



LUNA

A young and vibrant tracker, Luna teaches program participants to honor the “new self” that is ever emerging regardless of age or circumstance. How does “new self” express itself in your life? What may be blossoming in your life right now? Is “new self” tentative? Rambunctious? Awareness of self in this way is important as I acknowledge that life is a continuum of learning and emergence and that new beginnings are available to me in each moment through intention and the willingness to explore!

Lovely Luna was originally rescued from a backyard breeder who was "going out of business" in 2016. The community of wolfdog rescuers heard that the mother, Luna and her puppy siblings were in poor condition and stepped in. At just 3 and a half weeks old, Luna and her two brothers were removed from the breeder. Luna's mother was rushed to the ER as she was so malnourished that she couldn't nurse or care for Luna and her siblings. Luna and her brothers were then fostered where she and her siblings were bottle fed and nursed back to health.

When Luna was 2 months old, the foster placement asked Wolf Connection if we had room in our pack to rescue her. Wolf Connection's founder, Teo Alfero, opened our doors to Luna and he and his family welcomed the small puppy into their home where they nurtured Luna until she was mature enough to join her fellow pack members at the Wolf Connection Ranch.

Given her unique upbringing, Luna is friends with all creatures; horses, cats, and children. As Luna continued growing and her health strengthened after such a rough start, she became one of Wolf Connection's Ambassador wolfdogs with the rest of the pack, partaking in programs and monthly community events. Luna now spends her days relishing in the attention of Jacy and Ranger, all while being supervised by Nanny Nova.





NOVA

Nova teaches program participants about the focus and nurturing intention of the Pack Nanny. For example, Nova will act as a Nanny to Jacy and put herself in positions that cause her stress in order to offer nurturance to Jacy in his journey of healing. The Nanny of the pack is entrusted with the care of the pups and will put aside issues of self in order to provide what the "pups" need. Wolf Connection doesn't have wolf puppies but we do have animals in need of Nanny care. Nova selflessly provides that much needed, practical counsel.

Nova came from a couple who had two wolfdogs that eventually had a litter of puppies. Following the birth of the litter the couple decided against keeping the pups and were giving them away. Nova came to Wolf Connection at just 6 months old when her skittishness and more wolfy behaviors continued to manifest and made it difficult for the couple to handle her or get her adopted. In fact, she was adopted by Wolf Connection's Behavior Specialist, Renee Alfero, because she knew that the average owner would not be adept enough to handle Nova's nervous ways. Wolf Connection learned subsequently that Nova had been physically abused in those first six months of her life which contributed to her fear and skittishness. Her distrust of humans was rooted in negative imprinting.

Nova is gentle, shy and wary, and yet warmly sweet and playful as you get to know her through patience and bonding. She lives with Luna and Wyoh and is also a well-trained and beloved Ambassador of Wolf Connection.





JACY

Jacy's lesson is one of self-loving care: the honoring of sacred timing when he experiences anxiety. Staff encourages Jacy to just "be" during times of fear. With this support, he emulates self-regulation for guests who observe and see him emerge within his own timing. Each moment for Jacy during interactions with guests is a deep breath and release of past trauma, one supported step at a time. Jacy has gone from starting off as an animal that would have to hike last in line with no one allowed to walk behind him due to his fears, into a more confident wolfdog that has begun to lead the hike at times without regard to those in his wake. How do I experience anxiety? How aware am I of my coping strategies?

In May 2013, Wolf Connection received an urgent call from a California animal shelter with information about a young wolfdog about to be euthanized that very day. The Wolf Connection Team collaborated with local rescues only to find that none of the other sanctuaries had room for him and the animal shelter was desperate to find him placement. Jacy, an anxious young wolfdog, somehow managed to escape the shelter, not once, but twice! On the very same day that Wolf Connection finally rescued Jacy, one of Wolf Connection's pack elders, Moonshadow, passed away. The Wolf Connection Team decided that, in honor of Moonshadow, the new wolfdog would be named Jacy, which means "moon" in Native American.

Jacy ended up at the shelter when a family who only had him for a short time, released him due to the property damage he was causing. Without the proper enrichment, wolfdogs can cause significant damage when left alone. Prior to living with the family, the children had removed him from the backyard of someone who was apparently neglecting Jacy. The children thought they could give Jacy a better life at their house. Unfortunately, Jacy, then called "Crunchy" because he chewed property, was saved from one bad situation by kids with good intentions only to end up in another bad situation. Of course, Jacy had other plans and, with the cunning use of anxiety to escape the shelter twice, he seemingly caused enough delay to change the course of his life.





