



# ANIMALTALES™ EDUCATION CAMPUS



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# Teen Track Times

Fall 2015

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## Wild at Heart

This semester, we went to the Wild at Heart Raptor Rescue for our service day. Wild at Heart rescues, rehabilitate, and release birds of prey which have been injured or orphaned, relocates displaced burrowing owls, manages species recovery programs, manages habitat enhancement projects, and provides educational presentations to the public. They are all volunteer based and is a non-profit 501(c)3.

The teens did landscaping and cleaning the outdoor bird enclosures. The birds thank you!





## 2015 Walk to Save Animals

## Stellar Service

2015's Walk to Save Animals was the best year yet and broke all of our records!

This year, we had:

- **3,000 attendees**
- **119 walk teams**
- **729 walkers**
- **287 adopted shelter animals present for the world record**
- **\$116,000 raised!**

A BIG thank you to all the teens for their awesome animal presentations and help throughout the whole event! I know that you were able to educate so many people on the exciting animals we have at the Education Department at AAWL and we sincerely appreciate your enthusiastic presentations!

Check out some photos from the event to the right and below.





## Pick of the Litter

### Top-Notch Timmy



**Breed:** Welsh Corgi/  
Australian Kelpie

**Adoption Price:**  
\$203.00

**Gender:** Male

Hi, my name is Timmy! I am looking for my fur-ever family! I am treat motivated and have great focus on my handler. Training will ensure a lifelong bond with my new family and teach me manners.

I already know how to Sit and Lay Down! I would do best as the only dog in the home, I just want to be the King of the Castle! I dream of the days where I can go exploring these neat hiking trails and evenings filled of Belly Rubs and Ear Scratches! Hurry come on down to the Shelter, so you can meet me and my other adoptable friends!

**Breed:** Domestic Shorthair

**Adoption Price:** \$0

**Gender:** Female



### Empress Emmi

My name is Emmi, and I have been here at the shelter since March because my human mom and dad had a human baby who was allergic to me! My cattery friends are great, but I would really love to find my furever home this year.

I would really like to be the only kitty so I can have all your attention and love, and I would do great in a home environment.

My favorite thing to do is lay around and help with office work-the keyboard is my favorite place to lay! I also enjoy playing games on my special kitty tablet.

## Exotic Ambassador Highlight

### Jesse the Blue-Tongued Skink



Have you ever wondered what a non-dinosaur reptilian ancestor looked like? Neither have I, but Jesse the blue-tongued skink fits that description. Blue-tongued skinks are physiologically ancient. Their anatomy is relatively unchanged from what one would expect a modern species of reptile to possess. Limbs on a modern reptile are usually lot longer to allow for higher speed, or nonexistent for access to small spaces. Jesse can do neither of these. Thus, if you ever scare Jesse before picking him up, he may stick his tongue at you. This may seem funny because of the blue tongue, but the tongue is a warning

By Jonah Rucker

## Exotic Ambassador Spotlight

### Otis

By Julia Strazz

My first encounter with Otis was unplanned and unexpected. The Walk to Save Animals was coming up, and I had said I wanted to be in charge of either the Project 22 dogs, or rabbits. I was then asked if I would be in charge of Otis, the Short-Tailed Opossum. I was hesitant at first, as I had never encountered an opossum before. I figured it would be mean, or even scary. I agreed to Otis, wondering if I would regret it.

The day of the Walk arrived and when I got there, I was train to handle Otis, which was much easier than I had previously assumed. I was comfortable holding and petting him. I had him cuddled up in my pocket, with his little head poking out. I had been reciting interesting facts about the Short-Tailed Opossum all day, and knew them by heart. By the end of the Walk, I had determined he was my new favorite animal.



Julia & Otis



Otis had a rough start to life. He was found by a woman who is a part of the AZ Sugar Glider Rescue. She was in California at a flea market, and stumbled across Otis being tossed like a baseball between two young boys. Otis was taken to the Sugar Glider rescue back in Arizona, and rehabilitated. He suffered from a broken foot, which healed improperly, resulting in his club foot. Once he was in good health, he was given to the Arizona Animal Welfare League Education Department, to educate the public about animals like Otis.

My hope is that by educating others about exotic animals, that they may rescue or help animals like Otis that are subject to the exotic pet trade, smuggling, and/or cruelty.



