

SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER | 2014



Lincoln Children's

**ZOO**tracks

**THE WALLABY CONNECTION**

PAGE 3-4

**ADVENTURES IN COSTA RICA**

PAGE 5-6

**BABY BIRD BONANZA**

PAGE 12

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

**LincolnZoo.org**

**OPEN DAILY**  
April 9 - October 19  
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**President & CEO**  
John Chapo

**General Manager**  
Evan Killeen

### Zootracks Magazine

**Senior Editor**  
Ryan Gross

**Art Director**  
Kristin McCoun

**Contributing Graphics**  
Neely Sutter, Intern

**Contributing Writers**  
Jessica Simpson  
Cassandra Driskell, Intern

**Editor**  
Shannon Wilkinson

**On the Cover**  
Baby Liv the tammar wallaby joey

### ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

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



Community  
Services Fund  
of Nebraska

Lincoln Children's Zoo is a member  
of Community Services Fund.  
Learn more at:  
CommunityServicesFund.org.

# WHAT'S INSIDE

EXPEDITION COSTA RICA PHOTOS	2
THE WALLABY CONNECTION	3-4
ADVENTURES IN COSTA RICA	5-6
KID'S COLLECTIBLE POSTER	7-8
NORTH POLE EXPRESS	9
ZOO CALENDAR	10
THE MAN BEHIND THE ANIMALS	11
BABY BIRD BONANZA	12
FALL ZOO CAMPS	13
TOTS & TURTLES	13
BOO AT THE ZOO	14

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

## LINCOLN CHILDREN'S ZOO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Jake Muhleisen, CHAIR**

**Aaron Bell & Greg Dynek, CO-VICE CHAIR**

**James Anderson, TREASURER**

**Brad Anderson, Tafe Bergo, Bob Caldwell, Brian Cintani, Megan Ehlers,  
Amanda Garner, Brett Harris, Nelle Jamison, Brent Johnson, Fleur Johnson,  
Derek Kotschwar, Matt Lehnert, Ginny Martin, Bruce Meister, Andy Monnich,  
Ryan Nelson, Megan O'Connell, Keith Peters, Katie Ripa, Russ Ripa, Jeff Semrad,  
Len Weyeneth, Shannon Wilkinson & Michaela Johannis Young**

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



# EXPEDITION COSTA RICA

ARTICLE ON PAGE 5



## THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS



New arrivals at the Zoo are brought to you by Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center.

Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center



# THE WALLABY CONNECTION

## HOW LINCOLN CHILDREN'S ZOO IS MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

BY RYAN GROSS

“What is your favorite part of your job?” That is a question zookeepers are asked frequently. Their answers will vary depending on the animals they work with, but one element that is present in every answer is “a connection.” Just as adults spend many hours with their co-workers and children with their friends, zookeepers spend most of the day with their animals. During that time a bond is formed. A connection that often leads to life-changing moments.

In early 2014, zookeepers arrived at work as normal. As one of them checked in on the wallabies, they noticed the new joey was not in its mother's pouch but laying on the ground. The zookeeper was amazed to find the baby was alive but near death. The keeper knew the wallaby had abandoned her joey and the only path for survival would be to hand raise it. The process of hand raising a wallaby joey is not easy and success is not a guarantee.

The first step was to nurse the joey back to good health. She lived in an incubator being fed and monitored around the clock. There were many times zookeepers thought she wouldn't make it. As time went by she got stronger and the prognosis became more positive. However, the battle to keep this baby wallaby alive had just begun. The next

step would be as equally important as the previous—finding a pouch for her to live in.

Wallabies grow and develop in their mother's pouch. Zookeepers needed a way to replicate that environment. They decided to buy a makeshift pouch that they would wear. This would give the joey the warmth and shelter needed to grow. This process would require a zookeeper to wear the pouch, with the joey in it most of the day. That meant wearing it during normal daily routines such as working, shopping and being at home.

Three zookeepers took part in this endeavor. They took turns wearing the pouch every day, feeding her and completing health checks. It was a difficult task but they knew the end goal was the survival of an animal. As time went on, she progressed and became healthier by the day. She could even be seen peeking her head out.

