



Bi-Annual Newsletter

November 2020 Issue | Raptor Center News

Board of Directors

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- President – Nancy Murrah
- Treasurer – Gail Dixon
- Volunteer Coordinator – Kat Harnest
- Director of Merchandise Sales – Kim Rexroat
- Media Manager – Jenn Graff
- Secretary - Louise Roy

Where to find us

11018 Scott Loop
 Riverview, Florida 33569
www.RaptorCenterofTampa.org

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Welcome to our Membership Program

By: Nancy Murrah

Welcome to the first Raptor Center membership newsletter. The organization has been working hard for the past 7 years to build a dedicated wildlife rehabilitation center in the Tampa Bay Area. Our

day has finally arrived! Please watch this short clip about the new Center and how one of our organization's rehabilitator & President, Nancy Murrah got started in the rescue business by [clicking here](#).

The organization is currently working to move to a permanent facility that is approximately 1.2 acres with two permanent buildings. The Raptor Center is hoping to build our new nest in Riverview, FL. The 2 main buildings are lovingly being referred to as "the clinic building" and "the administration building," which consist of a 1600 square foot concrete block shell, and a 16'x16' wooden building, respectively. The goal is to utilize the clinic building by framing out a treatment clinic, 3 rooms to house birds, a laundry room, kitchen, full bathroom and a food prep area. The admin building will eventually be utilized for intake, administrative tasks and housing our educational materials.



If you like to build things, we can keep you busy!

To move the permit over to the property and start operating from that location we need:

1. The entire property fenced
2. We will use the admin. building as a clinic until the other building is finished.
3. We will complete one flight cage
4. Complete at least 6 rehabilitation mews (a wooden cage to house birds of prey) ultimately completing 10.



Once all the above are complete, the organization will request a final inspection and if all goes well move the operation from Nancy's house in Brandon to the new center in Riverview.

The new Center also has several outbuildings that are in need of repurposing, as well as a deck and cover to be built so the center will be able to host events. The organization is looking for volunteers to help plan and construct these areas as well as the planned flight and rehabilitation cages.

If you would like to help or know an individual or corporation that would be interested in sponsoring one of our flight cages it would be a great opportunity to take part of something special, by helping the local community. One small donation could make a big impact to the local wildlife in need. For more information please reach out to any of our board members.



The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay is dependent upon members like you who have given so much, whether it was monetary or time helping Florida's fragile wildlife. We specialize in birds of prey, however, we take any animal in need and work as a MASH unit to offer care and facilitate transport of other species to the specialist in our network, no matter if it is a baby squirrel or a bald eagle. We work to serve the wildlife community of the greater Tampa Bay area.

Your \$35.00 membership goes directly to help us feed, care and house the birds and animals entrusted to our care. Memberships make a great gift too!





To understand how to log your **volunteer hours**, contact Nancy Murrah or Kat Harnest.

The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay had 533 hours of volunteer work completed at the new center between August 1 - August 31, 2020. This does not include volunteer time rescuing or caring for birds/animals.

Visit our [New Etsy Store!](#)

About the artist - Volunteer Susan Mentzel creates these beautiful multi-media works of art out of paper, canvas, wood and embellishes them with beads and flowers. There are also great Holiday ornaments.

In the [store](#) you will find tumblers, T-Shirts and more!



Keeping Tabs on Volunteer Hours Is Crucial!

By Kat Harnest

The Raptor Center of Tampa Bay tracks and reports all volunteer hours so that the organization has opportunities to qualify for grants and develop operational strategies. This is why logging volunteer hours is so crucial. The organization wants to be able to celebrate dedicated volunteers and track individual contributions to our foundation. Students can log individual hours for required community service and employees may log individual hours for their company's social responsibility initiatives.



WHY DO WE LOG VOLUNTEER HOURS?

1. Understand the Value of Volunteers

Logging volunteer hours helps us understand just how important and valuable volunteer services are. Did you know the national average for volunteer pay per hour is over \$20.00?

