

TreeHouse Droppings



In this issue: From the Co-Founder, TreeHouse President and Director of Development; Duck Tails; Axolotl; Interns; Armadillo; Dr. Chuckles; Flying Squirrels; TreeHouse Guardian Program; Gray Fox Kits; The Owl Society; RIP Boomerang

30+ years of giving back to the wild

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Pam Lippert**
(Senior Wildlife Tech)
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(Development Director)
Libby McGinley*
(Office manager)
Marcie Nagle
(Volunteer Coordinator)
Rachael Heaton**
(Rehabilitation Manager
Intern Coordinator &
Ass't Education Director)
Tabitha Yates*
(Rehabilitation Weekend Tech)
Jennifer Yordy
(TreeHouse Wildlife Explorers)

TreeHouse Wildlife Center employs
**three full-time, and
*two part-time staff members.

Photo Credits

Rachael Heaton, Eric Bloemker,
Marcie Nagle, Elizabeth Snyder,
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Active Volunteers

Judy & Jack Neiman,
Melvin & Shirley McCann,
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Sherri Medley, Dr. Paul Myer,
Charlie Deutsch, Eric Bloemker,
Granite City High School —
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Elaine Perkins, Amanda Dixon,
Kathy Border, Gary Surgeon,
Bill Crawford, Marcie Nagle,
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Social Network

Glenda Eaton, Web Master
Eric Bloemker, Website
Rachael Heaton, Facebook

IT'S ABOUT THE ANIMALS

I have never been comfortable being out front. Behind the scenes is where I feel most at home. This was recently played out when I met a gentlemen from St. Louis who is a long-time environmentalist. He was asking questions about TreeHouse and how long TreeHouse has been around and how long I had been with TreeHouse. I told him I started it 36 years ago, and he looked surprised. I told him I tended to stay behind the scenes and he said, "Well, you've done a good job because I've never heard of you". I thought, mission accomplished!



Adele circa early 1980's

My feeling has always been that it's not about me, it's not about the staff, or even the volunteers. It's all about the animals. Sometimes the public knows more about the people running non-profit organizations than the animals and the circumstances that brought them to us. They have interesting stories to tell.

That being said, many, many people have contributed to the success of TreeHouse over the years. I would like to recognize the volunteers who started out at our original site in Brighton and are still with us today: Pam Lippert, Mel McCann and Judy Neiman. Our paid staff is small, but go above and beyond their responsibilities to make things work: Pam Lippert, Rachael Heaton, Libby McGinley, Andrea Schnelton, and Tabitha Yates. Special thanks as well to our board members: Eric Bloemker, Charlie Deutsch, Rod Davis, Mel McCann, Tom Foster, Marcie Nagle, Rachael Heaton and Libby McGinley.

Also our construction and grounds crew: Mel McCann, Tom Foster, Ann Robertson, Rod Davis, Jim & Sherry Droste, Jim Goetten, Ray and Robin Riefler, Gary Surgeon and Bill Crawford. Lunch Ladies: Elaine (Perky) Perkins and Shirley McCann. Transporters: Penny Moon, Connie Yordy, Mike & Stephanie Jacob, and Robert Elliott.

And special thanks to all the Hawthorne Animal Hospital veterinarians and vet techs, especially Dr. Paul Myer and Sherri Medley.

To TreeHouse members, both old and new, your support and donations are the reason we have been able to care for approximately 16,000 animals in need of rehabilitation. Some of you have been contributors for as long as we've been in operation, and I hope you continue to support us for years to come. Wildlife and the people who care about wildlife in need in a large area of Illinois count on us.

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After much thought and consideration I have decided to retire from TreeHouse Wildlife Center effective December 31, 2015. Everything and more that I first envisioned in 1972 has been accomplished at TreeHouse in the field of wildlife rehabilitation and education. After 36 years since our incorporation there has been no secret that I would like to spend more time with my family (especially my grandson), as well as finishing my new home. It's been a great adventure to say the least.

As I explained to the board of directors I am giving up my duties and responsibilities, but I'm not going to disappear totally. I will continue to volunteer for events, attend board meetings, and volunteer as a greeter.

TreeHouse has great people in place who can take this operation to the next level. New people with new ideas need a place to grow on their own. I am confident we have the right people in place, and prospective people in mind for needed additional staff positions for TreeHouse to continue to be a first class operation for wildlife long into the future.

Sincerely,



Adele T. Moore,
Co-Founder



4 Fawns moving to their outdoor pen by Molly, Rachael, Hayley and Monica.

Weeks later the fawns hanging out in their pen.



PRESIDENT'S AERIE by Eric Bloemker

Greetings to all. 'Tis the holiday season. This has been a year to be truly thankful. TreeHouse Wildlife Center has had a record number of admittances this year. Whether the critters were rescued by TreeHouse staff or volunteers or by the general public, each animal is given a second chance. Rehabilitation is sometimes a long and painful process, but a great reward for all involved when we are able to release that animal back into the wild. This is no small task, and it is made possible by the generous donations of our members and sponsors.

