



The WolfWood Wayfarer

Summer 2015

WolfWood Refuge

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Welcome to our twentieth newsletter!

Spirit over Spatulas

I lean toward wild things. There is very little that is landscaped around me. There is very little cultivated inside me. I prefer forests over farms, firs over Formica. There was a time I tried to simmer down, settle for less, but I believe it was this bent towards turbulence that blew the black wolf pup into my life.

He arrived from Alaska by cargo plane. I walked past the stares of people with more civilized packages of dishes and fruit to my little bundle of fur and fangs. We upended his crate into his awaiting pen and out tumbled a snarling, snapping ebony ball, all teeth and legs.

His name is RA, because all he did was go Raaaaaa at me.

We finally got him back to the Refuge. As I watched him growl and shred anything he could find, I knew that no matter what else was on my agenda, or what was penciled into my day planner, I was going to spend the next two years of my life forming a relationship with the little "heathen."

I spent everyday with him. I fed, watered, picked up poop, talked and sang to him. I ignored his fear and rewarded the slightest sign of approach. Then one day, seemingly like any other day, I was sitting in the pen, and Ra crawled into my lap, put both paws on my shoulders and laid his head on my chest. At 4 months of age his body was as long as mine and he fit just perfectly. Like the needy orphan he was, Ra had decided that I was literally his mother.

His name is RA, like a secret cheer, a silent fist pump.

Ra is 6 now. I have watched him pick up and trot off with an elk ribcage I could barely drag. He has fractured my hand in play. He has gone from a terrified damaged pup to a perfect example of a full grown wolf in his prime; 110 pounds of strength and speed, his silver gray coat the color of mercury. I have dishes to wash, emails to send. But he wants to show off on his morning run, racing to the top of the hill, jumping on top of his house, leaping over rocks. When he is done he lopes towards me, long red tongue rolling out of his jaws, a self-satisfied grin on his face. He bends towards me. I lean into him.

His name is RA, after the ancient and powerful desert sun, and I know, because of him, I will always choose Spirit over spatulas.



MEET OUR WOLVES

In each of our newsletters we feature some of our wolves



Jinn and Sheba



Jinn

JINN AND SHEBA

JINN: Jinn is our newest addition and is 8 months old. She was bought off the Internet and then her owners realized she was more than they had bargained for. She is very active and chews her doghouse, trees, toys, water bucket, volunteers' arms and Sheba's face. Her fur is not very wolf-like and she reminds us of Kia, one of our previous residents. We will be bringing her to events this summer in hopes of making her an ambassador animal. She does enjoy attention!

SHEBA: We now call Sheba "Saint Sheba" because of her enduring patience with Jinn. As a baby Jinn constantly chewed and licked her. She jumps all over her and Sheba takes it all with a big smile. Sheba has been excellent at allowing Jinn to be a rowdy puppy, but reminding her when enough is enough. Jinn was very lucky we had this gentle 10 year old wolf-dog to be her role model. The two of them have become inseparable and have to go everywhere together. Sheba came to us from a local woman who could no longer keep her due to a divorce.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 1st 10-3pm: Five Branches Campground Event, Vallecito Lake

August 8th & 9th: Hermit Park Event

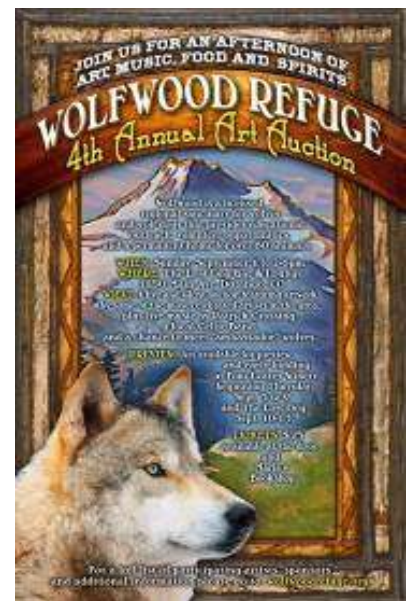
Sept. 3rd 5-7pm: Art Auction Art sneak peak and Trinity at Four Leaves Winery, Durango

Sept. 13th 2-7pm: 4th Annual Art Auction at Lost Dog

September all month: Shop at Nature's Oasis in Durango. We are the recipients of their wooden nickel fundraising program.

December 8th: Colorado Gives will match your donation to WolfWood! A great way to double your giving.

Check the website for details.



KIDS AND CANINES

We are proud to announce that WolfWood's outreach program is bigger than ever. After rescuing animals in need, education of young people and the public in general is our main priority, and we are definitely accomplishing that goal. All of these programs are provided free of charge and everyone is welcome. The ambassador wolves and volunteers have been hard at work. We believe we are making a difference by dispelling myth and misinformation about these special animals



Educational Program at Esperanza Elementary



Ignacio students paint dog house roofs



Tomlyn interns from Fort Lewis Collage • Charles interns from Animas High • Ben and La Vonne receive \$500 of student coins



Bayfield Family Center

OUTREACH PROGRAMS IN 2015

Mancos Elementary, FLC sociology block program, LINK program at Animas High, FLC business school, FLC ecology writing class, Ignacio Alternative School, Esperanza Elementary, Girl Scouts, ASTS Christian Academy, Classical Conversations of Pagosa, St. Columba, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Aztec Boys and Girls Club, Durango Pet Expo, Farmington School, Bayfield Library, Bayfield Family Center, Humane Society Summer Camp, Durango Day Camp.

