



"Rooted in Hope"

Racine Dominican Eco-Justice Center

Winter 2021

Vol. 16 Issue 2

Issued biannually



View this newsletter in
Full Color
on our website:

ecojusticecenter.org

Grounds Are Open!!

7-Days a Week 8-4PM

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Eco-J Staff

MaryLynn Conter Strack
Executive Director

Katie Flannery
Education Program Manager
& Developer

Dawn DeMuyt
Racine Area Youth Farm Corps
Program Manager

Jeff Appenzeller
Maintenance

The Eco-Justice Center is searching for enthusiastic individuals to join its board of directors and committees. The Eco-J Board just completed writing a three-year strategic plan and we seek an array of talent to help execute the plan.

Specifically, we are recruiting for those who have professional or life experience in any of the following areas: **legal, veterinary practice, maintenance & construction, home inspections, program/policy development, environmental engineering, naturalist/ forestry/ biology, HR, grant writing, marketing and fundraising.**

Want to get more involved with our organization but don't want to commit yet as a board member? Consider joining one of our essential committees: fund development, programming, finance, festival planning, buildings/grounds & animal husbandry. Most committees meet every-other month via Zoom and there is no financial obligation to join.

Please contact MaryLynn for more info: marylynn@ecojusticecenter.org.



Follow us on Facebook
for the most up-to-date
information on events,
programs, animal
updates and more.

Looking Ahead...Mark Your Calendars!

Needle Felting w/ Sister Janet, Saturday, Nov. 27 @ 9AM (pre-registration required)

Winter Solstice Celebration, Tuesday, Dec. 21 @ 7PM (free, all are welcome!)

Friendraiser/Open House, Sunday, March 20, 2022 (details to come)

Visit our website or follow us on Facebook for more information.

Eco-J Board Members

Chris Jamieson
President

Stacie Havron
Vice-President

Laura Feider
Secretary

Jeanne Gramza
Treasurer

S. Jane Weiss, OP
Sponsorship Office

S. Gayle Bogdanowitz, OP

Steve Oppeneer

Jerry Peterson

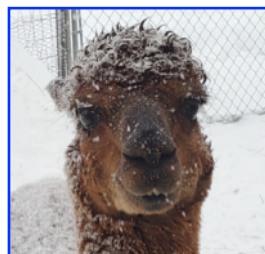
Nicole Reid



The Tuesday after Thanksgiving is Giving Tuesday—a global generosity movement aimed to empower people to transform their own communities.

This year we're asking for donations to help cover building costs to expand our alpaca shelter to make room for our 5 new alpacas! (Meet our new additions on the next page.)

We estimate the shelter expansion to cost approximately \$3,000. Won't you please help us reach this goal before the cold sets in? Our boys will love you for it!!



Aldo loves snow!

Win a Fresh Christmas Wreath!

Anyone who gives a financial donation by December 15 will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a fresh Christmas wreath, customized with Eco-J trimmings!

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THANK YOU!

Meet Our New Alpacas!

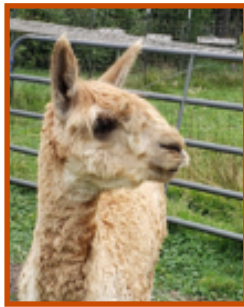
Alpacas have been an important part of Eco-J for years. The founding Sisters used alpaca fiber for spinning, felting, and knitting. Their manure is a natural fertilizer for the gardens. In addition to having memorable interactions with the alpacas, our summer camp children and hundreds of first graders in our Growing Healthy program also learned about nutrition and digestion by comparing our teeth and stomachs to that of our furry friends. We want to be able continue this tradition with alpacas at Eco-J.

The average lifespan of an alpaca is between 15-20 years old. We've been considering expanding our herd of four males since their current ages are 13, 16, 17 and 17. In early August we were approached by someone who owned a hobby farm in northern Wisconsin. She was looking to rehome her alpacas due to an illness in her family. We traveled to see the herd and decided on a group of 5 males. The new alpacas are between one and four years old, so they will hopefully be at Eco-J for the next 15+ years. We hope you can come to the farm soon to meet our new companions.

We offered naming rights to those who gave a considerable donation to help cover their purchase and transportation costs. Sister Sharon Simon, who just retired as Eco-J board president, was gifted a naming right in gratitude of her years of service. She thoughtfully named one of the boys, Weyker, in honor of founding Sisters, Janet and Mary Ann.



Jameson Born May 29, 2018
Jameson is our gentle giant. He is large and powerful but very shy. He is proving to be the hardest to train so far, yet he will occasionally approach us and gently sniff our face in greeting.



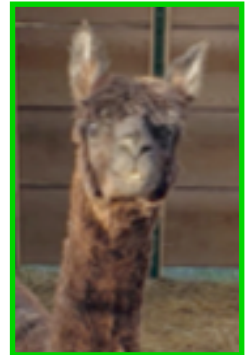
Eduardo Born February 9, 2020
Our rainbow alpaca is Eduardo. His fur is gray, white, dark brown & black. When we first haltered him for the vet he jumped so high he went airborne. We are working on making him comfortable with the halter so he stays on the ground.



Kevin Born June 23, 2019
Kevin is our escape artist. Although we have not officially introduced the new alpacas to the old herd, he has squeezed through small gaps in the fence to visit the other boys many times. He displays typical 'little brother' behavior—always hungry and kind of spacey, but adorable.

Name TBA Born March 17, 2018
This golden-tan colored alpaca is the leader of the pack. When he arrived at Eco-J, he was the first one out of the truck and didn't even wait until the ramp was in place! He has taken to halter training very well and is setting a good example for the others.

Weyker Born July 1, 2018
A deep chocolate brown Suri alpaca, he has long, soft, yarn-like fiber. His personality seems to differ by the day—sometimes he is shy and retiring, other days he challenges the others to a neck wrestle.



