



a brief history

Oakland, 2001: One day, when the neighborhood kids brought us a dead opossum with hungry babies crying in her pouch, we found that Oakland and Berkeley did not have a wildlife rehabilitation center, and that the nearest center was 30 miles away. We also learned that the majority of wildlife animals brought to the city animal control facilities were euthanized because the city agencies were unable to spare the officers to make that long drive. We decided to work towards opening a wildlife center local to the animals and children of Oakland and Berkeley.

A wildlife center in Oakland, which has one of the toughest inner-cities in America, is important, not only for the orphaned and injured wildlife in need, but also for the children. We have found that the same kids who come to us from their rough, urban environment open up to a baby animal in need in a way that is heart-warming and one of the sustaining rewards of this job. We know the kids who come through here carry away with them a deeper understanding and respect for life and the environment we share. Our hope is that some small fire of compassion, care, and

a belief that their efforts can make a difference, has been kindled in the hearts and minds of these young people, that will stay with them and guide them throughout their lives, encouraging them to be more compassionate individuals and more dedicated environmentalists. We believe that when we provide these young people with an opportunity to personally help some of the wonderful creatures that inhabit dwindling wilderness areas in and around cities, they acquire a direct understanding that the solutions to environmental problems are in their very own hands.

In August of 2002, my husband and I opened this small wildlife rescue and education





a brief history (continued)



center out of our home. We had 3 outdoor enclosures, a private backyard in which to work, and 2 rooms inside for raising babies. From August through December of that year, we successfully rehabilitated and released 16 animals. We set up a website and a wildlife telephone hotline so people could call to get their wildlife-related questions answered and report wildlife emergencies. We started habitat preservation programs and encouraged native plant restoration. In 2003, we were able to help 94 animals and interest the neighborhood children in protecting the animals around them. In 2004 it jumped to over 150 animals and has steadily increased, doubling every year. Up until March of 2004 we were able to run this wildlife center out of our own pockets, supplemented by small donations from grocery stores and local veterinarians, but with so many animals coming in and an increased interest from the local educational community, we needed funding as soon as possible. We applied and were granted State and Federal 501c3 non-profit status.

Our wildlife center quickly outgrew our house and we needed more room quick! In May of 2004 we were offered a rental property that seemed ideal. It was, on 1/3 of an acre with a house and a separate infirmary. It was located on a steep hill, but we were not scared off! We got to work rallying people, receiving donated supplies and recruiting a workforce to terrace the hillside. It was slow going but thanks to the blood, sweat and tears of many dedicated people who believe in our work, and to various organizations, such as Rebuilding Together: Oakland, and OneBrick. Org, by the summer of 2006 we had terraced the backyard and installed 9 large pre-release enclosures for our recovering wildlife patients.



We can proudly state that over the years we have helped thousands of wildlife animals get a second chance at a normal life and inspired thousands of children to respect, love, and protect wildlife and the environment we all share. We hope to be able to continue this work for years to come.

—Lila Travis

