled. See photo. There is nothing we can do for these animals with leg deformities. Having to euthanize them is always a burden for our volunteers.

Every year we get Easter ducks when people no longer want them or know what to do with them. We do not have a sanctuary for them and we cannot correct bone problems that cause them to be totally or partially crippled.

So please resist those adorable little ducklings (and bunnies) if you do not have the proper facilities for keeping them safe for their lifetime of 15 to 20 years.



Crippled Easter duckling

Foxes and Coyotes: A New Beginning by Rachael Heaton, Intern

There have been exciting changes at TreeHouse! The fox enclosure has been completed and the coyote enclosure has been opened up so that the animals can freely move from one side of the enclosure to the other. A couple of faces that had once called our old facility in Brighton their home have made their journey to our Dow location. We are very happy to have these mammals here. We are striving to make them happy to be here by coming up with different activities and toys for enrichment.

The newly completed enclosures for the foxes and coyotes can be found on the left side of the road when driving in. The enclosures are double fenced all around with no side covered, so the animals can safely see what is going on around them. They also have ramps to allow the animals to climb up to another level and have a better view of their surroundings. Thanks to a generous donation, the fox enclosures include gigantic, hollow logs that the foxes love to hide in so they can have some privacy. The coyotes do not have a log, they have a sand box that Trickster loves to play in. All of the den boxes have been filled with straw that was donated by one of our volunteers so that the animals have a nice and warm place to sleep.

Who are these coyotes and foxes inhabiting these enclosures? One of them is our famous Red Fox, Chuckles. She can be found on the right side of the fox enclosure. She is very happy with her new log and has been expressing it with more of her “chuckling.” Her fox neighbor is an old friend that has recently been moved over from Brighton. He is a beautiful Gray Fox, a species that many people never get a chance to see! Like Chuckles, he has a neurological problem that makes him unable to be released. However, his neurological problem causes him to drag his back legs when excited. He can often be found relaxing and soaking in the sunlight.



Chuckles with orphaned fox pups

Moving over to the coyote enclosure, this enclosure has been opened up so that the coyotes have the entire space. One of the coyotes, Trickster, was born this spring. He was brought to TreeHouse and grew up with us. Unfortunately, he

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cannot be released since he is too fond of humans. He was our first coyote orphan of the season, so for a while he had no coyote companions to keep him from getting too used to his human caretakers. The other coyote, Zuni, a female who had been living at Brighton, is also human-socialized and has become fast friends with Trickster. She is much smaller than he is, and although the two love to play, she is often reminding Trickster not to be too rough.

We at TreeHouse understand that just having a good enclosure and food to eat is not enough to keep an animal happy. This is especially true for animals that in the wild would have spent a lot of time playing, hunting, and problem-solving. That is why we have come up with enrichment activities for the foxes and the coyotes. So far they have involved daily training exercises for the human-socialized coyotes, papier-mâché toys for them to rip up that are filled with treats, and frozen blood treats both large and small that can be hidden around the enclosure or just given to them on a hot day. We are brain-storming for more enrichment ideas. It is so much fun watching the animals when they are given something new and fun to play with. Chuckles was once observed play-bowing and running circles around a papier-mâché ball while Trickster was seen tossing his up in the air. This Halloween they even enjoyed their very own carved pumpkin filled with treats! What could be next? A snowman for Christmas?

There are more changes to come in TreeHouse's Dow location in the future. More cages need to be built for animals needing our care. Though the process can be a long one, every step is exciting and celebrated in its completion. The coyotes and foxes have their new enclosure. We hope to see you come out to visit them. Maybe you will get the chance to hear our coyotes howl.



Members of the Granite City High School Science Club volunteer at TreeHouse one Saturday a month as a community service project.