2. Demonstrate Accountability

Volunteers' hours logged in an official capacity on behalf of our organization help increase the organization's accountability.

3. Improve Volunteer Program Return on Investment

The organization is dependent on volunteers to run our center. Our volunteer program's return on investment is in part measured by the number of hours our volunteers contribute. The birds and animals must be cared for no matter what happens. To do this proficiently we need to always make sure we are making the most of the hours people give us and that they are happy and productive. Volunteering should be fun!

4. Share Program Impact

It is important to show donors, both current and potential, volunteers, stakeholders, and other community members that we make a real difference. We track and report volunteer hours to show our community that we are having an impact and delivering on our mission.

5. Win Grants

This is a big one. Our non-profit Center relies on grants and other outside funding to exist. Most granting foundations want to know about our volunteer's contributions. Logging volunteer hours makes it more likely to acquire necessary funding.

Why I Volunteer

By Louise Roy

No picture tells it like this one does for me. I watched Mark Krawczyk rescue my Celeste in January of 2015.



This is where the Raptor Center of Tampa Bay started for me. One of my eagles, that I monitor for Audubon's EagleWatch Program, was down and I felt helpless. I wanted someone to come get her and make it all better. The eagle was rescued, and it went to Nancy Murrah at the Raptor Center. Later that night, Celeste died in her arms. Necropsy revealed that she died of rodenticide or rat poison. She was nesting at the time and looking for a quick meal. She saw a rat and ate it. I wanted to do more to help. Now when I talk about eagles, I talk about her I try and educate people on how rodenticides kill these beautiful birds. Not only her but owls, hawks and so on.

My first rescue was an Osprey. I was nervous and scared. With gloves, a net and a box in hand I went to get the Osprey. I picked up the Osprey and transported it. The more rescues I did the easier it was for me to safely pick them up. Nancy, through her experience and knowledge, is always willing to help us learn better ways of rescuing.

"I can't let her down.
I have to get that
eagle."

Last year I was called upon to rescue a Bald Eagle. You know you hear the word Eagle your mind starts racing. There was no one available to help me at the time. Eagle rescues are best done with two people. I went there and saw a beautiful eagle on the ground. I don't know if I was more afraid of getting it or not getting it. I knew Nancy was waiting to treat it. My thought was "I can't let her down. I have to get that eagle." So, I motioned an onlooker where to stand and anticipated which direction the eagle would run. Gloves and boots on, net in hand, I ran after it. I was able to corner and net it. Now I had a very mad eagle trying to bite and sink her talons in me. Thank God my gloves were thick. I kept her in the net until I got her in the carrier.

I just want to help make a
difference. That is why I
volunteer.

When Nancy said she weighed over 10 pounds and was the largest eagle rescued by The Raptor Center I was so proud I was able to do it. There is a rush when you see an eagle that gives you the power to run and catch it. Since then I have rescued several eagles. I do the best I can, but I usually have someone help me when I rescue them. I have also rescued hawks, owls, opossums, turtles, Sandhill Cranes, Great Blue Herons, Anhinga, Cormorants, gulls, vultures, squirrels, bunnies, and baby raccoons. I have transported many injured animals, including a baby fawn.

I just want to help make a difference. That is why I volunteer. Sometimes I am comfortable at home and the call comes in that a bird is injured so, when I can, I go. When I don't go, I am not comfortable until I know someone else has responded. We all volunteer for the same reasons: to help the animals.

This year I released my first Eagle. All the other things don't give you the rush and excitement that holding an eagle does I gave it a quick kiss on the back of the head for good luck and sent it on its way to live like an eagle should. So, Celeste's dying was not in vain. She opened doors for me that I never thought possible.

Volunteering is different for everyone but giving a little of yourself to help always leaves a good feeling.