VOLUNTEERS

WolfWood currently has a small, but extremely dedicated group of volunteers. Our volunteers are the heart of this organization and help take care of and save lives every day. Neither rain, nor sleet, nor snow, nor even MUD keeps them from their duties.

NEW VOLUNTEERS



Clay Adams



Donna Dorsett



Elizabeth Davis



Crow Harr



Jade Button



Rene Reyes



Ashley Weinmeister

CLAY ADAMS- BERGER: Clay is an Environmental Studies Major. He also works at Durango Joe's. His goal is to be a Park Ranger when he graduates. He says there is nothing he would rather spend his free time doing than working with the wolves.

DONNA DORSETT: Donna is a retired teacher. She also has worked in theater. She loves the out of doors. She has been a caretaker of both people and animals. She is single and travels a lot. She is on a life journey, and part of that brought her to WolfWood.

ELIZABETH DAVIS: Elizabeth loves all God's creatures great and small, and enjoys spending time in nature. She says she considers herself spoiled to get to spend time with the wolves, and has made friends with some of the shyer animals. Her dream is to live in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

CROW HARR : Crow is our youngest volunteer and this is his second summer at WolfWood. He will be five and is going to kindergarten soon. He comes with his YaYa (grandma) Lennette, and his favorite wolf is Trinity.

JADE BUTTON: Jade is a Geology Major and fell in love with WolfWood after a tour. She loves animals and working with them.

RENE REYES: Rene is originally from Cuba and has lived in Durango for four years. He loves spending time with animals and sometimes people. WolfWood has earned a special place in his heart.

ASHLEY WEINMEISTER : Ashley lives and goes to school in Bayfield. She loves nature and horseback riding. She also loves animals and has 15 pets. As soon as she can drive to she is going to volunteer at WolfWood as often as she can.



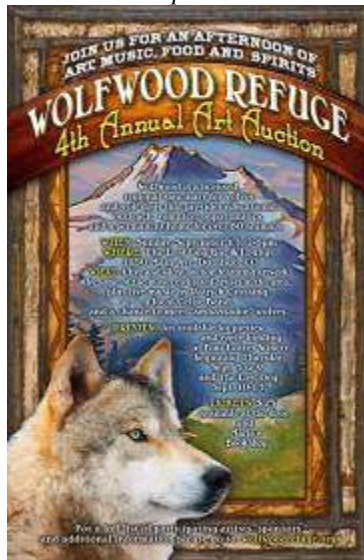
The 2016 calendar is here and available to purchase



Our Logo on the Milzick's race car at La Mans



Our new grandson Bodhi Rowan Miller



See you at the Art Auction Sept. 13



Our new, long awaited, much needed gate



Darla, Joan, Lennette, LaVonne, Linda, and Paula take time off for fun



Our improved 4-wheeler

THANKS

We would like to thank all the people who have been so generous with their giving. It seems everyone has gone “above and beyond” in the past months. The kindness and support shown to WolfWood has been truly overwhelming, and everyone has stretched their limits for the animals of WolfWood. We are blessed and so grateful for you all.

YOU ARE ALL WOLF ANGELS!

OTHER NEWS

- Our 2016 calendars have arrived! Thanks to Darla and Joan, they are gorgeous. You can order them online or pick one up at the next event.
- WolfWood has gone international! Thanks to the generosity of Greg and Eileen Milzcik and their crew, our logo was prominently displayed on the hood of their racecar entered at La Mans. They also gave a generous donation that helped us make important improvements this spring.
- We are proud new grandparents to our first grandson, Bodhi Rowan Miller born Dec. 10th. As if we needed another reason to brag!
- Our Art Auction is coming up Sept. 13th at the Lost Dog. It is shaping up to be epic with more amazing art than ever. We hope to see you all there. As a special bonus we will be at the Four Leaves Winery on Sept. 3rd during the Main Street Art Walk, with more of the wolf label wine available and a sneak preview of the live auction art. Plus Trinity will make an appearance.
- Keith and Tanya have been really busy making much needed improvements around the Refuge; everything from weed-whacking to building our new gate. We have needed a gate to help protect the wolves from unannounced people driving up, which has been happening more frequently.
- Joan has outdone herself, cooking, delivering and serving lunches on our big workdays.
- Paula and Lennette both turned 60 and celebrated in grand fashion. Paula went skydiving and had a great surprise party and weekend with Barbie. Darla, Joan and Linda also had birthdays so they all went rafting on some of the highest water in a long time. We milked getting older for all it was worth.
- Rodger fixed up our much-used four-wheeler. He donated both time and money to getting it into shape and Barb bought a new windshield for it so we can finally see where we are going again!
- Our long-term supporter, Glenn Raby, had heart surgery and is recovering well, as is Rich, who had a hip replacement. Hurry back Rich, the Tuesday feeding crew misses you.
- Colleen has graduated Veterinary school and passed her tests and is now officially DR. O'Brian. She has a job in Florida. Another reason to be proud of our WolfWood family.
- So much happens here and it sometimes happens quickly. I am always apologizing for my bad record keeping. I am also a negligent picture taker. We have many fine photographers at WolfWood but they are not always here. The best way to keep up is to go to the website or Facebook page, which John and Colleen do an amazing job of keeping current.