Meet Our New Permanent Resident by Trincy Nyswonger, Intern

One early summer day, Treehouse received a tiny bundle of fur. It was an orphaned coyote! We discovered that this pup had been found in a field without his mother. Normally coyote pups are protected by both parents and even some other adult coyotes if it is a large pack. A coyote's offspring will not leave its parents until they are 7 to 11 months old. This led us to conclude that this pup was either somehow separated from the pack or the parents had been killed. Luckily, though, he was brought to TreeHouse, where he would be cared for so he could grow into an adult and possibly be released.

When he arrived we put him into a cage in the mammal ward so we could observe his behavior. Soon after his arrival, we felt he was ready for a larger enclosure. The big mammal enclosures that were to be used for foxes and coyotes were still under construction, so TreeHouse improvised. The big outside cage that was normally used for possums was vacant so we placed him in there while the bigger mammal enclosures were being built. During this time, two other coyote pups came to TreeHouse as orphans and joined the oldest pup. While the pups were at this very impressionable age, all volunteers and interns that went into the pups' enclosure to feed and clean had to make loud noises to scare away the pups. This may sound mean, but in order for us to release any coyotes, they must be afraid of humans so they will avoid humans. If they are used to humans, they may unfortunately be hurt by them.

When the coyote enclosure was finally funded and built, thanks to the Sierra Club (who did this in memory of environmentalists and longtime friends of Treehouse Bob and Louise Freeman), the coyotes were moved to their new temporary home. However, during this time, interns and volunteers began to notice something strange. While two of the coyotes ran and hid when we came into the enclosure to feed and clean, the oldest would venture toward us despite the loud noises we made. This same curious behavior prevailed and when the coyotes were old enough to be released, the oldest coyote stayed at TreeHouse while the other two were released. Although he was healthy enough to be released, he was much too friendly towards humans.



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Another curious thing about this coyote was that he seemed to look a little different than the other coyotes in addition to acting different. His eyes were more rounded and his fur had a slight coloration pattern similar to that of a German Shepard. These physical differences and his overly friendly nature led us to consider the possibility that he may be part domestic dog, but only about one-fourth or less domestic dog, because his coyote features are far more dominant.

Now that the coyote was a permanent resident, he needed a name. Marcie, a senior volunteer, thought Trickster was the perfect name for this rascally young coyote and soon everyone started calling him Trickster. However, like the name would suggest, Trickster was quite a handful. The original design of the enclosure allowed volunteers and interns to close off half of the enclosure with a sliding gate. Because the fox cage was not finished, though, Trickster occupied only half of the enclosure while Chuckles the red fox occupied the other. This meant that we could not use the gate to block one side of the enclosure in order to place food and water onto the side opposite of Trickster. That ended up causing many headaches, because when we would go into the enclosure he would jump on us, try to bolt out of the door, cause us to splash water all over ourselves, and knock food bowls out of our hands. Quite frankly, feeding him became a two person job that no one seemed to look forward to.

About this time, some of the volunteers and interns began to talk about training Trickster. The only problem: "How do we train a coyote?" Some thought that since he's a canine, maybe we could train him like a dog. However, since he is a wild animal he might not take to that kind of training as well, and having direct contact with trainers could pose unnecessary risks for both Trickster and his trainers. It wasn't until two interns – Jennifer, who recently started working for The Endangered Wolf Center, and Rachael, who interned for two weeks at The Endangered Wolf Center this past summer –suggested modeling our training after the training done with the canids at the EWC. This kind of training was done through the fence, which was perfect for when we no longer needed to go into the enclosure with Trickster.