Not only have a record number of critters been to TreeHouse this year, a record number of visitors as well. While mostly on weekends, we get several visitors during the week, as well. In order to make these visits informative and interesting for the visitors, TreeHouse has volunteer greeters, but we can always use more. TreeHouse is looking for dedicated volunteers. If you can commit to a regular time slot, please check out our website for volunteer information. We have opportunities for working with the animals, if so desired. Of course, an operation like TreeHouse also needs construction, administrative, and cleaning.

More animals, more people, more volunteers, and more staff. This year has seen TreeHouse Wildlife Center grow. My thanks to all of you for what you have done. To continue to grow and serve wildlife for our community, we need your help. Please consider gift giving for the holidays. Check with your employer about matching gifts, too. With your continuing help, TreeHouse will be serving the community for years to come.

Next year, 2016, will bring changes to TreeHouse. Adele Moore, co-founder of Treehouse, is retiring, but not gone. While she'll be spending more time with their grandchild, she'll still be volunteering on a reduced schedule, adding to those 36 years that started in her backyard. Without Adele, TreeHouse never would have made it this far. We wish her the best in her retirement. She has secured TreeHouse's future with excellent staff and highly trained volunteers. Thanks, Adele!

We are excited to step up to the challenges ahead, and we look forward to doing so with your help. I hope to see many of you this eagle watching season. Cheers!

HELLO TREEHOUSE DROPPINGS READERS!

My name is Andrea Schnelten and I am thrilled to be on staff at TreeHouse Wildlife Center. I started at TreeHouse in August as the Director of Development. Previously, I worked for 10 years at JDRF, a Type 1 Diabetes International Non-Profit Organization. At JDRF, I helped to create, build and manage a National Outreach Program. I am originally from Florissant, Missouri, but moved to North Carolina with JDRF, in 2010, I moved back to the area to my grandparents farm, in Rockbridge, Illinois, to help manage it.



I am married to a wonderful husband, Daryl, and have three great stepchildren, Brady (13), Haley (10) and Koby (9). They all love TreeHouse and have all already gotten involved in volunteering on their days off school. We have lots of pets and farm animals at home, we often joke that we have a mini petting zoo, with 5 dogs, 6 cats, 2 fainting goats, 6 rabbits, 3 llamas, 1 horse, 5 donkeys, 1 mini donkey, a swan, a flock of chickens and a herd of cows. I have always had a passion for animals and wildlife, so the opportunity of this position at TreeHouse seemed to be a natural fit. I have a Masters degree from Washington University in Social Work, with focus on Non Profit Management, Development and Marketing.

I have been so impressed by the passion and commitment of the staff, donors and volunteers at TreeHouse. I consider it a real blessing to be working with such great people for a very important cause. I feel positive that working together as staff, members, donors and volunteers, we can continue to grow. I look forward to meeting each and every one of you. Please do not hesitate to introduce yourself when you call or visit TreeHouse.



Pam, Rachael and the interns working on an eagle's foot.

DUCK TAILS by Judy Neiman



Which one is not like the others.
Can you spot the one mallard duckling
among the wood ducklings?

Well, it was a record year for orphan ducklings. They came in groups of 9, 11, 13 etc. We received about 91 mallards (nine died as babies) and 50 wood ducks (5 died as babies). Overcrowding became a problem and we had difficulties keeping that many waterproof. But in the end we released 127 ducks.

GOOD MOM

Jack and I went out on Hwy 111 near I-270 where a mother duck and nine babies had tried to cross four lanes of traffic. She was struck by a car, had a badly broken wing, and was sitting on the shoulder of the road in shock. IDOT sent a truck out with warning lights to help deter traffic but there was a very narrow shoulder at that point. The babies had scattered into a small watery ditch with high grass. We walked up and down the ditch trying to hear their soft peeping over the noise of traffic. We saw two moving through the grass and caught them. Then four more, and we continued to listen for the rest. The babies tend to stay together. We finally spotted the rest and were able to net them in one fell swoop. Now everyone was safe.

Dr. Myer set Mom's wing but she will never fly again.

I brought Mom and babies home and caged them together outside. That night it was supposed to get to the mid 40's so it was important to keep Mom alive to brood them. I worried through the night that she would be a good Mom. The next morning I nervously checked on them and there was Mom standing up with 18 little legs underneath her. She brooded them until they were able to thermoregulate their body temperature. Once they were fully feathered we released Mom and her brood at the lake at Brighton where Adele keeps the water open all year. All seemed happy as they playfully splashed in the water.



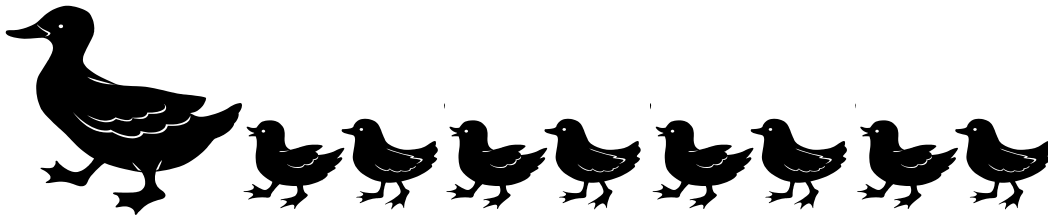
Duck Tails continued

NOT SO GOOD MOM

Another time a lady had 13 mallard babies in her yard. Mom had decided this was a good place since she had an above ground pool for them to swim. The lady had a wooden fence around the yard. She kept opening the gate but Mom would not leave with her babies

We decided to catch the babies and use them to lure Mom to a snare. We started gathering them up when four ran under the gate and into a school yard. Guess what? It was recess time and a dozen seven year olds started yelling "Look at the cute little ducks." Now here we were (70 and 80 years old) trying to out run ducklings and speedy little kids. Luckily we had nets and were able to out run everyone. I know it was stressful for the ducklings but we let the children touch them and explained to the children the ducklings were not pets and needed to be with their Mom.

