

Letter from the Founder - December 2016



Dear Cameron,

Season's Greetings! The pack is fluffy with their winter coats and enjoying the cold ... they are all thriving at the new property. 2016 has been one of Wolf Connection's biggest years of transition. Starting the year with nothing at the new ranch but the dream to move the pack before the summer. As soon as we obtained the permits for the current operation, we worked very hard to build the first compound, and we successfully moved the pack on May 7. For those of you that were not able to join us, it was truly an unforgettable day!

Together, as a community, we are becoming an incredibly unique educational sanctuary and wilderness retreat center. There is nowhere else on Earth that brings generations of people together through intimate relationships with rescued wolves. What an exciting thing to know that we are empowering people to become authentic leaders and stewards of the earth for generations to come.

We have been diligently working at bringing the vision of the new ranch to reality. Our team of volunteers has built a rustic amphitheater, put up the second learning teepee funded by the young leaders KITT program, built two wonderful sweat lodges for initiation rituals and vision quests, and continued clearing amazing trails going through the creek and forest, nearly connecting both end of the property for our wolves and program participants to hike and explore.

This reach is not without relentless effort and commitment. The move stretched the organization very thin, financially and otherwise, and we have been working diligently through constant challenges and growing pains to make the new ranch our home. Very often organizations of all sizes, nonprofit and otherwise, go belly up after a big move like buying a building or expanding to new markets ... and the risk is palpable here. The new operation demands a lot more from each and every one of us. It requires a bigger team, more maintenance of a much bigger facility, and constant security checks, especially during hunting season. It also requires that I, as a leader, become a better planner and executioner, better administrator, a more aggressive and intentional fundraiser, and a better manager and team leader ... and for all of us to be more involved, become stronger community members and leaders, and passionate stewards of our individual and collective future.

Wolf Connection consists of an extraordinary team of staff, volunteers, donors, and coaches so, to face this challenge, we spent the summer focusing on strategies that will ensure a healthy future for the animals we save and the people we serve. We've been reshaping our team, refocusing tasks, and working harder than ever to not only end the year as strong as possible, but to look towards the new year with determination and optimism.

Our new strategies are expanding Wolf Connection's presence on a national stage. In just the past few months we did two episodes for Reading Rainbow, a handful of interviews with various media outlets, and The Dodo who has chosen Wolf Connection as a preferred source of wolfdog news and information. One of these stories went viral and made the pages of Good Housekeeping, Cosmopolitan, Esquire, and Maxim just to name a few. We are also refining our curriculum, creating new offerings, and establishing partnerships that make Wolf Connection programs even more impactful and expansive. Our monthly Community Hikes, special events like "Howl'Oween", and our "Women and Wolves" workshops sell out every time. Additionally, we launched a Full Moon Club that provides special, exclusive activities for big donors over \$5,000; introducing major supporters to friends like Daisy Ridley, star of Star Wars: The Force Awakens who is also sponsoring Willow for 2017.

Despite the incredible successes and gains, there have been the unforeseen challenges that we were able to overcome with your support. The Sand Fire came to our backdoor this summer and was close to destroying what we worked so hard to build. This could literally have been the end of Wolf Connection. And there were numerous medical needs (Maya, Bandit, Koda, Ozzy, Luna, Sissy, Chance, Annie) some simple, some more complex, ongoing, and expensive. These are our children so THANK YOU from the bottom of our hearts!

Moving forward into next year, the immediate development needs are:

- A water pump for the new well which we recently funded by our Water for Fire Campaign – in case you missed it, visit our website to view the video www.wolfconnection.org,
- A Solar System that will protect us against power outages, natural disaster, mitigate bill expenses, and help us demonstrate a more sustainable way of life,
- A 48’ geodesic dome for gatherings,
- The construction of the **second compound** is a priority so that we are immediately ready to rescue more wolves when the expansion permits come through mid-2017.

PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR: THE COMPLEXITY OF RUNNING A MULTI-COMPOUND/MULTI-PROGRAM FACILITY

In 2017 we are taking it to the next level in every area of the operation, from the newest volunteers to the CEO, to prepare for Wolf Connection’s growth. My vision of expanding the Wolf Connection Ranch to receive more rescues and run more programs requires that these goals to be met next year:

- Build a healthy emergency cash reserve
- Build shaded areas for the two and four-legged in the upcoming summer programs
- Launch a Capital Campaign for facility development
- Initiate construction of the bunk houses and multipurpose rooms for 2018 programs
- Expand and train the qualified team to bring us to capacity to take care of more rescued animals and deliver programs

As a member of the Wolf Connection community, you are not only directly saving wolves and changing the lives of deserving young men and women, you are also making a huge impact on individuals from all walks of life, growing healthy communities, and demonstrating a sustainable way of living for the rest of the world. THANK YOU for your commitment and generosity.

I hope I can count on your support before the end of the year and I look forward to seeing you very soon.

With gratitude and respect,

Teo Alfero, CEO and Founder of Wolf Connection



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