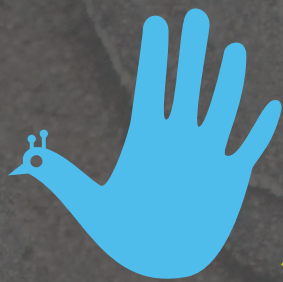


SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER | 2013



Lincoln Children's

ZOOtracks

**CONSERVATION IN COSTA RICA**  
SAVING SEA TURTLES  
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**ENDOCRINOLOGY**  
ZOO MAKES INTERNATIONAL IMPACT  
PAGE 11



**Lincoln Children's Zoo**  
1222 South 27th Street  
Lincoln, NE 68502  
402.475.6741

**LincolnZoo.org**

**OPEN DAILY**

April 13 - October 20  
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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Kristin McCoun

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Jessica Simpson

**On the Cover**  
Sea Turtles in Costa Rica

**Contributing Photos**  
Evan Killeen



The Lincoln Children's Zoo is  
accredited by the Association  
of Zoos and Aquariums.



Community  
Services Fund  
of Nebraska

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Learn more at:  
[www.CommunityServicesFund.org](http://www.CommunityServicesFund.org).

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**For information on Planned Giving and Endowments,  
please contact Kayla McElroy at 402.475.6741 ext. 131.**

## LINCOLN CHILDREN'S ZOO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Mission: To enrich lives through firsthand interaction with living things.**

# EXPEDITION COSTA RICA

ARTICLE ON PAGE 3



## THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS





# CONSERVATION IN COSTA RICA

## ZOO LEADS TRIP TO SOUTH AMERICA TO SAVE ENDANGERED SEA TURTLES

BY JESSICA SIMPSON

There are dozens of educational opportunities for children and teens at the Lincoln Children's Zoo. Through summer and fall camps, toddler programs and Zoo Crew, 2- to 18-year-olds can experience nature and animals firsthand without leaving Lincoln, Neb. For teens who want to immerse themselves in nature and wildlife farther from home, the Zoo leads adventure trips to Florida and Costa Rica each summer. This year's Costa Rica expedition gave students a rare chance at saving endangered sea turtles.

Led by Aimee Johns, the Zoo's director of education, a group of 12 teenagers set off for Costa Rica June 20 and returned to Lincoln June 30.

"Our main mission at the Zoo is to connect people with living things and

foster relationships with animals and nature," Johns said. "Many of the teens who came on the trip looked at it as career exploration. Some are interested in going into biology or they want to be veterinarians or zookeepers."

Ethan Freese, a senior at Lincoln Southeast, was one student who considered the trip to Costa Rica a valuable professional development experience. After he graduates in May of 2014, Freese plans to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and pursue a biology degree.

"I really wanted to travel abroad and work with biologists in the field," Freese said. "I want to go into conservation biology as a career, so it was awesome to gain experience working with wildlife in their natural habitat."

Johns, Freese and the other group members landed in San Jose and started the adventure by visiting the hot springs of La Fortuna. They spent three days hiking the rainforest and zip lining.

"It was a lot of thrill-seeking, adventure stuff," Johns animatedly explained. "We hiked a volcano and did lots of rainforest exploration for the first days in La Fortuna before taking a long drive to a remote location in La Tortuga Feliz where the sea turtles were. The drive was just amazing and beautiful, and as soon as we got off the bus a howler monkey greeted us. It was one of those moments where we were wondering what was going to be next! That's how every day was."

The journey from La Fortuna to La Tortuga Feliz was certainly memorable. After driving down a dirt road for about an hour, they





continued by boat for another 45 minutes until they reached their destination.

“Getting on the boat was really exciting,” Johns explained. “We didn’t know what the place would be like, and when we arrived we had no electricity and only cold water. We had to eat vegetarian meals for three days, and there was no Wi-Fi. We were very unplugged, which was good for all of us.”

Freese’s favorite part of the trip was getting to save the sea turtles in La Tortuga.

“It was a lot of hard work, but I thought it was the best experience because it really made me realize I want to do field work with animals in my future,” Freese explained. “Day-to-day when we weren’t at the turtle place we would ride the bus around to different locations, go on hikes and stop at local restaurants to eat. It was really cool to be immersed in the culture.”