When the Zoo announced a baby wallaby was being hand raised by zookeepers, public support was amazing. Adults and children loved the photos of this adorable baby. The story gained national attention as Lincoln Children's Zoo was one of the only zoos in the nation to hand raise a tammar wallaby. As she grew and became a healthy joey, the decision was made to let Zoo guests see

her at the Animal Encounter Stage. Here a zookeeper wearing the makeshift pouch would tell the story of the hand raised joey and occasionally she would peek her head out to the “oohs and aahs” of the audience.

This wallaby joey instantly became one of the favorite animals at the Zoo. Her story touched people's lives. Jeanne Stelmach's two children, Wyatt and Avery, found inspiration in her story. They wore their mother's old purses around their necks with stuffed wallabies looking out. Pretending to be zookeepers helping raise a baby wallaby, they went everywhere with them.

This is a story of a bond. A connection between a zookeeper, an animal and the Zoo's guests. It's a story that has been occurring for the past 49 years at Lincoln Children's Zoo. Over six million guests have walked through the gates of the Zoo. How many of them have had life-changing moments? This is the reason why Arnott Folsom created the Zoo, why nearly 200,000 people visit each year, why countless people find it in their hearts to donate and why the future of one of the nation's smallest zoos is brighter than ever.

This story has a happy ending. The wallaby joey found clinging to life was named Liv.

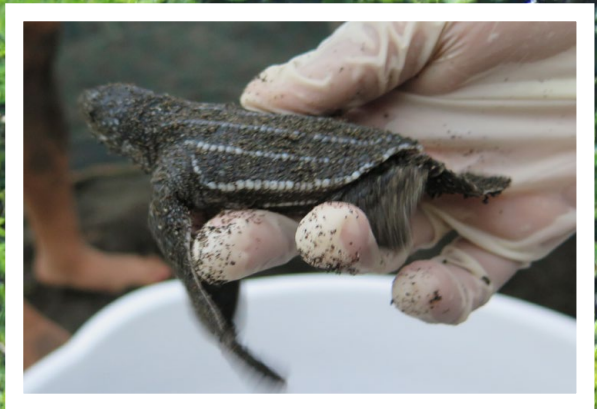








# ADVENTURES IN COSTA RICA



**BY JESSICA SIMPSON**

“A small bridge hung between the wall of the canyon, and brightly colored flowers and plants climbed the walls,” 18-year-old Gwen Plouzek vividly described. “In those few moments, I realized just how varied and magnificent the natural world could be.”

The scene she took in from a raft floating down Costa Rica’s Pacuare River remains one of her favorite memories of the trip, but it was hard to pinpoint one, she added.

“From the smallest interactions with the Costa Rican people to the realization that even a small group from Lincoln can make a difference in a worldwide effort, there were so many learning opportunities,” she summarized.

And that is exactly what Lincoln Children’s Zoo is trying to achieve

through its mission to enrich people’s lives through firsthand interaction with living things, said John Chapo, Zoo president and CEO.

“Our goal is to connect, to grow, to inspire youth to learn, and we will work endlessly to provide those experiences,” Chapo explained. “Because of our wonderful supporters, we are able to make that commitment.”

## **From Lincoln, Nebraska to San Jose, Costa Rica**

This was the second year in a row the Zoo organized a youth conservation trip to Costa Rica. The group of 14 began their 10-day adventure in San Jose and wound through the country taking in views of the Arenal Volcano and experiencing the rush of zip lining, white water rafting, kayaking and the hot springs. From the food to the lack of American amenities,

they were immersed in Costa Rican culture.

16-year-old Nelson Dittman was only a little tired of rice and beans after the trip, but he hardly noticed with the other amazing things going on around him. The group was learning the entire time, identifying plants and animals—like spider, capuchin and howler monkeys—and interacting with native Spanish speakers.

“I definitely think one of the coolest things we saw were the leaf-cutter ants,” described Dittman. “We actually walked past some of their huge nests and all the plants surrounding them were eaten down to stems. It was awesome to see.”

The group also experienced the electric energy of Costa Rica’s win over Greece in the World Cup. They happened to be in San Juan,





the capital city, when the two rivals played each other. In double overtime, Costa Rica won after a shootout.

