

Many people ask if their young children can volunteer. The reasoning is because the child loves animals and is very gentle. There are many factors involved for people to volunteer at any nonprofit charity and this is not different at American Heritage Wildlife Foundation. There are tasks needed which do NOT involve caring for wild animals – in some ways these duties are more important. For those who do want to get involved with wild animal rescue and rehabilitation, please read this poem and perhaps then you will understand why the young are not allowed to be hands on caregivers. This is also why we encourage only those who have undergone training and read our protocols to be directly involved. Wildlife rehabilitation is one of the most difficult professions – mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually and financially draining much of the time. Only those who are strong of soul should consider this calling.

#### RESCUE EXPLAINED.....

"The neglect changes you.

The abuse hardens you.

The suffering breaks you.

The ignorance angers you.

The indifference disturbs you.

The injustice destroys you.

On a daily basis...your faith will be tested.

Your heart will be wounded....

Your soul will be altered.

On a weekly basis...you'll question yourself.

You'll question your strength.

You'll question the world.

On a monthly basis...you'll fall down.

You'll get up.

You'll go on...

On a yearly basis...you'll look back...

You'll see faces...

You couldn't save them.

You'll learn to mourn.

To grieve.

To sob.

You'll learn to trust a little less.

To do a little more.

To fight a little harder.

You'll learn to try.

To hope.

To pray.

You'll learn to fail.

To succeed.

To accept.

You'll learn when to hold on.

When to give up.

When to let go.

You'll learn who you are.

What you stand for.

Why that matters.  
Then... at times... you'll forget why you matter.  
You'll question what you're doing.  
You'll wonder if it's worth it.  
But...here's the good news...  
When you forget...  
When you question...  
When you wonder...  
All you have to do...  
Is take a look around...  
And you'll see them.  
You'll see their faces.  
You'll see their smiles.  
You'll feel their love.  
In their eyes, you'll see their journeys...  
You'll remember their beginnings...You'll know how far they've come...  
You'll remember when they didn't know you...  
When they didn't trust you...When they'd given up.  
You'll remember how you healed them...  
How you loved them...How they loved you, too.  
And as you look back...  
You'll want to move forward...  
For them... and because of them.  
In your darkest hours, you'll look around...To find the differences made...the hope given...and the lives saved...  
Because you existed.  
In those moments, when you look into their eyes...every doubt will be erased.  
Every question will be answered.  
Every worry will subside.  
Because in that instant...in each of your hearts...  
You both share the very same thought:  
"Every bit of pain was worth it...for this moment here with you."  
And honestly...no matter what else happens...  
Those moments hold all the strength you need...  
To keep going.  
Rescue is pain.  
Rescue is joy.  
Rescue is worth it...because they are worth it.  
And that's the honest truth."  
~ Author unknown