After just a few weeks of training, Trickster has already learned a few behaviors that will help us to care for him. The first behavior he learned is to "target". This is when Trickster touches his nose to someone's fist when he is given the command. This behavior is actually a building block for other behaviors. The second behavior he learned is "down." Trickster then lies down on the ground. This will help us in the future to easily give Trickster a

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vaccination or any other medical attention through the fence, rather than having to go into the enclosure with him. Trickster may be socialized but this does not mean he won't ever have his wild instincts triggered by a particular situation. For instance, a stressful situation like receiving shots could trigger these instincts. This could be potentially dangerous for anyone in the enclosure with Trickster. However, besides being safer for his caretakers, this behavior will also decrease the stress on Trickster because he will know what we are about to do and we won't have to restrain him. The third behavior is to "stand". When Trickster is given the command "stand", he stands on his hind legs against the fencing. This behavior allows us to easily look over Trickster's body and look for any signs of injury or illness.



Photo by Micky Rudolph

Recently, the fox enclosure was finished and Chuckles was moved to her new home. Now Trickster has the whole enclosure to play in. This also meant that the permanent resident coyote from the old Brighton facility could be brought to the Dow facility to live with Trickster. For the first few days we let the two coyotes introduce themselves through the fence. When we thought they could peacefully coexist in the same enclosure, we opened the sliding gate.

Today, Trickster and his new playmate Zuni play and sleep together in the same big enclosure. They both receive and enjoy enrichment from time to time in the form of fish and chicken flavored ice treats and specially made piñatas filled with treats. Trickster is currently learning to "shift" from one side of the enclosure to the other through the gate so that we can clean and feed without having any contact with the coyotes. Soon we will also begin training Zuni on these same behaviors, but not until she becomes more comfortable with her new home and caretakers.

From a small pup to an adult coyote, Trickster has most certainly changed over the past 7 months. It's definitely been a privilege to watch his growth both physically and mentally. It's amazing to see what a big difference TreeHouse and our supporters have made in Trickster's life. Without the care he received, he almost certainly would not have made it in the wild. Although he cannot be released, he is now used for education so that others will learn to love coyotes too. Everyone has thoroughly enjoyed watching Trickster's journey here at TreeHouse, and we all hope you have enjoyed reading about it. Please visit Trickster and Zuni soon!

Rehab Ramblings *continued*

by Pam Lippert



A couple more rare admissions this summer were two young Black-crowned Night-Herons and one young Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. Both species are endangered in Illinois, but are Madison County nesting birds. The Black-crown's nest tree was cut down and the Yellow-crown fell from a nest in a different location. All three were released at Horseshoe Lake State Park in Granite City.

While both are members of the shorter stockier night heron family and in adulthood are easily identified by their black or yellow "crowns", the juveniles are more difficult to tell apart. The Black-crown has shorter legs and a thinner bill, while the Yellow-crown has longer legs and a thicker bill. Both are speckled or streaked making them sometimes difficult to tell apart.



Photo by Judy Neiman



One of the orphaned Red Fox pups that was raised by Chuckles and later released in the wild

Photo by Micky Rudolph

Surprise! by Connie and Jennifer Yordy

Anyone that has read the book recently published by TreeHouse Wildlife Center called *The Bird with No Name* knows the story of the troublesome turkey vulture that has been a permanent resident of TreeHouse since the spring of 2011.

For those who haven't had a chance to read the book, perhaps you recall the story from the last issue of the newsletter. The bird came to TreeHouse as an orphaned human imprint and soon made itself so obnoxious that even entering the cage to feed and clean became a daily nightmare.

For a while, no one could figure out why this bird acted so aggressively, but then in stepped Lisa Rose, an experienced bird trainer who had up to that point only worked with parrots. Her natural interest in bird behavior led her to volunteer her talents to help TreeHouse discover the root of this behavior and find a way to amend it.



Author Connie Yordy

The remarkable strides Lisa made during her very first visit resulted in a radical shift in the way that the humans of TreeHouse viewed this extraordinary bird. It became clear that this was actually an extremely intelligent bird that was craving attention from his "fellow" humans. A bird that has imprinted on humans truly believes it is human and simply wants attention from members of its "own species." By the end of that first session, the bird was flying to a specific perch and targeting to different locations in the cage on command, amazing even Lisa, who is accustomed to working with extremely intelligent parrots. Naturally, the bird was immediately christened "Einstein."