“I’ve never seen a group of people come together to show such pride in their country the way the Costa Ricans did over their win,” Plouzek said. “It was the perfect ending to an incredible trip, and I feel lucky to have taken part in every minute of it!”

### **La Tortuga Feliz**

A few days into the trip, the Lincolmites headed to La Tortuga Feliz, a turtle conservation project on the Caribbean side of Costa Rica, to fulfill their real purpose for being there: helping save the multiple endangered sea turtle species.

Sea turtles are incredibly valuable to poachers who sell their eggs and

want their shells for material goods, and pollution and fishing nets also threaten the turtles’ lives. La Tortuga Feliz’s main mission is to gather turtle eggs and hatch them safely so the turtles can be turned out to sea. Volunteers run the entire project, so help like that from the Zoo’s group is the only way it is successful.

Dittman and Plouzek both agreed that saving the turtles was the most rewarding part of the trip.

“While everyday amenities were unavailable—hot water, electricity, air conditioning or a mirror—it forced each of us to spend our time together appreciating the beautiful country we were in,” said Plouzek.

Dittman was inspired to return after he graduates high school. “I’m definitely going back. I think it’s important to conserve what’s left on the planet,” he said. “Walking those

beaches was amazing, the stars were insane and it was just a beautiful place to be.”

Each night groups walked up and down the beach searching for turtle nests and females laying eggs. The groups successfully excavated nests and saved a total of 346 eggs!

### **Small But Mighty**

For a Zoo its size, it’s incredible how the Lincoln Children’s Zoo can provide such life-altering experiences for people of all ages.

“We’re probably the smallest zoo in the country to do a global trip like this with youth,” Chapo said. “A great amount of research goes into these destinations and activities. It’s amazing that we can organize trips like this and youth can actually save animals on the front line.”







# FASCINATING FACTS

- HAND RAISED AT LINCOLN CHILDREN'S ZOO
- SMALLEST WALLABY SPECIES
- LOVES EATING LETTUCE

**hello**  
**my name is**

**Baby Liv**  
(the tammar wallaby)



COLLECTIBLE POSTER





# HOLIDAY TRAIN RIDE

Hot Chocolate & Santa

December 6 & 7, 13 & 14 | 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Ticket includes train ride, hot chocolate, cookie decorating, visit with Santa and Zoo entry!

Tickets on sale Nov. 5 at [LincolnZoo.org](http://LincolnZoo.org) or at the Zoo. Tickets may sell out.

Advanced ticket purchase is suggested.



# ZOO CALENDAR

WE WILL SEE YOU AT THE ZOO

**SEPT**

WED 10  
& WED 17

## MEMBER EXTRA HOURS

9 a.m. - 7 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo

Lincoln Children's Zoo members can take advantage of great perks including discounted train rides, free cookies from Runza, giveaways for children and additional Animal Encounter shows! Plus, members get exclusive extra hours from 9 to 10 a.m. and 5 to 7 p.m. Zoo open to non-members 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



First National Bank

WED 24

OR THURS 25

## TOTS & TURTLES

10 - 11 a.m. | Ages 2-4 with parent | Wednesdays or Thursdays | \$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.

**OCT**

FRI 10

## 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.

MON 13 TO

TUES 14

## 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.

SUN 19

## LAST DAY OPEN FOR 2014 ZOO SEASON

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

SUN 26 TO

THURS 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 over 35 trick-or-treat booths to get candy, coupons and more. Admission or membership applies, plus \$3 trick-or-treat bag required. Tickets available online or at the Zoo.