Then after five tries we were unable to catch Mom and she flew off. So the babies were raised for two weeks at my house and seven weeks at TreeHouse. They were all released at nine weeks of age when they were able to fly.



MIRACLE BABY

Ducklings have a yolk sac that will keep them fed for two days after they are hatched. After that if they don't eat they will starve in two more days.

A man from Madison called and said he found five wood ducks. Two had already died and he brought the other three to us. Two were quite alert and started eating right away. The third was laying on her side. I gave her small drinks of dextrose every half hour and soon she began sitting up. More dextrose and she began eating. She had truly come back from meeting her master. All three turned out to be female and were released when they were able to fly.

A NEW FACE by Rachael Heaton

We have a new little critter in our education center. If you haven't seen him, you'll have to come check him out. He is a cool little salamander that is called an **Axolotl!** What is that you say? Axo-lot-l.

This critically endangered species is a neotenic salamander that is native to a couple of lakes in Mexico. Salamanders are an amphibian just like a frog. The axolotl is a close relative to our own native tiger salamander. However, unlike our native salamander which looks similar to an axolotl as a baby and then grows into a land dwelling critter, the axolotl stays and matures in its underwater stage of growth. This is what it means to be neotenic.



This species is endangered because most of its habitat has become lost or polluted due to the artificial draining of Lake Chalco and the growth of Mexico City around Lake Xochimilco. Fortunately, a large population exists in captivity and the species has become a fascination among scientists. Axolotls are able to regrow most damaged body parts as needed including limbs and organs, so they can tolerate any organ transplants with no problems, and they can breathe both air and underwater. A researcher once implanted a gene from a jellyfish that causes it to glow under black light into the DNA of an axolotl. The axolotl developed the same ability and then passed it on to all of its offspring. Now there is a bloodline of axolotls in captivity that can glow under black light! Axolotls come in a variety of colors such as black, white, golden, albino, and wild type (fish colored). They have a lifespan of 15 years and grow 6 to 18 inches in length, though about 9 inches is the most common. They are carnivorous, consuming small prey by sucking in with a vacuum like force.

Efforts have been made to try to help restore the population of axolotls in the wild, but unfortunately they still have a long way to go. Current conservation is focused on raising awareness and trying to bring nature tourism to Lake Xochimilco to ensure the protection of the lake along with habitat restoration. Until then, a captive population is being kept up by zoos, scientists, and by hobbyists. You can help the axolotl by spreading the word and donating to causes and centers that are working with these salamanders.

INTERN SUMMER-FALL UPDATE

TreeHouse's intern/extern program was active again the last half of 2015. Since the last newsletter we've played host to a total of ten students from across the globe. Interns are students who live on site at the center and externs are local students who commute to the center from home.



Miriam from
Illinois College



Elizabeth from
Webster University



Chelsea from
Ohio University



Emelie from Illinois College



Susanna from Union University



Jess from
Elizabeth College



Molly from
Tuskegee University School
of Veterinary Medicine



Zach from
Mckendree University

"I enjoy working with everyone here everyday. I love this place, every people here and every animal! Here doesn't have many large and strong animals like lions or tigers, and I liked mammals more than birds before I came here. But now, I love every animal, even if its just a common squirrel (crazy squirrels!) Here, I learn how to get along with wild animals. Now, I can't imagine how to live in a place where there is no corns, no farms and no animals. Also, I can't imagine my life back to school. So sad I am leaving, but I really hope I can come back to here! "



Wei-Ting (Winnie) Kuo from
National Taiwan University



The time I spent interning at TreeHouse was one of the greatest hands on experiences I could have hoped for in an internship. Over the course of eight weeks, I learned how to do many different skills within a profession. I learned how to do animal care and husbandry, wildlife rehabilitation and releases, and how to inform and educate the public about wildlife. I couldn't have asked for a better working environment or people to learn under and work with during my time at TreeHouse."

Hayley Trzinski, Intern from University of Wisconsin

My Internship at TreeHouse Wildlife Center by Michelle
University of Aberdeen, UK

"At 5am on a cold Wednesday morning, I left Scotland to embark on my new adventure to intern at TreeHouse Wildlife Centre. After 3 flights, 20 hours and impressively consistent difficulties at passport control, I finally arrived into the small town of Dow, Illinois. There are over 100 animals at TreeHouse, including various species of mammals, birds and reptiles, and although I loved every minute of working with them all, there is one that I couldn't help but particularly bond with: Lily, a Barred Owl who came in to the Center a few weeks in to my internship. Unfortunately with Lily's injuries, she would be unable to release back into the wild, and so she has to be kept at the Center as an educational Owl. The forever-hungry Lily, had to be hand fed every evening as she appeared to have very limited vision/ coordination - a job that I loved to do for her. Lily is also known for being one of the more vocal animals kept in the ward, as we would hear her hooting and hollering all day from the gift shop upstairs, and even from my bedroom at night.