Since that first day, Lisa has returned many times to work with the TreeHouse interns and volunteers to set up a program to train Einstein. This training enables the volunteers to take better care of Einstein and gives this intelligent bird the enrichment opportunities it craves. With the aid of a target stick and a pouch full of vulture treats, Einstein has now solidified his "place" and "target" commands, and has also learned to take a ball from a trainer's hand and step up onto a glove. Trainers are also working on a "crate up" command and building enough trust to allow jesses to be put on. Einstein continues to surprise and amaze all who visit.

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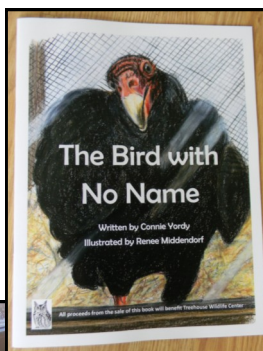
Thanks to Lisa again, we recently learned some fascinating information about Einstein that should help us respond more advantageously to some of the behaviors we've observed. Until just a few weeks ago, we did not know Einstein's sex. Determining sex is not as straightforward in birds as it is in mammals. In some birds, males and females have different colored plumage, but turkey vultures are not among these. There are no other external sex markers, and in birds behavior can never be used as a certain indicator. Unless a bird lays an egg, DNA analysis is the surest way of finding out.

So, a few weeks ago, Lisa came in for a training session and brought with her a kit for taking a blood sample from a toenail clipping. Although Einstein was a bit indignant over the whole ordeal, Lisa did manage to obtain the requisite drop of blood, which she then sent away to BioTest Lab for analysis. About a week later we got word back, and as it turns out...Einstein is female!

Mostly, this information satisfies our curiosity about one of TreeHouse's star residents. It does help to explain some of the behavior we've seen, but behavior is strange in human imprints, so not all of her behavior is necessarily in line with what we might expect. Knowing that Einstein is female could also be of importance if she would develop certain health issues in the future.

With help from Lisa, the TreeHouse interns, and other volunteers, Einstein has come a long way in the past few months. She has transformed from the Bird No One Would Name to one of the most interesting birds at TreeHouse, and to many, one of their favorites.

Orders can be placed through our web site or purchased directly from our gift shop.



Be the first on your block to own a copy of *The Bird with No Name* featuring Einstein the Turkey Vulture.

This is a great story for all ages by Connie Yordy. The illustrations by Renee Middendorf are spot on. In addition you will learn all about life in the wild for Turkey Vultures.

\$12 + \$5 (shipping and handling)
for 5 books or less.

\$12 + \$8 (shipping and handling)
for each book sent internationally

Jasper Finds a Surprise! by Bonnie Castroman

Member of the Board of Directors, and volunteer at TreeHouse

It was a summer evening and a storm was rolling towards us from the west. From our living room windows we watched the huge clouds and gray mist move quickly toward us from across the Mississippi. The weathermen on television warned us of heavy winds and possible tornadoes. So we kept everyone inside and hunkered down for the blast.

After the rain stopped pounding and the swirling leaves from the shaking trees settled down we let the Corgi out for a quick run. We kept an eye on him as he darted out the door... he stopped suddenly, nose twitching, curiosity sparking in his eyes, attention focused under a chair by the cedar tree in front of the house. "What's he looking at?" asked my husband, stepping outside to see. I joined him and bent down peering under the chair. It was hard to see, but there was something...it looked like a tiny round fuzzy gray ball. Jasper nuzzled it gently with his nose. I reached in and gingerly picked it up. It was a tight circle in the middle of my palm, pink and grey... cold and wet... and wiggled its nose and squeaked! Was it a squirrel or a chipmunk? It wasn't readily identifiable...it didn't look like any baby gray squirrels I had ever seen!