Discovery Days 🌻 Thank You!

Our new Fall fundraiser, the weekend-long Discovery Days, brought in over **\$15,000 in support!!!**

A BIG THANKS to the **dozens of volunteers** who gave time and talents to run food tents, work the gift shop, give educational talks and so much more.

A SPECIAL THANKS to our generous **Event Sponsors** whose financial contributions helped to offset expenses.

Join us next year—the third weekend in September.



Painting gourd birdhouses at Discovery Days was a very popular activity for the kids.

Our Generous Event Sponsors

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festival
foods

Educators CREDIT UNION

Did you know??? The Eco-Justice Center, through its Youth Farm Corps program, donated **OVER 1,000 POUNDS** of fresh produce to our local food pantry this summer! Here's what pantry manager, Steve Oppeneer, said:



It was surprising to see how many people did not know what some of the vegetables were, nor did they know what to do with these unknown vegetables. The best example of this was a gentleman asking what to do with green beans. This led to much discussion and sharing of recipes.

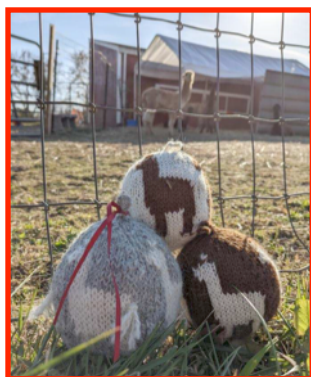
Generously Sponsored



Thankfully, on several occasions some of the Farm Corps workers came to the pantry to help identify the different vegetables, provide printed recipes and instruct clients on how to prepare the produce. An impressive bonus was that

the Farm Corps workers were able to answer client questions in both English and Spanish!

There were never any vegetables left at the end of each day which felt like a definite sign of success.



Holiday Shopping Made Fun at Eco-J!!

Enjoy a cup of hot cocoa on our farmhouse porch, then come inside and explore our new gift shop! Local honey, home-made black raspberry jelly, alpaca ornaments, hand-knit hats & scarves and much more!

Holiday Gift Shop Hours:

Nov. 27 & 28 from 10am-3pm
Thursdays: Dec. 2, 9, 16 from 1-6pm
Dec. 5, 11, 12, 18, 19 from 10am-3pm



We'll also have a booth at the International Holiday Market at the Kenosha Public Museum, Dec. 4 from 10am-4pm
Come Join Us!



TEST YOUR ANIMAL KNOWLEDGE

1. How many eggs in a typical Helmeted guinea fowl clutch?
a. 8-12 b. 10-14 c. 6-10
2. How many chambers does a goat stomach have?
a. 1 b. 3 c. 4
3. True or False? A female chick is called a Pullet.
4. On average, what is the lifespan of an alpaca?
a. 8-13 years b. 10-15 years c. 15-20 years
5. True or False? Humans have better vision than geese.

Written by Rachel, Eco-J Intern

Answers: 1a, 2c, 3T, 4c, 5F



Growing Healthy—Connecting Kids with Nature & Nutrition

In a normal year, half of all Racine Unified School District first-graders come to the Eco-Justice Center for Growing Healthy field trips where students learn about digestion, enjoy healthy food taste tests, and discover how plants and animals get energy.



Students of Gifford Elementary gave a 'thumbs up' after trying a fresh vegetable from Eco-J gardens during a Growing Healthy program.

Last year when students were learning virtually from home, Eco-J and Hawthorn Hollow worked together to create videos about digestion and healthy eating for teachers to use. This year, children are back in classrooms, but they are not yet going on field trips. So, we brought the field trip to them! Nine schools were assigned to the Eco-Justice Center and nine were assigned to Hawthorn Hollow.

Eco-J staff presented 17 programs at our assigned schools throughout the month of October. Children participated in a pollination activity to learn how plants need animals to spread seeds and pollen. They also had the opportunity to 'taste test' fresh produce from Eco-J gardens.

"It's been great getting back out into the community with the Growing Healthy programs this fall! We were happy to give the students a chance to get outdoors and learn outside of the classroom. Our staff had a wonderful time and are looking forward to next year's programs" says Katie Flannery, Program Manager.

The Growing Healthy program would not be possible without the generous support of SC Johnson, Forest County Potawatomi Foundation and Racine Community Foundation. We're so grateful!



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"Rooted in Hope" Since 2004

Eco-Justice Center
7133 Michna Road
Racine, WI 53402



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Hi! My name is Jaylyn. I am from California and I have joined the Eco-Justice team for this beautiful fall season. This place is magical, from the native plants to the animals. The job is varied in the most exciting ways. Everyday feels like a different job; some days I harvest crops, some days I help with felling trees, some days I'm wearing muck boots and caring for the animals. My most favorite activity is when we go out to teach first graders about bees and digestion.

If you had told me that I'd be driving a tractor, I'd think otherwise. It took some time and practice, but I drive the tractor like a pro now and it is a hat I wear proudly. The experience I am gaining here is life changing and I am forever grateful for this opportunity for providing not only farming experience, but life experience. Thank you, Eco- J!



Your contributions this holiday season support:

- ♥ The many animals who live on the farm, including our 5 new alpacas!
(See inside for more info.)
- ♥ The organic crops that are carefully tended to each growing season.
- ♥ Our educational programs that connect kids with nature and nutrition.
- ♥ Our passionate, industrious, and hard-working staff and interns.
- ♥ Our tireless fight for Environmental Justice and Right Relationships among all creations.

Eco-Justice Center Wish List:

Home Depot Gift Cards for Lumber, 56qt-64qt Clear Storage Containers w/Lids, Painters Tape, Forever Postage Stamps