RANGER

Ranger teaches the importance of not making assumptions or judgments of others based upon appearances. At first glance, most would think that this very large, almost lion-like in appearance and presence, wolfdog would be something to fear, but the exact opposite is true. Ranger has well earned his nickname as the “Gentle Giant” and continues to inspire program participants to define abundance in their lives. What does abundance and limitless possibilities mean to me?

One morning, in the Spring of 2013, a very large and furry wolfdog showed up at the Front Street Shelter in Sacramento, CA. The team at the shelter had no idea how this huge wolfdog, that looked like an oversized malamute-husky, had made it to their doorstep without being seen.

The shelter quickly assessed that Ranger was a wolfdog and, therefore, they needed to find his owner right away to avoid euthanization. They were sure that someone was missing this amazingly handsome and wonderfully mannered wolfdog and that the owner would turn up quickly. However, much time passed and no one claimed Ranger. The shelter realized they needed to try something else to save Ranger and reached out to Wolf Connection. A rescue team drove to Sacramento to bring Ranger to his forever home at the Wolf Connection Ranch.

Ranger was more than happy to play and greet his new human and wolfdog pack members. Ranger joined the internal pack lovingly referred to as the “Kindergarteners” based on all of the members’ young ages, playful natures, and wolfdog antics. Because of his sweet and loving nature, after assessment, Ranger was able to participate in his first youth empowerment program not long after arriving at Wolf Connection and has since become one of Wolf Connection’s premier Ambassadors for at-risk youth.





RYDER

Soon after his 1st birthday, Ryder came to Wolf Connection in April of 2014. Unlike most of our wolfdogs, we know his birthday is April 1, 2013. Ryder teaches about joyful creativity! He gives 150% to being present with guests and charms witnesses with his fun antics. Sometimes he barks at people when they are outside his enclosure to make his presence known ... Once inside, however, he will be licking their faces!

Prior to Ryder joining the Wolf Connection pack, a young woman called to discuss wolfdog ownership. She had seen someone on the internet giving Ryder up for adoption and wanted very badly to help him. Despite Wolf Connection's suggestions regarding the environment and time requirements needed, she took Ryder into her home. Unfortunately, 6 months later, she made the difficult call to Wolf Connection to see if Ryder could ultimately join the Wolf Connection pack after three unsuccessful home placements in the first year of his life.

Since becoming part of the Wolf Connection family, Ryder has been learning the ways of a wolf and his place in the pack. Ryder enjoys the company of other young wolfdogs and upon arrival was initially incorporated into a small pack that the Wolf Connection team fondly referred to as the "Kindergarteners" which consisted of young, male, energetic wolfdogs. Presently Ryder lives with Neo. What is special about this pair is that neither one of them is very dominant over the other. Together they maintain a fairly balanced sharing of dominance which allows them the space to continue healing on their journeys while supporting the other and providing nurturing encouragement.

Because of his desire to meet and interact with new people, his friendly temperament, overall adorableness, and positive assessment soon after arriving at the ranch, he became an Ambassador for Wolf Connection. The program participants love his silliness and antics when they meet him. He has become quite the April Fool's teenager that everyone who meets him loves.





NEO

Neo is the epitome of a high-content wolfdog ... inquisitive, intelligent, playful and, yet, extremely shy and skittish, being wary of all humans. Neo became part of the Wolf Connection family through the help and insightfulness of the Arizona Humane Society who sought out Wolf Connection's help in preventing Neo from being euthanized. His long and lanky physique is reminiscent of a teenager – someone that is sort of in between stages. Neo represents the aspect of self that is in transition: about to develop into the next stage in life. How honoring of myself am I as I go through changes?

Neo had a loving home and a loving family but had an insatiable desire to be part of a pack. As his owner was away at work or school, Neo would constantly escape from his home and yard to play with the neighborhood dogs. With the help and guidance of neighbors and The Arizona Humane Society, the family realized that they could not safely contain Neo as Neo was at risk of being picked up by a shelter each time he escaped, exposing Neo to the possibility of euthanization as a wolfdog. The Arizona Humane Society helped the family reach out to Wolf Connection and we were happy to take this call and provide Neo with the pack that he had been searching for.

Excited about finally being part of a pack, Neo was quickly introduced and became fast friends with many of his wolf pack members. Neo's favorite time of the day is play time and play time is all the time for Neo!

Wolf Connection is helping Neo with his fear of humans, to live a more enriched life, by training Neo to become accustomed to working with staff through feeding protocols and leash training. Neo is now easily leashed and has begun exploring the beautiful surrounding nature of the Wolf Connection Ranch through hikes around the property.

Neo incites the curiosity of Wolf Connection guests and our at-risk youth who are drawn to his chestnut coat, long lanky legs, and piercing auburn eyes. Neo will only approach those who are willing to be still and silent in their movements and their intentions. It is an honor and testament to the character of the humans with whom he chooses to trust and give his love.