Sea turtles are an endangered species and are at risk for poaching in La Tortuga. A local conservation group oversees the process of saving sea turtle eggs. The group was taught how to excavate sea turtle eggs from a nest and collect data, including measurements of the turtle. Three types of sea turtles—Leatherback, Hawksbill and Green—are native to the area.

“We did our part in conservation by helping save sea turtles,” said Johns. “Poaching is part of their culture. The locals are in such a remote location and don’t have a lot of resources, but they do the best with what they have. Unfortunately that means they survive on sea turtle eggs, adding to the endangered status of the species.”

The large group was split into smaller patrol groups, with each having four-hour shifts starting in the evening and stretching into the early morning hours. A local guide accompanied the groups.

“Every night we’d have to get up and patrol, and my shift was usually at midnight,” Freese recounted. “We’d have to walk up and down the beach for four hours and look for sea turtles. At the hatchery we saw babies hatch twice, and we got to release them back into the ocean.”

On her second night patrolling, Johns and students in her group were walking their 3 to 4 mile stretch of beach and saw sea turtle tracks. Using their red-light flashlight (they couldn’t use bright lights), they spotted a sea turtle laying eggs.

“We quickly took all of the turtle’s measurements and data and followed all of the rules we learned from our training. The kids did it all as I directed and reminded them of

the steps,” Johns said. “After an hour the turtle finished laying her eggs and covered them with sand and vegetation. We walked her back to the ocean to protect her from poachers and collected the eggs.”

In all, the group gathered 125 eggs from the nest and took them back to the hatchery. The hatchery is guarded 24 hours a day and serves as a place for the sea turtles to hatch safely before they’re released back into the wild.

“We were the only group that was able to collect eggs, so it was really cool. It was very exciting, and we were definitely in awe,” Johns described.

The group stayed in La Tortuga Feliz for three days before leaving for Playa Chiquita where they kayaked, snorkeled and visited a waterfall. The trip wrapped up back in San Jose for one more adventure of whitewater rafting before the group flew home.

“The experience of being immersed in Costa Rica was really cool. The culture was a lot more laid back, and we found ourselves laying in hammocks during our downtime. All of the locals were really nice and welcoming. It was an awesome experience,” Freese concluded.

For information on the 2014 Costa Rica adventure and other expeditions, visit [LincolnZoo.org](http://LincolnZoo.org).





# WORD SCRAMBLE

CAN YOU UNSCRAMBLE THE ANIMAL WORDS?

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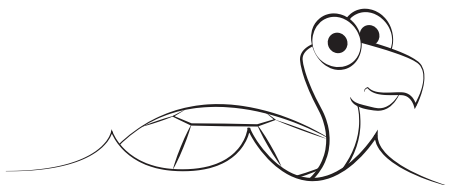
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NKYEMO

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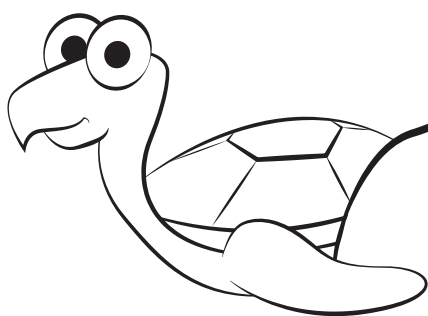
# COLOR TIME!

GET OUT YOUR BOX OF  
CRAYONS AND GIVE THE  
ANIMAL RESCUER SOME COLOR!

## KIDS CORNER

### STEPS TO SAVING SEA TURTLES

1. FIND THE EGGS
2. GUARD EGGS UNTIL  
THEY HATCH
3. RELEASE SEA TURTLES  
INTO THE OCEAN!



## FIND THE EGGS

CAN YOU FIND ALL OF THE  
SEA TURTLE EGGS?