My final week came too fast, however it brought with it the most rewarding of all my experiences at Treehouse, and really put into context why we all volunteer to help these wild but vulnerable animals. We travelled for nearly two hours north of Dow to an area outside Springfield, where we were tasked with releasing two Gray Fox kits back into the wild. As soon as those crate doors opened, before we could even blink, the kits were gone, running straight for the woods, never looking back. Although it was all over in a second, that feeling of satisfaction still lingers even now - knowing that the work that you did, day in, day out, had all paid off, and that those Fox kits are finally back where they belong.

After just two months of living and interning at TreeHouse, I can confidently say that it was one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life. The knowledge and experience that I gained in animal care and wildlife rehabilitation will be incredibly beneficial to my future career, but it's the life experience that I value most – all the amazing people I met and worked alongside, who made me feel welcome, at that place I called home for two months. I already look forward to the day when I can return to visit the center."

ARMADILLO RESCUE

by Rachael Heaton

Hundreds of animals come through TreeHouse every year. Most of the time these include birds of prey, squirrels, opossums, deer, ducks, and geese. Every now and then however, we get in an animal that we didn't expect. This year we received a call about an armadillo! This is the first armadillo that I've seen come to



the center since I started in 2012 and possibly only the third armadillo that has ever been admitted to TreeHouse. The armadillo population has been slowly and naturally expanding northward. In fact, armadillos have been spotted in southern Illinois for quite a few years now. We knew that at some point we would start getting calls for these little animals, and we were starting to get reports they were being spotted in our area. Nonetheless, it was still a surprise for all of us when this call came in!

He was found in Breese, IL on October 5th and appeared to have been hit by a car. He arrived at the center and I remember peering into the box and seeing a nine-banded armadillo up close for the first time. I personally like to describe them as looking like roly-poly pigs. They have a long nose with a pig-like snout and appear to be wearing leather armor all over their body. The size of the claws that the animal uses for digging also caught my eye! I put on a pair of thick gloves and carefully lifted the armadillo out of the box by grabbing him around the middle. He squirmed a little bit but otherwise didn't fuss too much. He obviously wasn't feeling very well. While I held him, we gave him a thorough examination and found that he had a few scrapes as well as a possible fracture in his back right leg. We cleaned his wounds and prepared his hospital enclosure with extra blankets. Now what? I had personally never admitted an armadillo before and the center's experience as a whole with them was limited.

I spent about half an hour on the phone with a rehabilitator from Texas learning as much as I could about armadillos and their care, and I learned so many fascinating things about them. For instance, they prefer to only live in areas

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with softer soil and do not thrive in areas with hard or clay soil. I also learned that despite their appearance, they are very fast runners and amazing swimmers! They can even hold their breath for up to six minutes.

When we put the recommended food in with the armadillo, he immediately reacted! He quickly sniffed out the bowl and ate all of it, even tipping the bowl up so he could get every last bite. Now, he is well settled in his hospital cage and likes to spend his time curled up tight in all of his blankets. Armadillos also have a harder time than other mammals when it comes to maintaining body heat, so it's very important that he is always kept in a warm place.



The armadillo has since had a check-up with our veterinarian at Hawthorne Animal Hospital in Glen Carbon. It is believed that he will make a complete recovery and he should be able to be released in the spring. He has provided a new and interesting experience for all of us at TreeHouse and we've been thrilled to work with him.

Armadillos need to dig to find their food which includes grubs and insects. Though this can indeed be an issue for our gardens and lawns, they are certainly not the only animal that does this. Many of our local wildlife dig to find food. Regardless, armadillos do better in areas with soft soil and most of our local area has hard clay soil. I don't think it is nearly as big of a problem as some people make it out to be, though cases of extreme lawn damage can certainly happen, just like it can happen with groundhogs or even pet dogs.

Armadillos are also feared due to the hype about them carrying leprosy. There seems to be a fear that all armadillos have leprosy and that you can catch leprosy if you come into contact with one. Armadillos are the only other animal on the planet besides humans that is known to be able to have leprosy. However, it is uncommon and has so far been isolated in the southern states with a couple cases being reported in Florida this year. When I spoke to the rehabilitator in Texas about this, she informed me, as much as people worry about catching leprosy from armadillos, it is believed that armadillos originally caught the disease by coming in contact with infected humans! Even if an armadillo is carrying leprosy, it is very difficult to actually catch the disease for it is not very contagious. Statistically, you're more likely to catch leprosy from another person than you are from an armadillo.

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Last but not least, many people consider the armadillo an invasive species that is not native to Illinois and therefore should be taken back south. However, this is also not true, as the armadillo population is native to North America and is expanding northward naturally. For a species to be considered a non-native and invasive species, it must have been brought to the continent through unnatural means. For instance, the infamous Japanese honey suckle! Because armadillos, are already native to North America, they do not fall under the same category.