AYASHA

“Little One” in Cheyenne, Ayasha is one of Wolf Connection’s main Ambassadors and loves to interact with people. She is a star at school presentations when she howls for her audience! When working with program participants, the lessons of Ayasha entail authentic self-expression, and in her case, being small and mighty and successfully integrating wolf, coyote and dog into one small and mighty Beta. Program participants ask themselves: How do I use my voice? How effective is my communication? A Beta uses their communication whether it be physical or vocal, to direct other pack members to adhere to the directions of the Alphas. What is the intention of my communication? First impressions of Ayasha is that of an angel but, as staff knows, she can, in an instant, start trouble with another wolfdog with just one glance. Reprimand her and one might find themselves in a howling match! Ayasha is absolutely adorable! She presently shares a habitat with Wolfee who teaches about healing and forgiveness. The two together are a vocal comedy routine with Ayasha’s signature fog horn howls and Wolfee’s Malamute “Wookie” sounding pleas!

There are times that presentations stop because Ayasha has a lot about which to howl! At Wolf Connection we practice silence when the animals are howling ... We wonder if she is taking advantage of this practice ...

Despite her small size and unusual coyote/wolf howl, Ayasha is packed full of energy and an abundance of personality. Ayasha survived the snowy mountains of Northern California for two weeks wandering alone before animal control was able to lure her with a piece of pizza. Being the sweetheart that she is, she won the hearts of the shelter employees who sought out sanctuary for Ayasha in order to spare her life and found Wolf Connection.





WOLFEE

Wolfee arrived at Wolf Connection at eight months old with his name, a story and an open heart. In August 2013 he arrived after being confiscated by police during a drug raid. Wolfee was being sold by his owners as a high content wolfdog in exchange for drugs. The police knew that, though he was a very low content wolfdog, because he was already labeled as “wolf” in the system that Wolfee would likely be euthanized if a sanctuary wasn’t found. Gratitude for the officers who went above and beyond and brought him to Wolf Connection!

With an open heart, soon after arriving at Wolf Connection, Wolfee participated in a substance recovery program. The participants were enthralled by his story and directly related to the many effects their drug use has in life. Following a vet visit it was also discovered that Wolfee has many BB’s lodged in his body. Perhaps his original owners were using him as target practice? Whatever the case, despite his treatment, Wolfee never imprinted pain and fear when dealing with people. In fact, Wolfee offers the lesson of looking at how each of us responds when we may be betrayed and/or physically and emotionally abused. Does one shut down and turn away from everyone in life as a result? Once “labeled” as wolfdog and slated to be euthanized, or the equivalent for you or me, for how long does one carry that label before striving to dispel it?

Wolfee loves to give and receive affection. Staff at Wolf Connection often joke that he is a dog, impersonating a wolfdog, impersonating a giant panda ... Whatever the case may be, Wolfee is an ambassador of love and forgiveness. Wolf Connection is blessed to have his joyful and frolics and loving presence.





BEAU

Having been abused and neglected, Beau teaches to give life a second chance and to learn to forgive and trust, one person at a time. Being an Omega of the Wolf Connection pack, he is sweet, loving and loves to lighten the mood with his big, goofy smile and wiggly body. Having healed emotionally as evidenced by his willingness to interact with new people, especially men of whom he was extremely afraid in the past, it appears that he has forgiven his past and has learned to trust himself to make choices to keep himself safe. He inspires program participants with the understanding that despite having been really hurt by others, it is possible to trust again, one good choice at a time. He reminds us of our preciousness. How do I respond when I am in a position to question the trust of others?

Beau came to Wolf Connection from a private owner who loved him very much, but Beau was terrified of her husband. Beau was a great wolfdog, but a bad “dog”. He would escape daily and get the neighbors chickens. To prevent this, his owners tied him up to a tree in the yard with a chain, but, after escaping the chain twice, he was tied with a wire around his neck as tight as it could go. The woman finally realized that he needed to be given a better life with a pack and place to run as the wolfdog he is. When the Wolf Connection team picked Beau up, even though fearful of humans, he saw our truck, not knowing where it was going, and jumped in without question ready to go. Beau was malnourished, his ears chewed by flies and an open wound around his neck from where the wire burrowed in. He was scared and lost.

Upon arriving at the Wolf Connection ranch, Beau lived with our alpha female, Maya, who guided him, helping him build his confidence and soon, his love of people. Thereafter, he moved in with Ayasha, a rescued wolfdog that arrived to Wolf Connection just before he did who was a spunky addition to the Wolf Connection pack. Since then, they have been best friends. Wrestling, snuggling and bringing smiles to all who meet them both.