WRITE DOWN HOW MANY YOU FOUND HERE: \_\_\_\_\_



# VENTURING BEYOND

## DUSTIN KELLY'S 2,265 MILE JOURNEY

BY RYAN GROSS

2,265 miles is a long way from Lincoln, Neb. That is the distance Dustin Kelly, a Lincoln North Star graduate, traveled this summer when he embarked on a Lincoln Children's Zoo adventure to Costa Rica. Up to that point his furthest trip had been just over 400 miles when he traveled to Illinois.

When Kelly heard about the Costa Rica trip through a friend, he was instantly interested. "I thought it would be a great way to meet new friends and experience amazing animals and the outdoors," Kelly said. His excitement for the adventure overcame the fact that he had never traveled outside the Midwest, had never flown in an airplane, was afraid of heights and didn't speak Spanish.

After a flight which Kelly said was interesting and fun, the group of 10 teenagers and two Zoo staff landed at the San Jose airport in Costa Rica. Kelly thought the airport didn't look much different than the one in Omaha. It wasn't until they left that the surroundings changed. "After we left the airport the first thing I thought was 'wow this is different,'" Kelly said. For the Lincoln teenager it was a moment straight out of *The Wizard of Oz*. "We are not in Nebraska

anymore," Kelly said. The buildings looked different; there was a jungle and a mountain, which looked a lot like a volcano.

The adventure was filled with many amazing moments. The group climbed a volcano, zip lined through a rain forest and for Kelly one of the most memorable moments was visiting the ocean. "You don't understand how incredible the ocean is until you see it," Kelly said. It was at that moment that he realized, soon, he would be swimming, kayaking and searching for sea turtles in this massive body of water. To Kelly it was one of the best parts of the trip. He described it in one word, "peaceful."

For Kelly, whose passion is woodworking, this was a trip of a lifetime. "I would instantly do it again," he said. It was about more than saving sea turtles, kayaking in the ocean and experiencing a new culture. It was about a kid from Nebraska living out a real-life adventure.

Find more stories from those who experienced Costa Rica by visiting [LincolnZoo.org](http://LincolnZoo.org).







- June 19 to 30
- Ages 14-18
- Summer 2014
- LincolnZoo.org

**COSTA RICA**

- July 28 to Aug 3
- Ages 14-18
- Summer 2014
- LincolnZoo.org

**FLORIDA**



# ADVENTURES

By Lincoln Children's ZOO

Experience the world  
in unforgettable ways.

Expert guides take you far beyond the beaten  
path immersing you in the culture, traditions  
and natural environment of the exotic land.



## JOURNEYS WITH JOHN CHAPO

- Adults
- Africa, Galapagos & more
- Prices vary
- To Contact John: 402.475.6741







# HOLIDAY TRAIN RIDE

Hot Chocolate & Santa

December 7 & 8, 14 & 15 | 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Tickets include train ride, hot chocolate, visit with Santa and Zoo entry.  
Tickets on sale Nov. 5 at [LincolnZoo.org](http://LincolnZoo.org) or at the front gate the day of event.

Tickets may sell out. Advanced ticket purchase is suggested.

Members: \$4 | Non-Members: \$8

# ZOO CALENDAR

WE WILL SEE YOU AT THE ZOO

## SEPT

WED 18

### MEMBER APPRECIATION NIGHT

5 - 8 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo | Zoo Members ONLY

Lincoln Children's Zoo members receive a free cookie from Runza, free cotton candy, \$1 train rides, \$2 horse rides and great discounts at the Safari Café. Plus, prizes will be given out every 30 minutes.

BEGINS WED 18 OR

THURS 19

### TOTS & TURTLES

10 - 11 a.m. | Ages 2-3 with parent | \$75

Tots & Turtles is a six-week toddler/parent education program which will introduce your child to interactive environments filled with learning opportunities. Each week children and parents will meet a new animal friend and take part in activities designed to assist with toddler development. Each one-hour session is limited to 15 families to ensure individual attention.

MON 30

### THE GREAT ZOO TRAIN ADVENTURE CAMP

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Ages 5-7 & 8-10 | Members: \$45, Non-Members: \$60

Board the historic Z.O.&O. railroad and uncover hidden secrets about the Zoo and the train. Plus, get up close to some of the most popular Zoo animals. LPS elementary not in session.