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## Exotic is Beautiful-Autumn

By Aleesia Hernandez

Autumn is one of the most magnificent animals we have here at the shelter. But she is one that not many people would consider magnificent or beautiful or interesting. Autumn is our Chilean Rose Haired tarantula, and if you were to see her, most likely you would try to get as far away from her as possible. I used to be like that, until I got to handle her for the first time. I was terrified, but once she was in my hands I was calm. I was no longer scared of her, and at the Walk To Save Animals, I presented Autumn the entire day and was completely comfortable with having her sit in my hand for long periods of time. I came to realize just how beautiful and interesting and delicate she was, and it gave me a new appreciation for her.

Before joining Teen Tracks, I would never have imagined myself being comfortable holding a tarantula or hissing cockroaches or rats or any of these amazing exotic animals we have. Teen Tracks has forced me to get out of my comfort zone and do things that I thought I would never do. It has helped me grow and has shaped me as a person.



Aleesia & Autumn

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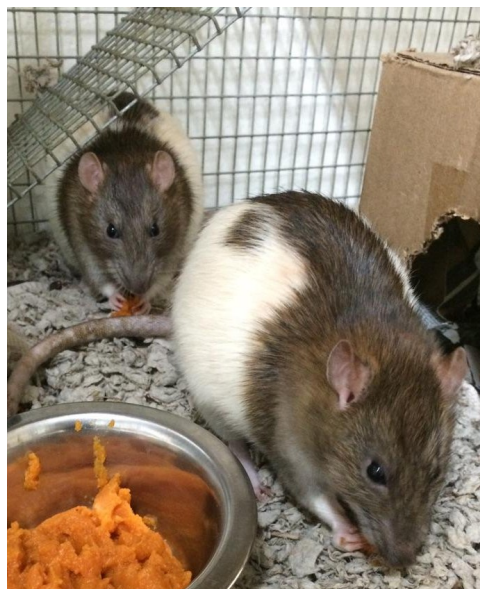
## Rats

By Noah Cather

Here are some facts about Rats. The Fancy Rat AKA Domestic Rat is a descendant from the Wild Brown Rat. Males are 1 to 1.5 pounds. They unfortunately live until they are two or three. Rats are great with families with children five and up. Rats are extremely social. They should be kept in pairs at a minimum. Neutered males can live with females and spayed females can live with males. The average litter ranges from twelve to twenty rats.

Theo and Bosco are friendly and kind. They will, like most rats, will climb on your shoulder. Theo and Bosco will nibble on your ear. If you put your finger through the cage they will groom your finger. They love being held!

It's easier to have rats as pets than reptiles. Most people think rats are dirty but in reality that's the roof and sewer rats. The domestic rat cleans him or her self. Rats are amazing pets. I recommend these animals.



Theo and Bosco

## Artist Corner



KATI DEAN

By Kati Dean

### Facts About Ferrets

- ★ Domesticated in Europe
- ★ Lifespan: about 8 years.
- ★ Sleep: 14-18 hours per day.
- ★ Family: Same genes as weasels.
- ★ Mass: 1.5 - 4.4 lbs
- ★ Newborns can fit inside a tea cup.



#### Pros

- Hardworkers
- Good Hunters
- Playful

#### Cons

- Poor eyesight
- Need a lot of attention
- High maintenance

By Esha Patel and Grace Butler

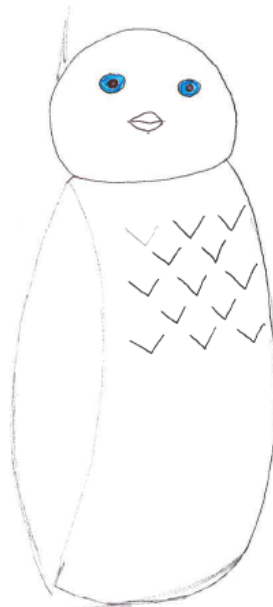
Guapo the lizard

Is a god lizard to have

He eats some mangoes.

-By Taylor Sheard

### Wild at heart Rescue



Kirstyn Conroy

By Kirstyn Conroy



By Shannon Gough

## Artist Corner

### My New Family

By Briana Harper

I live in a room with a big door for the big humans and a little door for me to go outside. I live here with my brothers and sisters. We didn't always live here. We were brought here. Everyday, humans come through the doors of the building I live in and look at my siblings and me. Some of my siblings leave and don't come back. I miss them. I want to know where they go. I want to leave too. I'm beginning to get used to being looked at. There is this one girl, who is wearing a shirt with a snake wrapping around some sort of stick. This girl smells really kind and I like her but she is leaving me. An older lady comes to get me and takes me to one of the play areas, where the good smelling girl is waiting with another dog, Bailey. I think she wants to play with me and she does. We play fetch for a little while but then she starts to run. I want to keep up with this girl so I run with her. She likes when I do this -- she told her mom that. I'm enjoying this game and I want to play this game all the time with this girl. After a while of playing, the girl leaves and I am put back with my siblings in my room. I don't think I will ever see her again.