WILLOW

Born February 2010, Willow is a high content, female wolfdog. Willow was raised by an excellent wolfdog owner who provided Willow the socialization, behavior training and enrichment that a wolfdog needs. Due to a change in fortune, the owner chose Wolf Connection to be Willow's forever home. As a result of having a start in life whereby her needs were met, Willow teaches Balance. She will accept nothing less than the love and respect she deserves in every interaction. For program participants, this can either bring up feelings of jealousy for "someone" who has not experienced hardship or sometimes, embarrassment or guilt for not carrying around a lot of "pain". Willow represents a balanced beginning no matter when in life that beginning comes. As a pack, the wolves teach respect for everyone's journey. There is no need to judge it and, with heart, all are invited to honor both the lessons and the sacred timing of each individual's journey.

In 2012 Willow was chosen as one of the animals to travel to the Cheyenne reservation near Lame Deer, Montana to represent the wolf spirit at the meeting of the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers. During this trip she showed herself to be a tracker because she frequently tried to drag her handlers after animal tracks to locate prey. Because of encounters she had with the Cheyenne people, her healing qualities were revealed. One Cheyenne family, after visiting her, returned the next day to bring her an offering in gratitude for her healing and requested her blessing. After that, others also brought offerings to her.

Willow is a truly special, healing animal and has found her calling at Wolf Connection. Spending time with her is a profound gift. Wolf Connection has been fortunate to assist Willow in discovering her purpose. The true gift is the honor in witnessing the healing and connection she reflects to others.





SHADE

Youth in foster care who come to Wolf Connection's youth empowerment programs relate greatly to Shade's history, being sent from one home to another due to people not understanding them. A group of such youth made it their mission to help Shade feel comfortable and at ease with them by sitting quietly and patiently near his habitat. Week by week, they sat and communed. That group learned that they could experience bond with a wolf that they did not actually touch. Shade teaches about the importance of honoring one's boundaries and choosing only to connect with people whom I deeply trust.

A young man in college purchased Shade as a puppy from a breeder. The young man had never owned a wolf pup but did extensive research and gave up much of his social life to tend to Shade's needs, impressing his family with his dedication to this young pup. The young man worked incessantly to train him. Shade became a well-behaved companion. However, the young man had to give Shade up because he could not find a suitable place to live with Shade. The young man's parents agreed to take Shade and care for him in their much bigger space. However, a young wolfdog with a lot of energy, Shade continued to prove that he needed more than a large home to meet his needs and was moved to yet another home.

Sent to live with a couple who had more experience with wolfdogs, Shade settled into his new home receiving the attention, behavior training and enrichment that he had so needed. Regardless of their nurturing and care, Shade was still a wolfdog and proved his pack mentality when their grandkids came over and Shade wouldn't let them in the house. Shade's second family realized Shade's heightened wolfdog needs and found Wolf Connection.

Shade continues to be very sensitive to energy. However, Shade has become comfortable in his home at Wolf Connection, knowing that he is safe and well protected from the energies to which he is so sensitive. The Wolf Connection Team took great consideration in Shade's habitat placement, ensuring that he is neighbored by well-balanced pack members, in a low-traffic area and set further back from the other habitats.





KODA

Koda teaches about surrender: how to surrender to love, vulnerability and trust. In his presence, this wolf can easily give humans a glimpse into what it might be like to be part of a wolf pack. After the loss of his brother in December 2016, Koda has learned how to meet other wolves and has continued to individuate in a way that has reflected his brother Chance's way of being beautifully. The process of moving on subsequent to significant life change is the path of surrender. Koda adds a flavor of demonstrative wolf style which resembles great love and affection in human terms.

Koda was raised as a roadside attraction in Alaska. In his young years, Koda only understood life with a chain around his neck, the constant barrage of strange humans in loud cars, and the inability to hide and protect himself. When the roadside attraction was exposed and prosecuted, a rescue mission involving the efforts of multiple wolf rescues saved Koda and his pack mates from euthanization by helicoptering the pack to Southern California where they all now live in sanctuary. Wolf Connection was honored to receive Koda and his older brother, Chance, as part of this rescue.

Having been limited to the peripheries of his post, Koda's body incorporated the muscle memory of running in circles when afraid. Wolf Connection has been diligently and patiently working with Koda on being introduced to new people and situations in a safe, calm way in efforts to counterbalance these unhealthy coping mechanisms and to live a more enriched, balanced existence without constant fear.

Wolf Connection staff was fortunate to have witnessed the incredible bond between brothers Chance and Koda. It will never be forgotten. At present, watching Koda's relationship unfolding with Maggie is a reminder that life goes on, no matter what, and we have the choice to honor the learning along the way. Koda's lesson to Wolf Connection's at-risk youth is one of trust and surrender. Growth is a process, one step at a time.