I have been volunteering at TreeHouse Wildlife Center for the past year, feeding orphaned gray and fox squirrels-- among other things. So I immediately recalled my lessons for caring for these tiny creatures. One of the first things is to gently warm up baby critters that are cold to the touch. So I soaked a washcloth with lukewarm water and wrapped the little thing in it. As soon as it felt warmer, I made sure it was dry and transferred it to a soft piece of baby blanket and put him in a basket. And then my husband asked, "Are you sure there aren't any more?"

Oh my gosh...I ran back out the door, calling the Corgi. "Jasper...are there any more? C'mon, look around!" It was getting dark and the ground cover under the tree was thick and wet. I pointed down and he stuck his nose in the leaves and sniffed around. No reaction. "How about over here, boy?" Again....nuzzle, nuzzle, nuzzle—and definitely a reaction. I stuck my hand down and fished around...another tiny little gray ball! We repeated the search pattern... no more, only that one! Into the house I ran, bent on my rescue mission. Warm up the critter, wrap him up, and then get them both to TreeHouse so I can get some milk into them!



I was scheduled to work that night as a volunteer on the evening shift, so it was perfect timing. I snuggled them into the basket, jumped into my car, and drove over the hills and through the woods to Dow, the small town in Illinois, where our beautiful eight and a half acres sits nestled in farmland between cornfields and cow meadows. Inside our large contemporary Frank Lloyd Wright style building—lots of windows and natural wood and beams—we have an amazing collection of equipment and supplies, made possible by contributions and donations. And more important: devoted people who volunteer their time on weekends and evenings, feeding, cleaning and caring for rescued wildlife.

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So, in I went with my two little rescued balls of fur. Trincy, our intern, was downstairs in the nursery area. We excitedly examined our little critters—"They must be chipmunks! They're too small to be squirrels. Look at the little brown fur around their eyes—and all that loose skin around their bellies. I've never seen a squirrel like that," she said.

We then went over to the 4-inch thick resource book, co-authored by Adele Moore, Founder of TreeHouse. First, looking at the section on mammals, specifically squirrels—Family: "sciuridae". Hmmmm.....there are several possibilities: tree squirrels, ground squirrels, chipmunks....(I didn't know woodchucks and prairie dogs were in the squirrel family!), and flying squirrels. Well....it was too hard to exactly figure out what they were! But according to the detailed charts we could calculate out how much to feed them according to their weight, and what mixture would be appropriate.

We prepared the warm mixture of water and powdered squirrel milk (which we purchase from a company that produces milk replacers for wildlife). And after feeding them with a syringe, slowly and carefully, we settled them into an incubator with lots of soft bedding to nestle into. They would be fed every 4 hours for several days until their body weight increased. Trincy was on duty—and she'd be getting up to feed the orphans!

When Adele saw them, she excitedly identified them as flying squirrels. Because they are nocturnal we don't see them very often, so this was a rare treat for our wildlife rescuers.



Planters located on two sides of the cages serve several purposes:

To "dress up" the solid wall along the bottom of the cages

To add some "greenery"

To direct the public to view the birds where they feel more secure. (Birds tend to get nervous when totally surrounded by people.

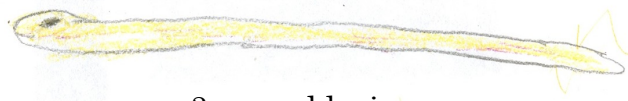
Planters can be fun to make! Our first set of planters were made as part of the Girl Scout Silver Award, Troop 893 from Queen of Peace School in Belleville in honor of Connie Yordy. Pictured are scouts Jill Ann Buettner, Kaitlynn Borik and Amy Bertelsman, plus their support team





Open House Drawing Contest Winners

Kids were asked to draw their favorite TreeHouse animal.
(The python and giraffe must have slipped in under the radar)