Armadillos have plenty of competitors for food in the area as well as a few natural predators such as coyotes and bobcats. How about the Illinois winters? It is true that armadillos thrive better in warmer climates so it is likely that they won't be able to live much further north. They do not hibernate, require a constant water source, and need unfrozen soft ground to find food. Despite this, the population at least in southern Missouri seems to be resilient so perhaps the armadillos are adapting in some way or have been taking advantage of changes in the environment caused by humans, such as people keeping ponds or lakes open year round.

The armadillo is certainly a fascinating and ancient looking creature. We at TreeHouse hope that we can dispel the negative mindset that many people seem to have for this native species. When I walk into the room that houses our armadillo patient and see him standing up with his front feet on the door of his enclosure looking in my direction, I see a creature that is worth saving and learning about. People seem to fear things that they don't understand or are perhaps not accustomed to. I urge everyone that is reading this, to please, no matter what the topic or creature is, to research and learn more about it before casting judgement. You may be surprised!



Planter Box
Girl Scout Silver Award
Project by

Katie Reagan
Girl Scout Troop 899
Granite City, IL

DR. CHUCKLES by Dr. Marcie Nagle

I was startled as I opened the door and she was unexpectedly standing there. She looked tense and uncertain. “Hi, I was wondering if I could see Chuckles”, she said softly. “Sure”, I replied and led her to the enclosure. Chuckles was lying on her shelf, basking herself in the sun. I pointed her out to her visitor, along with Zorro, the gray fox with whom Chuckles shares an enclosure. I also pointed out the two gray fox kits that were peeking out of the log inside the enclosure. Both had been fostered by Chuckles and Zorro over the summer.

“Hi Chuckles”, the visitor said. Chuckles looked over, her eyes slitted almost shut against the sun. “I found a video of Chuckles on the internet,” she said. “Yes”, I replied. “Chuckles is very popular.” “I read that she has a brain injury and that’s why she can’t be released.” “That’s right”, I said. “Chuckles’ siblings were killed by a dog. The dog’s owner got there just in time to see the dog shaking Chuckles but was able to save her. She was very young and the shaking caused neurological injuries, similar to Shaken Baby Syndrome in humans. She was brought to TreeHouse and we’ve taken care of her ever since.”



The visitor’s eyes filled with tears. “You are such a strong, brave girl”, she whispered to Chuckles. She turned back to me and said “Do you think Chuckles is happy?” I considered the question carefully, then said “Chuckles would not survive on her own. Here she is safe and cared for. She has Zorro for company. She can enjoy the sun like she is doing today. She can shelter in her log if she wants to. She has space to move about freely. She has food and water and we give her raw chicken for treats. She “laughs” when we talk to her and I truly think she has a bond with us. And every year when we get fox kits to rehabilitate, she and Zorro foster them, teach them to be foxes. Chuckles is a very good mom. So, yes, I think she is happy.”

The visitor was staring at Chuckles, tears freely sliding down her cheeks. “I’ve had a very hard year” she said. “I’ve really struggled and sometimes wondered if I would make it. Then I happened across Chuckles’ video and she made me so happy. On my really bad days, I would watch her videos and it always helped.” Her voice trembled a little as she spoke directly to Chuckles. “You’ve really helped me. I thank you. I love you, Chuckles.” I watched a minute, then said “Wait right here. I’ll be right back.”

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I went inside the Education Center and told the other volunteers about Chuckles' visitor and my plan. We gathered up our supplies and went back outside. The visitor still stood talking to Chuckles. We approached and I said "We'd like to show you how Chuckles gets her treats and what she does with them." The visitor's eyes widened. "Oh, I would love that," she said. One of the volunteers went to the door of the enclosure and opened it. She walked inside with a bucket, then tossed the treats of raw chicken, one for Zorro, one for each of the fox kits, and one for Chuckles. Each fox grabbed their treat and went off by itself to enjoy it. Chuckles licked hers, then crunched it a time or two. But then she did what she always does when she has babies she is fostering. She called to them and as they came to her, she nosed the treat in their direction, giving it to them. Mission accomplished, she climbed back up on her shelf and stretched out in the sun.

"She always does that," we told her visitor. "Chuckles is a great mom and takes good care of her babies." The visitor was smiling and crying at the same time. "Thank you for letting me see that," she said. "It really meant a lot to me." One of the volunteers smiled. "I recorded it on my phone," she said. "I'll send you a copy. You'll have your own video of Chuckles to watch whenever you want." The visitor's smile was beaming and proof, once again, of the emotional power of animals to help us all heal.



The young gray fox meets
red fox "Chuckles"
for the first time.

See story pages 20-21

The now grown gray fox pre-release



THE FLYER by Rachael Heaton

Did you know that there is a small little mammal that lives in your backyard? This mammal has a tail with long hair, large eyes, runs around in the branches of your trees, and loves to eat nuts and bugs. No, it is not the extremely common gray squirrel. This animal is rarely seen because it is out at night. It also has the ability to move from tree to tree without touching the ground. Do you know what it is? It is the Southern Flying Squirrel! Many people do not know that we



actually have a native flying squirrel in our area. The smallest of the squirrel species, this cute critter prefers to live in wooded areas with old trees. This is because they nest in tree cavities and also hunt for insects. They cannot actually fly but they do have a membrane on both sides of their body that reaches from their front legs down to their back legs that gives them the ability to glide long distances. Their tail is also flat and helps them steer in the air, even making 90 degree turns! When they approach their target, they bring their legs forward which causes the membrane to act like a parachute to slow them down so they can safely land on the tree.