This morning I got my shot and the rest of the day I watched people watch me. At the end of the day, the good smelling girl from yesterday came back. She didn't play with me this time. She is taking me to a room with an older lady and I sit on the cold floor, confused. The girl doesn't leave me on the floor for long and picks me up. I can smell one of my sisters. She smells sad and scared. She is scared because she is getting her shot but I do not know why she is sad. I do not like when my sister is sad, so I begin to cry. After a long time of listening to the rambling of human talk, I am taken outside. I have been outside before, but I have not seen this part of outside before. The good smelling girl is taking me to a very small building on wheels. I sit on her lap but I do not know what to do because I am scared so I start to shake. Maybe this is why my sister was sad: she knew I would end up in this little building that moves very fast. The rolling building comes to a stop and I am carried into a large brown house. Inside the house, is Bailey. I like Bailey. She is a little old and fat but she is really nice to me.

I have been with this family for six months. I know everyone's names now: Mom, Dad, Bri, Loryn, and Kyle. I even know my name: Remy. I have a least favorite part of the day and a favorite part. My least favorite part is when Bri, Loryn, and Kyle leave for school. I don't like when they are gone because then I can't play with them. I wait at the door for a while just to make sure that if they come back soon, I am there to greet them. My favorite part of the day is when everyone gets home, especially Dad. When Dad comes home he gives Bailey and me a treat. Sometimes he forgets because he is old so I have to remind him. I remind Dad to give me my treat by howling at him. He tells me "okay" or howls back to me to tell me he will get me my treat. When Bri, Loryn, and Kyle come home, I like to play with them. I play with them by grabbing onto their fingers with my teeth and walk on my back legs just like they do. After I walk like a human, I jump really high to try and be as tall as they are. I have never jumped that high yet, but I am getting close. This is my new family and I'm apart of it.



## In Memory

### A Whole New World

By Max Solod

Jasmine, not the Disney character in a fancy dress, but Jasmine the rat. Arizona Animal Welfare League is not just about dogs and cats. It is a place of refuge for all types of small animals. Jasmine was rescued from an inhumane living environment. She was malnourished and timid and treated badly. My job over the summer was to help rehabilitate Jasmine. In the beginning it was trying. Jasmine bit me a lot. At first she wouldn't let me touch her and then after about a couple of days she let me take her out of her cage. Jasmine would still bite me, but she allowed me to take her out of the cage. She enjoyed doing her bodily functions inside my pockets and in my hands. We were making progress, so to say. After about a week of constant attention to Jasmine, she stopped biting me out of the cage. I would motivate her with chicken and turkey.

I would look forward to volunteering at the camp because I got to spend some time with Jasmine. I felt that I had formed a bond with her and that she was coming around. It is hard sometimes when an animal suffers from so much neglect. No matter how much you try the animals can have a hard time adjusting.

I have no regrets with the time I spent with Jasmine. I got a lot of experience and felt that I helped Jasmine a lot during her time at AAWL. I wish the events that happened to Jasmine before she came to AAWL didn't happen, but I am glad to have participated in maybe a happy part of her existence. Hopefully she felt loved and cared for.



Jasmine the Fancy Rat



## My Teen Tracks Experience

By Janie Christensen

As an awkward, quiet teenager, there aren't many places I feel comfortable. My shyness often makes me feel like I'm hiding on the sidelines of everything, or that I'm missing out on life. Sometimes I feel like I can't cope with it, or that I'm not as good at dealing with the stress of life as others are.

My passion for animals, however, gives me a reason to get up, to talk to people, and to participate in the world. I've been in Teen Tracks for a little over a year now, and I've found that at AAWL, I get a chance to learn to be myself. By learning about animals, shelters, and the people that help them, I am always reminded of all the wonderful things that I can be a part of. I have also learned through practicing responsibility, teamwork, and leadership skills while completing projects and working with the other Teen Trackers. Furthermore, I got an opportunity to try something new: volunteering over the summer as a junior camp counselor. I've had fun hanging out with people who have common interests, and have received nothing but friendliness.

This semester, we looked into animal related careers, which really let me get excited about my future. We also volunteered at a raptor sanctuary, which inspired me and helped me to see that people can make a difference. I was amazed at how well built the sanctuary was, and how many birds it saves. Helping to train the Project 22 dogs left me in awe, and was one of my favorite things we did this semester. The mission inspired me, and I hope the program continues to grow. I have a passion for bully breeds and dogs in general, and enjoyed learning about how to train them and getting to know each dog personally. It's been a lot of fun and I'm looking forward to coming back after the break!