Bryan Health

**DEC**

SAT 6, SUN 7,  
SAT 13 & SUN 14

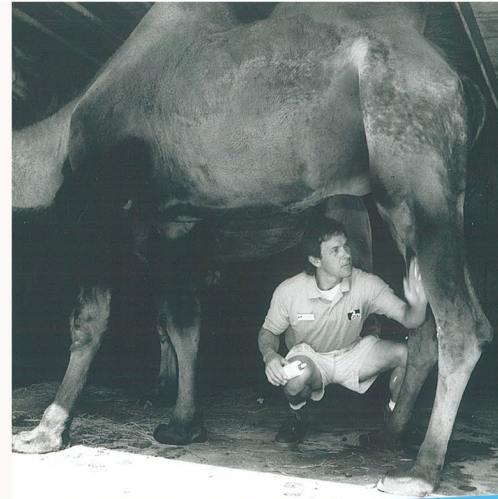
## NORTH POLE EXPRESS

11 a.m. - 3 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo | Tickets at LincolnZoo.org

Board the Zoo's train for a journey to the North Pole. Once inside the Zoo, your winter wonderland experience includes hot chocolate, cookie decorating 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.



# THE MAN BEHIND THE ANIMALS



## BY RYAN GROSS

In 1990, Lincoln Children's Zoo was going through a transition period. There was a newer CEO, plans for expansion were underway and a young zookeeper was hired to oversee animals in the Animal Kingdom. The new zookeeper was Randy Scheer, a wildlife biology graduate of the University of Nebraska. Scheer had spent his first two years out of college working at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo overseeing the birds. His new position in Lincoln would send him down a path he never imagined.

Scheer had always loved wildlife, nature and working with animals. After college, he was in search of a job, one that he hoped didn't include working in a zoo. "At that time I didn't want to work in a zoo," Scheer said. However, as in so many people's lives, he needed a job and one came up at Henry Doorly.

It was at Omaha he found a passion for working with animals in zoos. He only spent two years there before he was hired in Lincoln by current Zoo CEO and president, John Chapo. In 1996, only six years after being hired, he made the move from Animal Kingdom zookeeper to animal curator. He couldn't believe he was promoted to oversee all the animals so soon, but a new title and being in the spotlight didn't matter to him in his new position. He was a leader who

preferred to work behind the scenes to make a difference.

Move forward to 2014, Scheer has been with Lincoln Children's Zoo for 24 years and in that time has made an incredible impact on the Zoo and the community. He helped with the Zoo's first birth of the highly endangered Matschie's tree kangaroo, was the first to work with National Geographic photographer, Joel Sartore, on the Photo Ark project, was instrumental in the production of Zoofari with Larry the Cable Guy and has saved more Zoo animals than can be counted.

When asked what his favorite memories are, Scheer responds with "helping and saving so many animals and giving the public an opportunity to see how amazing they are." His favorite animal at the Zoo is Kalif, the Bactrian camel who was one year old when Scheer got him. Now on retirement, behind the scenes at the Zoo, Kalif is always excited to see his friend of 23 years when

Scheer visits. "My number one goal is to keep our animals healthy and happy," Scheer said.

He now spends much of his time working with zoos across the country, setting up breeding plans for animals to have a brighter future and avoid the possibility of extinction. However, it is common to spot him helping with horse rides, cleaning the penguin pool and visiting his animal friends throughout the Zoo. He is a man who has avoided the spotlight for 24 years but the reality is if it weren't for animal curator Randy Scheer, Lincoln Children's Zoo wouldn't be where it is today.





# BABY BIRD BONANZA

BY CASSANDRA DRISKELL

This summer, the Zoo celebrated the hatching of four rare species of baby birds: the East African Crowned Crane, the Tawny Frogmouth, the Great Malay Argus Pheasant and the White-faced Whistling Duck. All four of these birds are seldom found in zoos. One of the species, the East African Crowned Crane, is endangered while the Tawny Frogmouths and Great Malay Argus Pheasants are declining in their natural habitats.

“The great thing about these hatchings is their contribution to the growth of their species,” said John Chapo, CEO and president of Lincoln Children’s Zoo. “Did I mention they’re also adorable as babies?”

The ducklings and pheasants are being hand-raised due to the layout of their exhibits. One crane chick has been placed back with its parents after an artificial egg was placed in the cranes’ nest—the real egg was placed in an incubator for observation and safety purposes. First time parents, Marta and Walter the Tawny Frogmouths, may have a case of empty nest syndrome while they watch their fledgling son, Herbert, learn to fly.

“People don’t know about all the effort that goes into conservation work,” said Elizabeth McClure, zookeeper for the birds. “There’s a lot of science that goes on behind the scenes, but it’s why I’m here, really, to keep the population of the species up.”

