

Illinois Raptor Center Endowment

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haunting eyes. Volunteer veterinarians help mend the animals while minor repairs and daily care are provided by Seitz and Nuzzo.

From the backyard garage to the fifteen-acre plot has led to many new expenses. It costs about \$1,000 a month to feed all the birds. They mostly eat quail and mice. An eagle will consume two quail a day, at \$1.35 each. Medicine must be purchased, as well as mews for the birds to live in.

To stretch its limited funds, the center has taken an entrepreneurial turn. Jacques has created "Nuzzo Raptor Equipment." These unique utility hoods, anklets,

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jesses, leashes and other items for zoos, nature centers, rehabilitates, and falconers around the world are used to keep birds of prey calm and safe while being handled. Many of these hoods, placed over the raptor's head to block sight and sound, feature feather plumes on the top. In the beginning times of falconry a feather from the captured prey would be placed in the hood of the conquering bird to recognize its success, thus came the saying, "a feather in your cap."

To raise revenue as well as awareness, "Education on

the Wing" was launched to bring audiences face to feathered face with a range of raptors: golden eagle, snowy owl, red-tailed hawk, and a turkey vulture are some of the 20 educational raptors. These birds, whose injuries prevent them from returning to the wild, seem quite comfortable in their new role as wildlife ambassadors. Last year IRC presented over 120 programs reaching over 17,000 people.

The most famous resident at IRC is Spud, a great horned owl. Spud suffered a broken wing early in life, leaving her unable to fly. She now acts as surrogate mom to orphaned owls. Spud has been featured, along with the IRC, in a new book, "The Least of These, Wild Baby Bird Rescue Stores," by Joan Harris. The book features a chapter on 'Spud' and includes artwork of a young owl eating a mouse, drawn from a photo provided by the IRC. The book's forward was written by Jane Goodall.

Jane Seitz says she feels that the IRC is an important part of Decatur, and benefits from its association with The Community Foundation. She has created the IRC Endowment Fund in The Foundation, and hopes that more people will become aware of the IRC and make donations to the fund. As she thinks about becoming older her concerns are for the future finances of the IRC. For fifteen years she has donated long days of service to get this project off the ground, keeping it running, and expanding the services. And so continues the evolution of the Illinois Raptor Center. "If you stay the same, you're not doing your job," says Seitz.

Marilyn Metzger is writing a history of the 94 funds held by The Community Foundation to be published in 2006. Marilyn has worked at The Community Foundation in the business office since 2002.



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