## For Your Consideration

### Safety Around Snakes

By Nathan Weber

Arizona is home to one of the most venomous snakes in the nation, the Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake. These snakes lurk in the bushes at night, waiting to strike their prey. Unfortunately, their prey could be your beloved pets. When you take your pets outside at night before bed, who knows what's hiding in your bushes or blending in with the darkness. Over a million pets are bitten by snakes each year, which is a very scary number because snake venom is more dangerous when injected into smaller creatures such as dogs and cats. There is a 20% mortality rate if your dog is bitten by a venomous snake such as the Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake. Here are some ways to keep your pets safe from these dangerous snakes.

It is important to scope out your yard before letting your pets outside. If it's dark outside, you can take a flashlight and see if anything looks suspicious or grab a stick and poke at the shrubs to see if anything jumps out. Also, listen to hear if there is a rustling sound or a hissing noise coming from the bushes. If not, your pets are mostly likely going to be safe from these night crawlers.

Snakes of course don't only come out at night just in your yard. You may encounter a snake on a walk with your dog. If you hear a rattle, keep your dog at your side until you have located the snake. Once you have, go in the opposite direction in a calm manner. Also, if your dog seems interested with something in the grass, back away until you know exactly what your dog is sniffing for.

Another way to keep dogs safe on walks is to prevent them from looking down into holes because snakes may be lurking inside. Also keep them from sniffing and turning over logs and rocks. Snakes tend to rest under these objects and if your dog wakes them up or startles them, the snake will certainly bite.





## For Your Consideration

### The Selling and Purchasing of Exotic Animals

By Emma Offenberg

We've all been to zoos before. Spent our time looking at all the magnificent animals, saying how much we'd like to take one home. In the end, we leave empty handed because it would be ridiculous to take home a wild animal, right? Well, several households in America have their own personal zoo right in their backyards. And although we'd all like to have one, they're probably not the best idea. In fact, most of these animals are owned illegally. I'm not talking about the typical animals like birds, snakes, and ferrets. I'm talking about animals like wolves, tigers and bears. Although these are very exciting animals, they definitely don't belong in the captivity of humans.

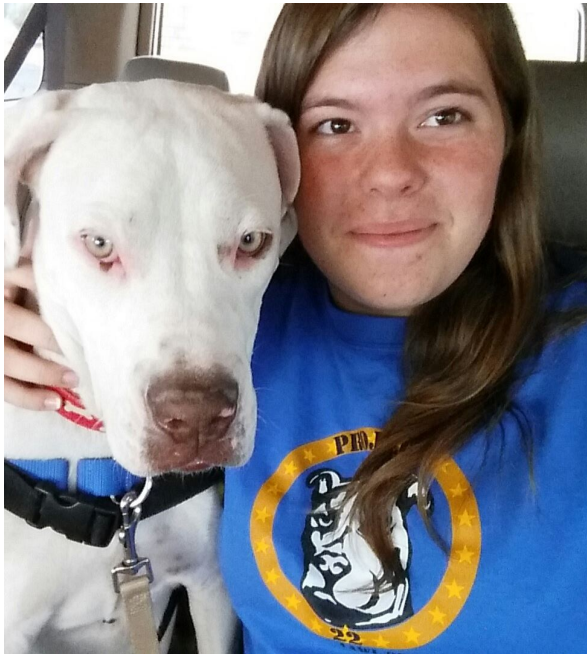
Now, I know what you're thinking. What kind of person would own a tiger? Well, according to a paper written by Corrine Henn, "It's estimated that over 5,000 tigers reside in U.S. homes; that's more tigers in captivity than there are left in the wild". Now you can understand why owning exotics is such a problem. Animals like tigers are becoming such a rarity in the wild, but have grown in popularity as household pets. Not only do we have to worry about tigers, "the term exotic pet has no firm definition; it can refer to any wildlife kept in human households—or simply to a pet that's more unusual than the standard dog or cat". If we continue to domesticate these animals, there will be a great risk of extinction in the wild. Not only will we eradicate the entire species in the wild, the domestication process will alter the species, which could cause the species to evolve into something new, something like what happened with dogs. All dogs descended from wild wolves, but because of human interaction and domestication, have turned into the furry friends we know now.