Once these birds reach their mature age, they will be relocated to other zoos where they will continue to globally impact the population of their species.



WHITE-FACED  
WHISTLING DUCK



TAWNY FROGMOUTH



EAST AFRICAN CROWNED CRANE



GREAT MALAY  
ARGUS PHEASANT



# FALL ZOO CAMPS

**OCT**  
FRI 10

## THE GREAT ZOO TRAIN ADVENTURE CAMP

8:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. | AGES 5-7 & 8-10

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.

MEMBERS: \$45 | NON-MEMBERS: \$60

**OCT**  
MON 13  
TUES 14

## MINI ZOOKEEPER CAMP

8:30 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. | AGES 5-7 & 8-10

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 elementary not in session.

MEMBERS: \$60 | NON-MEMBERS: \$75



## TOTS & TURTLES

Lincoln Children's Zoo

WEDNESDAYS OR THURSDAYS  
BEGINNING SEPT 24 OR 25

## TOTS & TURTLES

10 - 11 A.M. | AGES 2-4 WITH PARENT

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.

MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS: \$75



## PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR ZOO TODAY!

We rely on your generosity to fund programs that help save our endangered animals, give children in need free admission and provide outreach opportunities for area senior citizens and youth. Lincoln Children's Zoo receives no tax dollars and depends on individuals and organizations for support.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND GIFT.

To donate visit [LincolnZoo.org](http://LincolnZoo.org) or call 402.475.6741 ext. 131.



# BOO AT THE ZOO

## A LETTER FROM THE WIZARD

Hi Trick-Or-Treaters,

It's your old friend The Wizard from Boo at the Zoo checking in and seeing if you're sharpening your sweet tooth. It's that time of year for tasty treats, gobbling goblin goodies and eating enjoyable haunted Halloween munchies.

I've been working hard getting all the candy and treats ready for this year's big event. My special Haunting Team will have a million pieces of candy ready for trick or treaters! For the past few months, my goblins, ghouls and spooky creatures and I have been getting all that candy ready for Boo at the Zoo. It takes a long time to make and wrap it all. It's a good thing that I also pulled in my entire neighborhood of ghosts, witches and mummies to help!

I bet all this talk about candy is making you hungry so I thought it would be fun to share some of my favorite Halloween treats. I know many of you probably love Mars Bars. Well, I love nibbling on the planet Mars. I just use my magic wand and poof I'm there! One of my favorite Earth treats are spider web candy, it's kind of like cotton candy but full of bugs. Mmmm! I like the crunchy sound! Another one of my favorite sweets is a cold cauldron of bat sweat topped with ooey gooey gross foam. How can you not love that?

However, my favorite treat at Halloween is getting to see all of you at Boo at the Zoo! I just love seeing you dressed up in your creative costumes. Plus, when you come to Boo at the Zoo, you are helping my good friends at the Zoo. All the money raised at this event helps take care of the animals during the winter months!

So don't forget to stop by Boo at the Zoo October 26 through 30, sponsored by our friends at Bryan Health and say hi.

I'll see you at Boo!  
Hauntingly yours,

The Wizard

P.S. Don't worry about getting any slimy creepy crawly candy in your treat bags. I save that all for me!







Lincoln Children's  
**ZOO**

1222 South 27th Street  
Lincoln, NE 68502  
[www.lincolnzoo.org](http://www.lincolnzoo.org)

**KFOR**  
1240 AM

**106.3 KFRX**  
LINCOLN'S HIT MUSIC

**KX 96.9**  
SERIOUSLY #1 NEW COUNTRY

LINCOLN'S SPORTS AUTHORITY  
**ESPN**  
(1480 AM)

**104.1 the BLAZE**  
pure rock

**EAGLE 92.9**  
LINCOLN'S CLASSIC ROCK

Lincoln Children's ZOO

# BOO AT THE ZOO

ZOO



OVER 35 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.  
RAISING CANES CHICKEN FINGER MEAL TICKETS FOR PURCHASE ONLINE OR WITH CASH DURING EVENT.  
ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE ZOO.**

Bryan  Health