## OCT

MON 14 TUES 15

### MINI ZOOKEEPER CAMP

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Ages 5-7 & 8-10 | Members: \$60, Non-Members: \$75

Spend two days working with real zookeepers as they care for some of the Zoo's most popular animals. Mini-zookeepers will help feed animals, learn exciting Zoo facts and get a behind-the-scenes experience. LPS not in session.

SAT 19

### LAST DAY OPEN FOR 2013 ZOO SEASON

10 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo

SAT 26 TO

WED 30

### BOO AT THE ZOO

5:30 - 8:00 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo

Lincoln's biggest trick-or-treat party is at the Zoo. The entire family will love stopping at 40 trick-or-treat booths to get candy, coupons and more. Admission or membership applies, plus \$3 trick-or-treat bag required.

Bryan Health

## DEC

SAT 7 SUN 8

SAT 14 SUN 15

### NORTH POLE EXPRESS

11 a.m. - 4 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo | Members: \$4, Non-Members: \$8

Board the Zoo's train for a journey to the North Pole. Once inside the Zoo, your winter wonderland experience includes hot chocolate, candy canes and a visit to Santa's workshop to see the big man himself. Tickets include admission, a train ride and all activities. Tickets on sale November 5.



# ENDOCRINOLOGY

## ZOO'S RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS HAVE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT



BY JESSICA SIMPSON

The Lincoln Children's Zoo was already nationally renowned before having a wildlife endocrinologist on staff, but now the Zoo has even more proof. Kari Morfeld, the Zoo's director of conservation and research, conducts and leads groundbreaking research that not only improves health and quality of life for animals at Lincoln Children's Zoo, but also at zoos across North America.

"Most people don't know what an endocrinologist is," concedes Morfeld. "Basically, endocrinology is the study of hormones, so I study animal hormones. Specifically I focus on metabolic hormones in elephants. My research will help set new health standards for all elephants in North America."

Morfeld's start in wildlife endocrinology began as a student at Nebraska Wesleyan University where she studied biology. After graduating she got a job managing the Henry Doorly Zoo's reproductive biology lab and continued her education at UNL to earn her master's degree in reproductive physiology. Morfeld wanted to keep studying after earning her master's degree, so took a leap of faith and headed to Washington D.C. to study at the Smithsonian



National Zoo where leading elephant research was being done.

"I volunteered at the Smithsonian Zoo for six months to get my foot into the lab and finally caught the eye of the head physiologist studying elephant reproductive physiology. She needed someone to study body conditions of elephants," Morfeld explains.

Morfeld brought her expertise back to Nebraska after the birth of her daughter. She didn't know if she'd be able to continue her elephant research, but the Lincoln Children's Zoo was happy to have her.

"The Zoo had space and was interested in getting more involved in research and conservation, so they took me in. My research

is a joint project between the Smithsonian National Zoo and Lincoln Children's Zoo," Morfeld explains.

In January of this year, a new collaborative research center was established at the Zoo. Morfeld conducts all of the elephant hormone research there using data sent from zoos across North America. Her passion for the work and research she does will eventually make a difference in the lives of hundreds of elephants and other animals in the future. Morfeld was also invited to study wild elephants in Africa over the next 10 years, which will give her a benchmark to compare zoo elephants with.

"My work entails a little bit of crazy," she laughs, "But I feel it's important."





## Linda and Norm Helzer

Linda and Norm Helzer enjoy visiting the Zoo and feeding the dromedary camels with their grandchildren. Linda, a retired educator, generously underwrites free admission for low income children attending local schools. Norm, a retired scientist, makes gifts to benefit the plant and animal care at the Zoo.



## Jill Marshall

Jill is a proud aunt and animal lover. Every year, for birthday gifts, she shares a Lincoln Children's Zoo animal adoption package with her nieces and nephews. "The kids absolutely love animal adoptions, plus it supports the Zoo," Jill said.

## Susan & Mark Musick

Susan and Major General (Ret.) Mark Musick have shared many gifts with the Lincoln Children's Zoo over the years. As a lasting gift to benefit the Zoo, Susan, a retired executive secretary for the Lincoln Public Schools Science Focus Program (Zoo School) and Mark have taken action to perpetually benefit the Zoo through their estate planning.