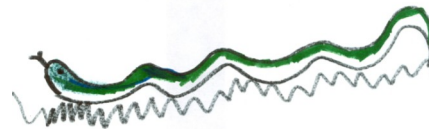
3 year old winner
Gregry



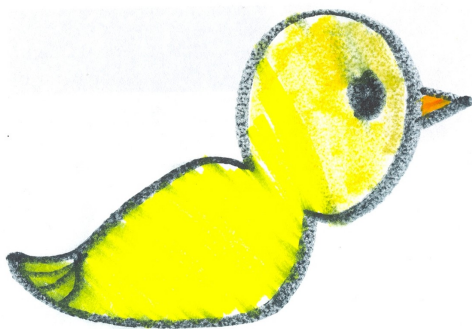
5 year old winner
Destiny



10 year old winner
Michael



6 year old winner
Ryan



8 year old winner
Shelby



7 year old winner
Ky

TreeHouse Open House Raffle Winners

iPad: Connie Yordy
Owl plates and cup: Darlene Wenner
Owl Afghan: Sue Crone
Wildlife Quilt: Maureen Auvenshine
Eagle Photo (3/4): Karen Montgomery
Woodpecker Photo: Sharon Gwillim
Eagle Family Photo: Rob Phelan
Eagle Photo (head on): Catherine Mikolay

Thanks to all who participated in our raffle



Dr. Phil McKinney performs an examination at the TreeHouse Open House Stuffed Animal Clinic

The 2012-2013 Nature Nuts Sessions are in Full Swing

by Kaeta Cronin, Environment Education Director

If you're not familiar with Nature Nuts, it is a nature education program for preschoolers. By offering a variety of outdoor activities and allowing children to explore the natural world with a hands-on approach, we are not only heightening their senses but helping to create awareness. As you know, children grow like weeds, and one of our activities this year involves tracking how much they have 'sprouted'.

Each session begins with a themed discussion and outdoor activity in which we encourage imaginative play. Incorporating a craft, snack, and story wrap-up, the children leave TreeHouse with new information and a new outlook on animals like turkey vultures, bobcats, the changing seasons, and experiences like exploring a bird's nest.

The 2013 Nature Nuts calendar will be available in November and will be offering special summer sessions for June and July! If you have a preschooler between the ages of 3 and 5 years old and are interested to see

what we have to offer, come give Nature Nuts a try. Morning and afternoon sessions are available, and children must be accompanied by an adult. Call for availability and pricing--sessions fill up fast!



Nature Nuts learn about vultures and make "vulture vomit"

AMEREN'S COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Ameren's regional office located in Maryville chose TreeHouse as their Community Connections project. Thirty-four employees and their families spent a Saturday helping TreeHouse with several projects, including painting, landscaping, and cage building among other things. It was a great day, we got a lot done, and we appreciate being chosen for this event. THANKS AMEREN!



Ameren employees working on the fox cage.

Gussie Reed from Ameren presents a check to Adele.

Photos by Victoria L. Busch



Past, Present and Future by Adele Moore

The morning of November 20th turned out to be one of those talked about perfect fall days – temperatures in the 60s, light breeze and bright blue sky. I was in the process of tearing down our intermediate flight cage to prepare for transport from our old facility in Brighton and re-assembling in Dow.

The only cage we will be moving was paid for through a campaign called Cash for a Cage. Members paid for cage slats in return for getting a name of their choice etched in the slat. As I was taking the slats from the cage I thought about certain names of members from the past. I wondered if they were still around and still interested in what we were doing. But as I moved around to the back of the cage and looked up, I re-discovered that we had placed three rows of slats containing the names of our permanent residents. Because this cage is 11 years old, most of the permanent residents listed are long gone.

As I took each slat off I was reminded of the animal, and how they touched many lives – both mine and countless other people's – through the years they called TreeHouse home: Searchlight the Screech Owl who mothered many orphaned Screeches, Casey the Cross Fox, magnificent Kahlua the Golden Eagle, McDuff and McBeth the Barn Owls, Freckles & Sprite the Kestrels.