The Difference a Helping Hand Can Make

By Gail Dixon

Since taking control of the property that will be the new Raptor Center of Tampa Bay, we have watched a miracle happen. People have come out of the woodwork to help.

Throughout the rescue's history, Nancy Murrah has said that acquiring a location would encourage volunteers to go there and help. Little did we know how right she was.

We took control of the property on August 1, and that very day, volunteers from various units at MacDill Air force Base came and cleared thousands of pounds of vegetation as well as our gate. That weekend started a stream of volunteers in large groups and small who came to help clear all the stuff left on the property, that was once used to raise tropical fish, to give us a clean slate on which to establish the Center. I was amazed.

Here are a few stories of how volunteers have already changed the face of the Raptor Center:

Two teams of 23 and 24 people from MacDill spent their Saturday mornings getting sweaty and dirty at the property. They removed thousands of pounds of vegetation from the property, clearing our fence line, helping to remove a huge bougainvillea, and other various clean-up tasks.



AHC donated 3 dump trucks and removed a truckload of old paint and chemicals.



Two dozen people came out on two separate Friday mornings and thinned out vegetation, removed trees, removed over 8 tons of concrete as well as an 11 additional tons of fish tanks. They removed PVC pipe, wooden platforms that once housed huge burial vaults where the previous owners grew fish, the remaining bougainvillea and more. Then they hauled it off for us. Five roll away dumpsters full!

RAYMOND JAMES Took up a collection, bought us nearly everything on our Amazon Smile Wish List and delivered it to the Center.

The UPS Store in Trinity donated a copier allowing us to provide educational materials for our programs.



They spent hours removing 25 fish vaults from our property, allowing us to clear the space for a flight cage.

Volunteers - 57 people from every walk of life spent either their Saturday or Sunday clearing even more debris from the property. They cleaned out the ceiling



from the clinic building, which was Styrofoam and fiberglass insulation. They removed junk, including a picnic table, riding lawnmower, florescent lights, roles of rusty wire and lots of invasive plants, like Caesar weed and air potatoes. They pressure washed the inside of what will be our new clinic. Another rescue group,

Birds in Helping Hands volunteers removed every nail from the rafters. They pressure washed the walls of the administration building and cleaned the floor. They removed a Crape Myrtle that was too close to the building and laying on the roof and continued to chip away at the Bougainvillea.



Sabine and her sons - Sabine found us on Facebook and coordinated with a forklift to remove 8 more of the burial vaults, allowing us to move forward toward building rehabilitation cages. They are going to use them to grow lettuce.



Your Membership Dollars at Work

By Nancy Murrah

Have you ever wondered what we use your membership dollars for?

It takes a lot to save the life of an injured or orphaned baby wild animal. It also takes a lot of baby formula, medicine, food, rehabilitation equipment, cleaning supplies, and months of specialized care.

It takes even more to save the life of a injured bird of prey. It takes x-rays, vets, food, medicine, bandages, fluids, incubators, heating pads, and much more. It takes cages for the clinical stage, even larger cages for rehabilitation and even larger flight barns for reconditioning through their physical and occupational therapy in preparation for returning to the wild.

Wildlife rehabilitation organizations do not receive any governmental funding, but instead rely on the support of animal lovers like you. Your membership helps us buy

what we do not get donated and need, especially food, in order to treat, feed and care for the birds.

Remember the basic individual membership is \$35.00. You get our newsletter, like this one, at least 2 times a year, a membership card and pre-notice to all events. Most importantly you will be helping the birds and animals that come to the Raptor Center for help and healing.

Our goal is to sell 5,000 memberships. That's an aggressive goal which, if achieved, would bring us \$175,000. We need every penny of that and more to build several large flight cages, rehabilitation mews, outfitting our clinic, installing a kitchen and bathroom. THE LIST GOES ON AND ON.

Please consider buying memberships for your friends and family for the holidays and help them save the birds too! Here's a direct link to our [Raptor Center ETSY store!](#)



Thank you for your continued support.