Flying Squirrels are uncommon at TreeHouse but occasionally we do admit this fascinating animal. They often come in as young orphans. This year, we received a phone call from a homeowner in Grafton Hills who found a baby squirrel on the ground in her backyard. I arrived at her house and she led me around the back and over to the wood line. There she was. She was a small little flying squirrel just sitting in the leaf litter and she was being harassed by flies. She also appeared to be thin and lethargic. Flies buzzing around a baby is never good. They seem to sense if an animal is weakened and will start laying eggs on them right away. Fly larva can often kill an animal that we could have otherwise saved if someone had found the animal sooner. As soon as I arrived at the center, I brought her into the exam room to look her over. She had a few fly eggs here and there but thankfully none had hatched yet. I placed her into our incubator and when she was warmed up, I offered her some fluids. Flying squirrels are fragile little creatures, and I wasn't convinced that she could pull out of this. She was thin, weak, and had obviously been left alone for a while. What could have happened to her mother? Did she have siblings?

I was not about to give up on her however. I decided to take her on as a foster thinking that one-on-one attention may be the only thing that could pull her through. This meant that she would go everywhere with me. For cases such as

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this, I actually use a fanny pack with small little blankets inside so that the orphan is literally attached to me where ever I go. It may look funny but you'd be surprised that no one ever asks about the fanny pack! It also keeps the squirrel close to my body to help keep her warm and I can feel if she is moving around. I allowed her to eat as often as she wanted which was typically every two hours. After a few days, there was a definite change. She was getting stronger and more alert. Perhaps she would pull through after all! She became a fascination amongst my friends and family who would look over to suddenly see me pull a flying squirrel out of my pack and start feeding it formula. The life of a wildlife rehabilitator.

After a week or two when she seemed stable and healthy, I slowly started to wean her off formula and moved her into a small wire enclosure so she could have room to run around. However, she was showing absolutely no interest in solid food. I still offered her formula but I spaced it out to keep her hungry in the hope that she would eventually break down and eat the solid food. After several days, she finally tried a sunflower seed. I very slowly backed off on the formula until she was eating only solid food and drinking water and moved her into a larger wire cage with another flying squirrel that we had in our care.

This individual was an adult male that had a problem with his back hip. He very likely will be non-releasable and become an education animal but he could at least offer her companionship. Flying squirrels do like to have friends and I certainly wasn't the right kind of friend. She needed to learn to socialize and be with other flying squirrels. The first few days, she avoided him and he could have cared less. Eventually however, I came downstairs into the nursery where they were housed and found her nestled in the blanket pouch with him. Another success!



Now it was time to think about her release. I did some research and found out that young flying squirrels born late in the year like she was have been known to spend the winter with their parents. It was getting late in the year and she hadn't had time to store up food. I decided the best thing I could do in this case was let her spend the winter with us and her new flying squirrel friend. When spring comes next year, we plan to return her to Grafton Hills to live out the rest of her life in the wild.

THE TREEHOUSE GUARDIAN PROGRAM by:Andrea Schnelten, MSW

As supporters of TreeHouse, you all know that the care and treatment of injured wildlife is our first priority. Release back to the wild is our goal. We have several veterinarians and volunteers that graciously donate their services, but the cost of rescue, rehabilitation and release of wildlife is still significant. The Guardian Program is an exciting new program that allows donors to exclusively sponsor a resident animal for one year, renewable. Supporting a resident animal's food and care allows TreeHouse to put money towards the animals receiving rehabilitative care.

Many of you already are aware that our resident animals help us serve the community through environmental education. Most of the TreeHouse resident animals serve an important purpose. Some of them are Outreach and Education animals for events, while others serve as foster parents to orphan animals that come in through our rehabilitation program, and several help to educate TreeHouse guests by viewing them up close in their enclosures.

All of the resident animals at TreeHouse have a unique story and are here because they are unreleasable. We are encouraging everyone to consider participating in the Guardian program, it offers a unique and personal way to show your support for TreeHouse. Laurie Jones thought of the Guardian Program as a unique opportunity to pay tribute to the memory of young woman named Emily. Laurie's co-worker Bill Pinney's daughter Emily, lost her life in a tragic car accident. After reading about the Guardian Program at this year's Owl Fest,



Bill meeting "Emily" the Screech Owl

Laurie along with her co-workers we were moved to sponsor an unnamed Red Screech Owl in the memory of Bill's daughter, Emily. One of the unique benefits of the program, is to name the animal if it is unnamed so, Emily Pinney's memory will live on in "Emily" our Red Female Screech Owl. Laurie and her co-workers together with TreeHouse staff were able to present this guardianship with a surprise visit to TreeHouse and a very special introduction of Bill Pinney to the Screech Owl "Emily". It was a very touching event and a great way to recognize the life and spirit of a young woman through the Guardian Program. This program is a great way to recognize someone's memory or life as Laurie did or to create a new personal story.

continued

TreeHouse Guardian Program continued

Signing up to be a TreeHouse Guardian comes with several unique benefits:

- Certificate of Adoption
- Sole sponsor of the animal of your choice for one year, renewable (initial animal choice available on a first come, first serve basis)
- Your name as a guardian on a visible plaque located on your resident animal's enclosure
- 5x7 full color photograph of your resident animal sent to you
- Permanent naming rights for the animal if unnamed
- One year's subscription to the TreeHouse Wildlife Center newsletter printed twice per year
- Natural history and life history of your resident animal
- Special Treehouse Wildlife Center Guardian T-shirt
- 10% discount on all TreeHouse Wildlife Center merchandise in our gift shop
- Invitation to annual appreciation dinner
- One hour complimentary onsite tour to you and your family, your classroom or group per year (must call to schedule)
- For Guardians of Education or Outreach Animals we offer one complimentary visit and presentation to your group, company or school with your Outreach and Education animal per year (must call to schedule)
- For Guardians of Education or Outreach Animals we will mention you as a sponsor by name when introducing the animal at all Outreach and Education functions your animal attends
- For sponsorship of Famous TreeHouse Animals additional benefits are available, contact us to discuss further

Some of the best TreeHouse Guardians are classrooms and scout troops. In addition to learning about animals, children also learn the benefits of giving, since every dollar raised goes directly to the care and feeding of the animals. We encourage everyone to request a brochure from the office staff, read the stories of the resident animals, and find one that connects with you or your situation. For more information, call the TreeHouse office at 618-466-2990 or email treehouse.andrea@gmail.com.

THE GRAY KITS by Rachael Heaton

In North America, the red fox is a common sight and visitor all across the USA and Canada. However other native species include the Arctic Fox, Gray Fox, Island Gray Fox, Kit Fox, and the Swift Fox. Our area happens to be home to two types of foxes, the red fox and the gray fox. The gray fox is not as well known here as it is in other areas and many people have never even heard of them. This is mainly because these foxes seem to occupy more remote woodland areas instead of open areas like the red fox.



The gray fox is actually not a close relative of the red fox and is scientifically not even considered a true fox despite exhibiting many fox like traits and behaviors. Due to the genetic differences they cannot interbreed with red foxes. Grays are a little smaller than red foxes, have a black tipped tail that is triangular rather than circular, and have black markings on their face. They eat many of the same prey, especially mice and other small abundant mammals. However, the gray fox has an extra trick up its sleeve that sets it apart from the red fox. It is one of only two canines in the world that can effectively climb trees, the other being the Asian Raccoon Dog. It has tough curved claws that allow it to climb straight up a branchless tree and can descend down such a tree backwards like a cat.

At TreeHouse Wildlife Center, we admit mostly young red foxes that have become lost, injured, or orphaned. Occasionally we do admit a gray fox, most of which are adult gray foxes suffering from canine distemper. We've rarely ever admitted a young gray fox — the last in 2009 which was our much loved permanent resident gray fox, Zorro. He was discovered in a den along the Great River Road bike trail near Elsah, along with his sibling. Both were in bad shape and there was a strong odor of dead animal nearby which was thought to be the mother. The sibling died soon after admission. Zorro lived, but has a neurological problem which sporadically manifests itself in semi-functioning back legs. At times he walks normally, and other times he does not.

Zorro has spent the last few years helping Chuckles, our permanent red fox, raise young red foxes to be released back into the wild. In all of that time however, he hasn't seen much of other gray foxes. That all changed this year when we admitted a young gray fox kit in late May this year. The small kit was found wandering around by himself near Springfield. Though small, he was feisty and often tried to scare us off when we walked by his hospital enclosure.

He spent a couple weeks in our hospital until he was weaned and then moved outside to be with our permanent residents, Chuckles and Zorro, so that they could teach him how to be a fox. At first, he was very nervous and stayed hidden. Chuckles, being the nurturing foster mother that she is, came up to greet him. At first he tried to scare her off. Chuckles seemed to not be phased by it at all and went off to grab some raw meat that we had thrown in the enclosure for enrichment. She picked it up and brought it right back to the kit. This quickly changed the kit's mind about Chuckles! He immediately started begging for the food and excitedly took it from Chuckles. After that, he ran back and forth with the meat in excitement for a while before finally settling down and eating it. During this time, Zorro was resting on the other side of the enclosure and didn't seem too interested in what was happening.

Zorro left the foxes alone since Chuckles had readily adopted the little one but when I came back to check on them the next morning, I had to smile. Zorro had at some point realized that it wasn't just another red fox kit in the enclosure, but a gray fox just like him! The gray fox kit was following Zorro around and the older fox seemed very happy with his new charge. He was sharing his food with the kit, resting with the kit, and basically going all over the enclosure with him. The trio were now a very happy family. We expected we would get in a few red fox kits to add to the family but this would turn out to be a very different year. We did not admit any very young red foxes this year. However, a couple weeks after our gray fox kit was put with his foster parents, we admitted a second gray fox kit who had been found in roughly the same area as the first fox. The two seemed to be the same age so we believe that they may have been siblings. At first, he didn't seem to know what to do when introduced to the others. After all, it had been a while since he had seen another fox, however it didn't take long for him to latch onto Chuckles as a new mom!