MAGGIE

Having lived the first year of her life hoarded underneath a porch, Maggie was rescued and kenneled at an east coast wolfdog rescue where she was brought to health and spayed. Following her spay she was attacked by the wolves with whom she had been living and suffered both physical and mental trauma. The rescue brought Maggie back to health and then sought out foster placement as Maggie could not safely return to their care. A military couple stepped in to give Maggie foster placement and eventually became Maggie's owners for the next 4 years. Recently, Maggie's rescue family was deployed and Wolf Connection was honored to be asked by them to help Maggie in her continued healing as a wolfdog – to begin a new life with a safe, healthy pack with healthy boundaries.

When Maggie arrived at the Wolf Connection Ranch, Koda, her present habitat mate and her then adjacent neighbor, was spending his last months with his brother Chance who was dying from cancer. The Wolf Connection team had promised Chance that they would do everything possible to find a habitat mate for Koda. After a few walks together following Chance's passing, it was clear that Maggie had found a partner in Koda and the two couldn't be more perfect for each other.

Maggie often may be seen pacing when strangers are on the wolf compound. She is learning to discover her stillness despite her anxiety in the presence of the "unknown". She teaches a very important lesson to our program participants about the awareness of how one acts when they "snap". How do I respond when/if I "hit a wall" inside? Do I say hurtful things? Do I damage property? How does anxiety overwhelm me? And after I "snap" do I release enough pressure that I then begin to act as if nothing just transpired? The journey to stillness requires self-awareness with loving and forgiving intention.





MAX

Max, originally named Maximus, teaches about the journey of trust: trust of self and trust of what aspects of self am I willing to show to others. Max has a way of exhibiting “play pounce” behavior which is equivalent to a person only showing a playful façade and not sharing, perhaps, depth of self. He is a great reflection to program participants of the question: When I meet people I don’t yet trust, how authentic am I with them? Max exemplifies the skittish wolfdog and challenges program participants who spend time sitting in his enclosure to just “be”. It’s a great exercise in “being” and Max is assisted as well because participants are not allowed to touch Max in the process- Max can “pet” the participants which facilitates the emergence of trust in Max but not vice versa. This process also teaches participants to respect the journey of others.

Max was raised by a teenage boy who wanted a wolfdog but was not aware of the challenges involved. Having complete domain of the backyard, and the natural instincts of his ancestor wolf, Max dug so many dens that the entire yard looked like a lunar landscape. Seeking out enrichment, he pulled the siding off the back of the house. He even had his very own car, an old Mustang, that he slept on and played with, completely covering it in mud and paw prints. Not only was Max a challenge to enrich, he was also a challenge to contain. Max became adept at escape. The locking system on the gate to the backyard was a challenge to open for many humans, but not to Max!

Knowing that this was not a full, enriching life for the young wolfdog, Max, his young owner made the difficult decision that Max needed to be among other wolfdogs. He called Wolf Connection. We agreed to take Max with one condition ... that the boy volunteer as well to keep his bond with Max.

Soon after his arrival, he became friends and habitat mate to Wolf Connection's pack alpha, Maya, a high-content arctic wolfdog who carried herself as the mother of all. Maya was exactly what Max needed. She brought him friendship, love and an understanding of who and what he is.





MIKEY

Arriving at Wolf Connection in 2014, Mikey was shy and skittish around people he didn't know. Having been raised around feral dogs and high content wolfdogs, Mikey's behavior was in line with wolf behavior. His particular shyness, however, left staff wondering if Mikey felt "worthy" of receiving affection because of the way he initially would lean away from being touched ... Mikey challenges program participants to just "be" with him without expectation and to question how worthy they each feel about giving and receiving affection.

Mikey came to Wolf Connection malnourished and significantly underweight ... looking more like a puppy than an adult wolfdog. Mikey's owner had difficulty with the expense of taking care of so many animals and resorted to feeding Mikey and his packmates cornmeal and olive oil. Wolf Connection immediately began a tailored food regimen to safely get Mikey up to his appropriate weight. Mikey's diet and health was monitored daily and he was weighed weekly to ensure progress was being made.

Since Mikey's previous canine family was large, he was not used to individual attention and affection. Mikey started out shy, but is very bright and spent several weeks observing the Wolf Connection staff from afar before indicating that he wanted to make a connection. Mikey slowly and carefully began sniffing Wolf Connection staff's feet and legs and then quickly running away when he was seen.

Once Mikey realized that he was safe in his new home, his large personality burst out of its shell! Though he still may take some time to get to know new staff and volunteers, his sweet demeanor and attitude is worth the wait.