# You can help.

Lincoln Children's Zoo depends on the generosity of people like you to maintain the Zoo and care for our animals. Lend a helping hand. Visit [LincolnZoo.org](http://LincolnZoo.org) today.





# BOO AT THE ZOO

## THE WIZARD CALLS JOHN



### <RING. . . RING. . . RING>

**John Chapo:** Hello, this is John Chapo.

**The Wizard:** Hey John, your old friend The Wizard here checking in.

**John Chapo:** Hi Wiz, how the heck are you? Long time no see!

**The Wizard:** I'm doing great. I'm enjoying my vacation down here in the Okefenokee Swamp and boy am I having an awesome time. You wouldn't believe how many snakes and alligators are here hanging out with me. Hey Spot the Alligator, say hi to John, my Zoo director friend in Lincoln, NE.

**Spot the Alligator:** <HUGE roar!>

**The Wizard:** That's alligator speak for "hello." Ouch! Hey mosquitos, remember not too many bites please. I know, I know, it is all part of my wizard skin care beauty treatment, but the bites sting a little too much. Sorry John, all of these critters down here are distracting me and boy do I love it, especially at night when all of my bat and spider friends come over to party. They all love the jungle drums and rattling bones of the local band The Rolling Bones and boy, you should see it when a hundred spiders are doing the twist—it's legs everywhere! Anyway, hey John, how are preparations coming along for my favorite annual event, Boo at the Zoo?

**John Chapo:** Hey Wiz, things are sliding right along as we prepare for that awesome, fun fundraising event. We will have 40 trick-or-treat stations, decorations galore, our friends from Bryan Health are sponsoring the

event and the great cooks from Raising Canes will be serving your favorite chicken fingers on the plaza. As the great Boo team pulls more of the details together we will be announcing it on our website, Facebook page, Twitter and through emails.

**The Wizard:** Well, it sounds like everything is a go for another awesome Boo at the Zoo, and I am so excited! By the way, I have been having special hair treatments done. It's amazing what snail slug slime does for the shiny glow of my hair. I can't wait to show all of the kids at Boo at the Zoo. Well, John, the spiders just asked me to join in a game of "Kick Bone" so I'd better hang up and get in the game. I'm really looking forward to seeing all of those kids in their costumes at Boo at the Zoo, October 26 through 30. My favorite five nights of the year! I'll see you at Boo at the Zoo.



# FALL ZOO CAMPS

## The Great Zoo Train Adventure Camp

Monday, September 30  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Ages 5-7 and 8-10  
Members \$45 | Non-members \$60

Board the historic Z.O.&O. railroad and uncover hidden secrets about the Zoo and the train. Plus, get up close to some of the most popular Zoo animals.

## Mini Zookeeper Camp

Monday & Tuesday, October 14 & 15  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Ages 5-7 and 8-10  
Members \$60 | Non-members \$75

Spend two days working with real zookeepers as they care for some of the Zoo's most popular animals. Mini-zookeepers will help feed animals, learn exciting Zoo facts and get a behind-the-scenes experience.



## Tots & Turtles

Ages 2-3 + Parent

Wednesdays (Sept 18 - Oct 23)  
or Thursdays (Sept 19 - Oct 24)  
10 to 11 a.m.  
Price: \$75

Tots & Turtles is a six-week toddler/parent education program, which will introduce your child to interactive environments filled with learning opportunities. Each week children and parents will meet a new animal friend and take part in activities designed to assist with toddler development. Each one-hour session is limited to 15 families to ensure individual attention.



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Lincoln Children's

ZOO

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[www.lincolnzoo.org](http://www.lincolnzoo.org)

Lincoln Children's ZOO

# BOO AT THE ZOO

ZOO



40 TRICK-OR-TREAT BOOTHS

**OCTOBER 26, 27, 28, 29 & 30 | 5:30 - 8:00 P.M.**

**SAVE TIME, PURCHASE TICKETS IN ADVANCE ONLINE OR AT THE ZOO.**  
CHICKEN STRIP MEALS BY RAISING CANES FOR PURCHASE. ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE ZOO.

Bryan  Health