What was interesting to watch, was when the first kit came to meet the new kit. At first they seemed confused but then our first kit started trying to play with his long lost sibling. The second kit seemed happy but a little unsure of how to respond to this other kit jumping all over him and running around him. After a few days, the new kit settled in nicely with his family, and seemed to prefer Chuckles' gentler nature, often sticking close to her side. The enclosure seemed to come alive with activity with the new additions. Chuckles and Zorro were thrilled as usual to help raise the next generation of foxes. Chuckles continued to spoil both of them, but once they neared their full size, Zorro no longer shared his food with them. That was our indication that they were ready to be on their own. In the fall we transported them back toward Springfield where they were released in a remote area, and took off like rockets from their traveling crates once the doors were open. Another successful year in wildlife rehabilitation!

JOIN THE TREEHOUSE “OWL SOCIETY” by Andrea Schnelten

Early this Fall we were thrilled to learn that TreeHouse would be receiving a large donation from the will of Robert Canham. This donation was quite a surprise and also a true blessing to TreeHouse, as it came at a much needed time. We are greatly appreciative of those individuals who choose to think of TreeHouse when planning their wills, estate or trusts. However, often times we only learn of their thoughtfulness to TreeHouse, after they have passed. When really, we would like to have the opportunity to say thank you and honor those individuals while they are alive.

With this in mind, we are starting a new planned giving donor recognition program called, “The Owl Society”. The Owl is often thought to be a spiritual bird in some Native American cultures and we thought it appropriate to recognize this special group of donors in this way.



To become a part of the TreeHouse Owl Society, you simply need to notify us at, 618-466-2990 or treehouse.andrea@gmail.com. Let us know that you have put TreeHouse in your planning for your will, 401K beneficiary, estate, or trust. We will then send you a special Owl Society Pin and add you to a special mailing list, for a unique newsletter just for the Owl Society, once a year. We will also recognize the Owl Society members in all our regular newsletters. You can let us know if you would like to be part of the Owl Society, but not publicly recognized and we would be happy to respect your privacy.

If you have any questions or are considering putting TreeHouse in your will, we would be happy to speak with you and answer any questions that we can related to charitable planned giving. TreeHouse wants to ensure that all donors are given proper recognition and thanks. We think the “Owl Society” will help us ensure our thanks, for those who remember TreeHouse in their financial planning.

Charter members of The Owl Society are Melvin & Shirley McCann



Wish List

33 gal. trash bags
Plastic animal kennels (all sizes)
Sponges
Laundry Detergent & Dryer Sheets
Welding gloves
Fishing nets with handles (all sizes)
Garden hoses
Sweatshirts & sweatpants
Cash donations
Tractor with scoop or
(Mechanical) Bobcat
Mini van with stow & go seating
Walk-in freezer
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

REST IN PEACE BOOMERANG

We regret to announce the recent passing of one of our long time education animals. Boomerang, the Barred Owl, was a well-known TreeHouse ambassador for wildlife. A calm and easy going bird, she helped out at hundreds of outreach programs during her time with us. She taught children and adults alike to understand Barred Owls better and to develop a respect and love for wildlife.



Boomerang came to TreeHouse in 2001 as a young bird after she had been found on the ground by a hunter. She was originally brought to another rehabilitator who then transferred her to us. She went through our rehabilitation program like all of our other admitted raptors, but when it came to her release she had other ideas. Instead of flying off to live her life in the wild, she kept returning to the center. This is why we named her Boomerang or Boomer for short. We suspect that before she came to us someone must have had her when she was a nestling, resulting in her becoming imprinted on humans. She was also a weak flier which is a sign that she was not fed a balanced diet at some point in her development. We can only speculate. After we decided to let her stay, she was trained as an education animal and went on to help us for many years.

We suspect that Boomer became a casualty of West Nile Virus. We will all miss her dearly. Rest in peace, Boomerang!



Many thanks to SIU-E Phi Kappa Psi fraternity, Jack Fitzwilliam & TreeHouse volunteers for donations and a workday to build planter boxes & fencing in the eagle garden.

Working on an injured fawn



"Buddy" the Screech Owl with
Dean Mike Kinman at Blessing of the
Animals, Christ Church Cathedral



Einstein the
Turkey Vulture
showing off her
diva moves at
Owlfest 2015



IN CELEBRATION OF
environmentalist
Ruth Nichol's
95th Birthday!

Thanks to
Libby Nichols McGinley
and all Ruth's friends
and family for this
memorable event
benefiting TreeHouse

Other Locations:

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(618.667.4900)

Adair Gardens
(618.235.2744)

Countryside
(618.664.4420)



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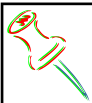
THANK YOU

SIU-E Alpha Phi
Jerseyville Girl Scout Troop 348
Brighton Farm Hands 4-H
Godfrey First UMC
Community Christian Church
Emmanuel Free Methodist Church
Cornerstone Christian Church
Lifeshouse Church
Cheryl Pride!

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

IN MEMORY OF

Marsh Mertens
Darrel Funk
Robert Canham
Sam Massalone
Charles Foster



**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

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

TreeHouse Wildlife Explorers Membership consists of a minimum donation of
\$15.00 annually

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

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

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(mm/dd/yyyy)

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City _____

State _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____

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Make checks payable to:

TreeHouse Wildlife Center

and send to

TreeHouse Wildlife Center

23956 Green Acres Road

Dow, IL 62022

attn: Jennifer Yordy