Mikey is an excellent candidate to become an Ambassador at Wolf Connection. He is participating in behavioral training programs to even out his temperament and food anxieties. He is quickly becoming a very affectionate, happy, hopefully soon-to-be program animal.





ANNIE

Annie and her sisters have been rehabilitating: discovering nature and learning how to interact with humans and new wolves. Annie's recent life with her habitat-mate, Mikey, has proven to be full of peace and joyful frolics! Her relationship with Mikey supports Annie in opening more to Wolf Connection staff. Even on three legs, she is unstoppable! A true Beta/warrior she did not miss a beat following the amputation of her broken leg. Her way of being is given as a metaphor for the program participants: A true warrior doesn't stand around telling a pity story. A true warrior goes back and picks up their "leg", identifying its significance, be it loss of a loved one, betrayal, etc. They place it in their heart and move forward never telling their story again unless it is of service to another ... The path of a warrior is a process. Each step is important.

In the summer of 2015, a small team from Wolf Connection headed off to Wisconsin, the biggest rescue Wolf Connection has ever undergone, to save 3 yearling wolfdogs from euthanization. Annie and her siblings were found with 15 wolfdogs being bred on a fur farm in Illinois. When the State of Illinois closed the fur farm down for animal cruelty, Annie and her pack were slotted for euthanization.

As the clock ticked down on the 72 hour hold of Annie and her sisters- the last of the 15 animals in need of a home, Wolf Connection realized that we needed to step in. Fundraising efforts started immediately and support for Annie, Charlee, and Bella poured out of the Wolf Connection community! A small team was formed to make the non-stop drive to the girls' foster home, a special transport bridge was custom designed to help the girls transition from the truck to their kennel without the trauma of being leashed, and 3 isolation kennels were constructed – all in a matter of 3 days to save Annie and her sisters and make sure that their transition to the Wolf Connection pack was a calm one!





CHARLEE

Showing the promise of becoming an Alpha female, Charlee teaches program participants to continue striving to discover and honor their true selves. As Charlee aligns with her purpose in the pack, she is also still healing and learning to interact in a new environment that includes humans. Honoring the timing and unfolding is truly a gift to witness. Watch how she may gaze with confidence at humans walking by. She is highly aware of everything around her and continues to discover simple things like dirt, twigs and rocks, which were non-existent at the fur farm she grew up in. New treasures to experience! Behaviorally, she reminds her neighboring sisters that, for now, amongst the three of them, she is Alpha. Her partner, Malo, may also be learning that his new habitat mate has more presence and energy than he may have bargained for....

In the summer of 2015, a small team from Wolf Connection headed off to Wisconsin to save 3 yearling wolfdogs from euthanization. Charlee and her siblings were found with 15 wolfdogs being bred on a fur farm in Illinois. When the State of Illinois closed the fur farm down for animal cruelty, Charlee and her pack were slotted for euthanization. Rescues and zoos from across the nation came together to place these 15 feral wolfdogs, but Charlee and her siblings, Annie and Bella, were left with no home.

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MALO

Malo is a high-energy, loving wolfdog. He is an unusual combination of grey wolf and Akita. Malo teaches awareness of boundaries ... If allowed, Malo will cross anyone's boundaries! He has a brilliant way of getting humans to do what he wants, like pet him for example, because he will lift his leg in a way that most people find endearing, causing them to pet him more. He is totally in control around most people who fall prey to his charming dog-like demeanor. Ultimately, Malo teaches about wanting to "connect" and the opportunity to explore the ways in which one might choose to express that connection. Learning balance with connection and boundaries is a great place to start. How do I interact with boundaries?

Malo belonged to a gentleman who was terminally ill. The owner's kind-hearted hospice nurse agreed to take Malo when his owner passed. She and her husband truly adored Malo, but it was very challenging for them to physically keep up with his energy. In addition, the neighbors did not like having Malo in the neighborhood and tried to poison him on more than one occasion by throwing poisoned meat over the backyard fence. It was at this point that the new owners chose to find a safe, forever home for Malo and reached out to Wolf Connection.

Malo was neutered shortly after coming to the Wolf Connection Ranch. Due to his high energy, he quickly managed to tear apart his cone and rip his stitches when unsupervised. After Malo was taken back to the veterinary clinic to be sewn back up, he returned to the compound where the Wolf Connection Team had to provide around the clock supervision for him for one full week in the volunteer house ensuring that his stitches would not be disturbed. The Wolf Connection human pack bonded with him during this period because team members took turns sitting with him for hours at a time, massaging his back, to help keep him still.





BELLA

Rescued from a fox fur farm, Bella and her sisters have been rehabilitating in sacred timing. Though she joined Wolf Connection in 2015, in some ways Bella is still arriving. A strong presence, Bella's personality is slowly unfolding with confidence. Program participants are asked to consider how they treat themselves when they find themselves in "unfamiliar" territory as it is for Bella and her sisters when interacting with humans. How do I support myself when I am learning a new way of being?