Exotic animals may be impressive, but being owned by the general population does not benefit them. It keeps the animals out of the wild where they belong. The exotic pet trade won't be stopping anytime soon. It's an extremely profitable business, earning anywhere between \$10 billion to \$15 billion each year. The best thing to do is prevent them from being sold by not buying them. This will force sellers to stop collecting and breeding the animals for purchase. In Arizona, several methods are taken to make sure it is not easy to purchase and own exotics. Arizona has some of the strictest laws on exotic animal ownership, and it is very difficult to receive a permit. The bottom line is, we need to protect our wildlife from extinction by keeping it wild. The best thing you can do is to never buy exotic animals from dealers or pet stores. If you really want some sort of abnormal animal, there are rescues dedicated to specific animal species that may allow you to purchase them. I hope this has given you more information on the other side of something so heavily encouraged. I encourage you to get involved and learn more about your city's exotic animal laws. Hopefully, you'll find a new passion you never knew existed.

## My Experience With Project 22

By Kendra Wardon

About a month and a half ago I began working with one of the most rewarding projects of my life. By working with Eric Wolfe and his new organization Project 22, I have had the honor of not only helping save homeless dogs, specifically bully breeds, but also to help save people. Project 22 is named after the statistic that everyday 22 military veterans commit suicide due to battles with PTSD, depression, and many other daily challenges. While the organization is still in its infancy, I have seen the incredible effects these dogs have on their handlers. My first day volunteering with Eric he had a veteran coming in to look at a couple dogs. When the veteran first arrived she seemed very withdrawn and spoke very softly. I watched as Eric explained the process that the dogs go through in training the the commitment the handler would have to make to keep up the training, after that we brought in the first dog. We allowed her to meet the dog and gave her some treats before leaving so that she could have time alone with the dog to do whatever she felt she needed to in order to find the dog that was the best match for her. After 5 or 10 minutes we returned and the change I saw in her just from that short time was incredible. She was now smiling as the dog stood beside her and she pet him, she spoke with a normal tone and you could see a light in her eyes, something that this dog had brought out in her. We then traded out that dog for another, and again a third time. After narrowing down her choices, she selected the dog who would now serve her as a companion and caretaker. After she had selected her dog I went with her to walk the dog around

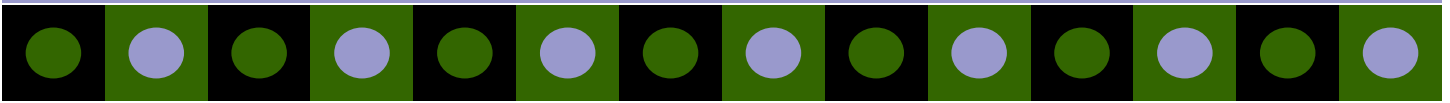




## My Experience With Project 22 Cont.

the canal and the whole time I was amazed by the confidence this dog had given her. Now, as we walked she held a conversation and we talked about some aspects about her service but also how she was happy to have the dog. She told me about how she didn't really leave her house very often but now with the responsibility of having to take her dog out on walks and such it would allow her to be more active. Not only have I been able to work directly with the dogs and veterans but I had also had the opportunity to educate people out Project 22 by working the booth at AAWL's Walk to Save Animals, and I have also had the opportunity to take the dogs to school with me to help socialize them, work on their training, and spread more awareness about the organization. This opportunity has brought so much joy and opened so many doors for me, it has allowed me to gain experience training dogs now as this is what I hope to do in the future and has also given me the opportunity to work with an organization that is really making a difference in the lives of both the dogs and their handlers. For more information on this amazing organization visit [aawl.org/content/project-22](http://aawl.org/content/project-22)





## Farewells

### Shannon Nalley-

Shannon sadly left us this semester as she took a job with another company. After many years with AAWL and semesters with Teen Tracks, we were all disappointed to see her go. Shannon's passion for animals, the Earth, young people, and AAWL came through in everything she did. Her zealous nature and innovative ideas will be greatly missed.

Her personal email is [shannon.nalley@gmail.com](mailto:shannon.nalley@gmail.com).



### Michelle Ramos-

Michelle, the Director of the Education Department, left us in December to take a job building the Arizona Humane Society's Education Department. She has been with AAWL for 8 years and has helped shape the programs to what they are today. We wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors and will miss her.

Her personal email is [michelle.ramos6@gmail.com](mailto:michelle.ramos6@gmail.com).

## Things to Remember

### Upcoming Dates:

New Teen Application Deadline: January 16, 2016

First Day and Orientation for New Teens: January 23, 2016

Winter Break Camp: December 21-23rd and December 28-30th, 2015

**See you in the spring!**



### Have a good idea for the newsletter?

Do you have a brilliant idea for future Teen Track Times or want to get more involved in creating art, success stories or other interesting pieces? E-mail all submissions to Rosie Sevic at [rsevic@aawl.org](mailto:rsevic@aawl.org) or call 602-273-6852 ext. 122 if you have questions.