When I finished taking off the last slat, I looked down from the ladder and there were the names – all of them scattered amongst the leaves. Soon we will add new permanent resident names to the group which will adorn the re-built cage at Dow linking the past to the future.



BUILDING REPORT



This beautiful pavilion is about 80% complete. We are currently looking for funding to complete this project.

Also needing funding are planters, the Avian Ward, and several rehabilitation cages.

Contact TreeHouse
for more information

Other Locations:

Troy Hawthorne
(618.667.4900)

Adair Gardens
(618.235.2744)

Countryside
(618.664.4420)

Hawthorne
ANIMAL HOSPITAL LTD.

Hawthorne Animal Hospital
#5 Cougar Drive
Glen Carbon, IL 62034
p. 618.288.3971
f. 618.288.3977
www.hawthorne.vetsuite.com

We take exceptional care of pets!

THANK YOU

Granite City High School Science Club
The Nature Institute, the Sierra Club,
Dr. Sue Stanley @ St. Clair Animal
Hospital; John Becker, Rich Edelman,
East Richland Middle School, Olney, Illinois
8th grade history teacher Bill Page;
Alton Lowes, Jim Droste Carpentry, Cope
Plastics, Cathy Rudy, Dale Kennedy,
Deana Browne, Eric Bloemker,
Youth Conservation Corps Workers,
Cheryl Pride, Dr. Linda Whittingham,
First United & Emmanuel Free Methodist
Churches, Althoff Catholic High School,
Lenhardts Tree & Lawn Service,
Jerseyville Charity Works, Jim Border,
Phil McKinney, DVM,
Dr. Jennifer Davis, DVM

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

IN MEMORY OF

Maurice Coatney
Sandra Samojeden
Oma Oetken
Joseph F. Doyle
Sadie Evers
Hans Peltiere

IN HONOR OF

Connie Yordy for years of
service at Queen of Peace
School, Belleville

TreeHouse from
Kaskaskia Audubon

Will & Susan Harbaugh's
25th Anniversary

Ava Hayes Birthday

Dr Paul and Donna Myer's
Birthday

Eric Bloemker's Birthday

**For more stories please check out
the intern's blog at:**

www.treehousenotebook.wordpress.com

Wish List

Paper towels
Dry dog food
33 gal. trash bags
Dryer sheets
Canned cat food with liver
Scotch-brite sponges
Welding gloves
Fishing nets with handles (all sizes)
Plastic animal kennels (all sizes)
6',8',10' & 12' step ladders
Garden hoses
Folding chairs
Pool covers
Gas cards
Cash donations
Gift cards for Home Depot or Lowes

If you have an animal in need of
rehabilitation, call

(618) 466-2990

or the

**BiState MO/IL Wildlife Hotline at
www.wildlifehotline.com or
(636)-492-1610**

If you have questions about
becoming a volunteer, or 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**

To Our Members and Supporters,

It is very important to get our
animals moved from Brighton to Dow
— the sooner the better. Our goal is
to vacate the Brighton hospital
building and move those operations
to Dow as soon as possible, but by
winter at the very latest.

We are incurring double expenses
because we're operating out of two
facilities, and we're hemorrhaging
cash from Brighton via high utility
bills due to the state of that building.
The only obstacle holding us back
right now is cash to renovate the
rehab area, and building more
outdoor caging in Dow.

**Any and all donations toward
this end are welcomed!**

**Company Gift Matching**

Many companies offer Charity
gift matching programs.

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

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 fee consists of a minimum donation of
\$20.00 annually.

Senior Citizen Membership fee consists of a minimum donation of
\$15.00 annually

Lifetime TreeHouse Membership fee consists of a **one-time** minimum donation
of **\$1,000.00**.

- ☐ 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**.
- ☐ I would like information on **volunteering to staff a TreeHouse booth at fundraisers**

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.**