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Never shown human affection or the ability to touch the earth, Bella and her sisters leaped, rolled and ran through their new enclosures when they arrived – so happily exploring a new life!





KENAI

A developing Alpha male, Kenai shows us that aligning with one's purpose is a sacred journey of self-discovery and integration of self with surroundings. Though he speaks "wolf", his original owners spoke "dog" to him which caused him much anxiety and distrust of human "language". Thankfully, his owners loved him deeply and that loving foundation has allowed him to meet new people over time and bridge relationships with certain humans into his present development as an Alpha male showing self-confidence and presence. How do I support myself or others on a journey of developing confidence?

Kenai became part of the Wolf Connection family when he was about a year old. His story is similar to many wolf dog stories ... His human family had a beloved wolfdog that they believed to be "high content" and, when this wolfdog passed away, they wanted another. With Kenai, they actually got a "high content" wolf dog. Kenai's family loved him dearly, but knew, as months passed, that he needed something more. He needed a pack of his own.

When Kenai came to Wolf Connection, he was nervous and seemed to not know who or what he was: a high-content wolfdog.

Soon after his arrival, he became friends and habitat mate to Wolf Connection's pack Alpha, Maya, a high-content arctic wolfdog who carried herself as the mother of all. Maya was exactly what Kenai needed. She brought him friendship, love and an understanding of being a wolf. As he grew and time went on, he made friends with the rest of the pack and even the human pack, one by one. He certainly makes one earn his trust. He now has gained such confidence in himself, with the help of Maya and the Wolf Connection team, that he helps program participants explore confidence, trust and love.





OMAK

Omak is the present Alpha male at Wolf Connection. He has a calm, wise and grounded demeanor. Being an Alpha essence, he has great confidence, even if he is unsure of a new situation. One of the largest pack members at Wolf Connection, Omak's majestic presence is revered. Abandoned by his owner, Omak soon found himself roaming a neighborhood, scaring residents, and was subsequently chased by Animal Control. Eventually, Animal Control did confiscate him and wanted to euthanize him because they feared he was too aggressive. After some discussion it was agreed that Omak would find sanctuary at Wolf Connection.

Why do humans want to own a wolf or wolfdog? Is it ego that wants to claim this amazing "property"? Is it that perhaps, deep down inside, some humans are trying to touch some of the wild within themselves? As staff began to get to know Omak, it was soon realized that Omak's owner did not show him loving touch. As Omak began to bond slowly with particular staff, it became evident that, though this alpha knew that he was deserving of loving touch, he simply didn't understand it and required time to get used to it ... Sacred timing. This Alpha male teaches that there is great strength in vulnerability and it is wise to choose with whom one reveals vulnerability ...

After being darted, caught, placed in a metal box and driven over five hundred miles, Omak arrived at Wolf Connection in quite a grumpy mood. For the first two weeks, Wolf Connection staff barely entered his kennel except to slip in a bowl of food and remove the empty bowls to which Omak delivered warning chuffs. After a few weeks, he began to trust and staff was able to enter a little further into his kennel while respecting his space.

Slowly and surely, he continues giving and receiving affection and becoming an amazing member of the Wolf Connection pack.





BANDIT

An original pack member and elder of the present Wolf Connection pack, Bandit has a past replete with stories of fun and adventure. Though his body is aging, his spirit perseveres in communicating his intentions. For example, if he isn't leashed quickly enough, his snout might nudge his handler along! He is a celebration of togetherness and connection.

Bandit is a favorite among Wolf Connection's at-risk youth teens who connect with Bandit's obstinate, outspokenness and spunky behaviors. Bandit happily acts as a Wolf Connection Ambassador with these participants and quickly bonds with the youth, giving them love and affection freely. Although an elder of the pack, Bandit is a forever teenager who inspires smiles from everyone who meets him. Bandit teaches the important lesson of making time for playfulness in our days, regardless of age. How do I express playfulness?

Bandit and his fellow members of the original rescue had been hoarded by a private owner. Kept in cages, Bandit's perception of life was narrow and surrounded by bars. When his owner died, Bandit and the original pack members were left locked in their cages with no means to escape and no one to feed them. Out of the 42 wolfdogs that were kept in this enclosure, only 16 survived to be rescued and become the founding Wolf Connection pack.

Despite his history, Bandit came to Wolf Connection with high energy, a good nature and a desire to live life to the fullest ... usually by riling up his pack members in playful antics. Bandit's cool demeanor towards humans and rabble-raising shenanigans with his wolf pack, earned him the title of the "James Dean" of the pack. Bandit prefers to nap in the sunshine rather than make a new human companion. But, once this friendship is earned ... the love is overflowing and can sometimes knock you to the ground. Bandit is known for lovingly head-butting his favorite humans and rubbing his face all over them to ensure he has scented them so the rest of the wolf pack knows who they belong to.