La Vonne and Lynn howl at the Pet Expo



Torq shows how it is really done

IMPORTANT FUNDRAISING NEWS

Thanks to the consistent hard work of Darla, WolfWood has received new grant and fundraising opportunities. She has done all the work to facilitate the following and we are so grateful.

Doris Day Foundation: We received a \$5,000 grant from the Doris Day Foundation. This is the first time that they have ever been given a grant to a non-pet organization. Wow! We are honored.

Mercury Gives: Mercury Payments once again has given us a grant through their charitable fund. This local business continues to provide funds and volunteer hours to support the animals here.

Sky Ute Casino and Southern Ute Indian Tribe: We were selected to participate in the money booth this year. Craig was at work so Paula stepped in and with the help of volunteers cheering her on, grabbed \$2,000.

Colorado Gives: After months of work we are set up to be part of the Colorado Gives Program. This has the potential for being our biggest fundraiser ever. **On Dec 8th, all money donated to WolfWood through this program will be matched.** Please consider giving your Christmas donation in this way. See the website for details.

Nature's Oasis: In September we are the recipient's of their Wooden Nickel program. Shop and drop yours in!



The event at Wolfe Brewery in Pagosa Springs



We ALWAYS need more gravel



John dances with wolves



Paula's mom, Joan, works on her vacation



The constant work to keep the USDA happy



Ben at work with Keith while Craig bosses!



Ben at play with the Alaska wolves

NEW ARRIVALS



Nikki when he first arrived



Nikki now



Vlad



Jinn and Paula

NAKITA (NIKKI) AND VLAD: Nikki and Vlad were both rescued from Texas. Vlad was posted on Facebook as a wolf/dog and in immediate danger of being put down. Paula was in CA when Talbot, a long time volunteer now living in Denver, saw his picture and wanted to help. He flew from Denver to Dallas and rented a car to drive to Longview, all at his own expense. When he got there he saw many animals in really bad shape, waiting to be euthanized. He couldn't stand it so he took Nikki too, and drove them both back to the Refuge. After a vet visit, we determined that Vlad is not a wolf/dog, but a happy and healthy dog. He lives next to Razi and is very excited whenever anyone comes to spend time with him. Nikki, however, is another story. He has some very serious medical conditions. He was in extremely bad shape and the first thing to do was to improve his body condition before we could even consider other treatments. This has proven difficult, but he is making good progress as you can see by his happy smile. Still, we only have about a 50/50 chance of saving him. His medical procedures will be arduous and very expensive. We want to thank the Metzners, Penny Kipley and Karen Wilbert for responding with donations to help give Nikki a chance. He loves life and we will do everything we can.

Needs: Even though we have had wonderful donations and paid large sums to our fabulous vet, as you can see, we have incurred a lot of **medical expenses**.

We are also in need of a good working **used truck**. The Ford we use to feed the animals is on its last legs. It had 250,000 miles on it when we got it and we have used it every day for over 6 years.

We need a **cabin** to house a caretaker. Joel can build one or we can get a pre-fab one. This is becoming increasingly necessary to provide quality long-term care for the animals.

We need two more **pens** by next summer. A **Skidster** would make a huge difference in our ability to do dirt work, snow removal and other big jobs around the Refuge.

IN LOVING MEMORY



Ranger on his rock in his younger days



La Vonne with Ranger on his last day



Ria



Minnie



RANGER: Ranger was a very special animal and the beloved companion of Willow. We knew he would join her soon and we were with him when he passed of old age. Ranger was a favorite of many of you, and he touched many lives during his 11 years at WolfWood. He is immortalized in a song on our CD, WolfSong.

RIA: Ria was a beautiful and delicate female wolf that came here with her brother in 2004. She outlived him by several years and also lived with other males including Ranger. In the end she suffered from severe seizures. She fought hard but could not recover from the neurological damage.

MINNIE: Minnie came from Utah. She was very shy and did not like to be petted. Minnie was one of our elder animals. She was a pen mate to Little Timber and Justice, and added a quiet and gentle presence.

TOM DUNN: Tom was a long time supporter of WolfWood. His dedication to the animals was unwavering and his donations carried us through many emergencies. We can honestly say we might not still be here if it weren't for Tom. He and his wife Barbara sent us Zion, long time resident and Ambassador wolf/dog. Tom was our original "wolf angel." We will be dedicating our visitor center to Tom this fall. He was a kind and generous man.

NICO & AJ: Darla and Barbara, two of our long time volunteers, lost their canine best friends recently. Our hearts go out to both of them and we wish them healing in their time of grief. Our animal companions are family and it is hard to be without them in our lives. We send love to all who have experienced this loss.

"Wolf..... teach me to know"