WYOH

Wyoh, a very sweet and playful being, is an original pack member and an elder of the Wolf Connection pack. Kept in small cages early in life, Wyoh's perception of life was narrow and surrounded by bars. Wyoh lived this way with his sister for the first few years of his life until Wolf Connection's Founder, Teo Alfero, discovered the pack living at the pitbull rescue and began giving them enrichment, exercise and attention. Wyoh and his sister had developed extreme anxiety and, unfortunately, his sister passed away due to a heart attack at a young age.

Despite his history, Wyoh came to Wolf Connection with high energy, a good nature and a desire to live life to the fullest as the new partner to Tala, the Co-Founder of the pack. Wyoh's friendly relationship with Tala earned him the status of Teo's personal companion and Wyoh continues to spend most of his time with Teo and his family in their home.

Wyoh prefers to spend time with humans when he does not have a strong wolf leader to follow. He is an open channel of learning between wolves and humans in this way and shows healthy boundaries when his needs are met. He offers program participants the opportunity to question as to whether they are aware of their needs. How do I support myself in different situations? Wyoh, being an elder, also represents "old self". The part of self that is very familiar with one's behavior and choices. He represents the part of self that is wise and knows how to navigate into new situations with caution and self-reliance because, in the past, he has followed wolfdogs that knew the path.

When in the compound with the pack, he is usually the instigator of fence play and heckling the volunteers for more attention and, as a result, the Wolf Connection staff appreciates how he helps to train new volunteers by refusing to follow their directions and challenging them into more presence and confidence.





SHADOW

After losing her owner to a terminal illness, Shadow and two companion low content wolfdogs came to Wolf Connection to become part of the pack. In the owner's last year of life, he had struggled to provide proper food for his wolfdogs and, though he loved them dearly, he hurt them by feeding them junk food. The two low content animals became morbidly obese to the point where it was difficult for them to walk. Because of her wolf content, Shadow did not over eat. A wolf knows inherently how to care for its body- that to overeat would mean hurting one's self and therefore not being able to perform as a pack member. Self-regulation is the wolf way.

An additional result of the owner's passing was that Shadow became the protector of the other two wolfdogs, Sissy and Smokey. Shadow was not naturally a dominant animal and, having to take on such a role, caused her to be quite grumpy. At Wolf Connection, Shadow was separated from her companions and placed into a neighboring habitat. She was no longer forced to play the role of the protector.

Shadow teaches program participants to ask the question: Who am I if I no longer have to play a particular role in order to survive? Am I starting anew or am I picking up where I left off a long time ago in my growth and development? How can I maintain a healthy body? Many of the students who attend Wolf Connection's programs can relate to having to take on more than they were ready for in order to get through some difficult situations. They can relate to being "fed" things that hurt them by well-intentioned loved ones. Allowing one's self to find stillness, reassess and slowly, in one's sacred timing, heal and move forward, is Shadow's reflection.





OZZY

With his incredible awareness, natural ability to be present, elder status and deeply wise green-gold eyes, Ozzy is known as the “Shaman” of the pack.

Originally, Ozzy was taken to a local shelter by someone who witnessed him being pushed out of a moving car. Being identified as a wolfdog, he was immediately put on death row. Luckily, a friend of Wolf Connection found him and reached out. Ozzy teaches program participants to ask what it was about Ozzy to make someone “throw” him away on the street? What is it about me that someone might throw away and is it true? Am I harboring such judgments against myself?

One of Ozzy’s favorite things to do is stop at the top of a hill on a hike, sit, and take in the view or watch the ravens fly by. He reminds us to live in the moment and appreciate our surroundings. Ozzy also has the ability to be incredibly loving and light-hearted. He can patiently look into a person’s eyes and commune while, in another instant, he might vocalize quite loudly if he wants something from a team member. He communicates effectively and loves deeply. His ability to be present and in the moment does not thwart his capacity to frolic and cajole!

When Ozzy came to Wolf Connection, he was in bad physical shape with exposed, raw skin. It was discovered that Ozzy had severe allergies and skin irritations, causing him much pain and distress. The Wolf Connection Team took great care and time to treat Ozzy’s ailments, consisting of allergy medication, a specialized diet and topical treatments. Guests who meet Ozzy now would never know that this healthy wolfdog came to Wolf Connection malnourished and in pain.

Ozzy was given his name by the woman who originally found him at the shelter, in honor of him finally finding home. Of course, “there’s no place like home.”

