



— Friends of the —
RAINFOREST[™]
Monteverde, Costa Rica

FOREST FIELD
NEWS & NOTES
Summer 2020

SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN'S ETERNAL RAINFOREST SINCE 2002

Making Diversity a Mindset

With our education program growing in the past 3 years, our mindset needs to grow as well. We mistakenly believed that making our resources and lessons available to everyone was enough to claim inclusion. In reality, the disparity between well-funded and under-funded schools in our area is extreme, and due to systemic injustices, poorly-funded schools in St. Louis are largely comprised of Black children. Add to this the inaccessibility people of color historically face in green spaces and it is no wonder the rainforest can feel like another planet. We have missed opportunities to connect kids to the rainforest and we are working to make it right.

Staff and Board Members are pulling from teacher and nonprofit professional development resources like Sapna Strategies, Teaching Tolerance, Coalition of Communities of Color, and others, to make plans and take real actions to train ourselves to identify our biases and build a more equitable education program and organization. We understand that making changes to our program is not enough. For our mission to reach and resonate with everyone, we must change our approaches to answer the needs of all the communities with which we work.

We are committed to using our platform to fight for educational, environmental, and racial justice. We are in the process of reevaluating our organizational values and goals to better align with this mission. It will take time to make thoughtful and sustainable organizational shifts and add more community voices to our Board. Despite this, we are committed to having our Equity and Justice statement and a new education training in place by the time school is back in session.



Education Update

We are very excited to announce that we have begun scheduling lessons for the Summer and the Fall. Students' safety and health is absolutely our top priority, and Jamie has been doing a great job of reworking our lessons to ensure adequate social-distancing and sanitation procedures. For students and schools that will still be online in the Fall, we will continue to offer virtual lessons as well!

Learning about the rainforest is the first step in working to protect it. Whether your school is holding in-person classes or switching to virtual, online learning, we can join you and teach a variety of rainforest topics **for free**.

If you have any questions email jamie@friendsoftherainforest.org or check out our website at friendsoftherainforest.org/schedule-a-lesson



Grant Update

A huge thank you is required to everyone who has donated so far to help the Monteverde Conservation League in the Children's Eternal Rainforest. They have been able to open their doors to local tourists, but they still anticipate a loss of around \$100,000 through the end of the year. The money we received has helped to bolster the guard's salaries. They have been working at a fraction of their normal pay, so your money not only helps protect the Children's Eternal Rainforest, but it also supports the guards and their families during this challenging time.

While we have filled the grant MCL had requested for salaries covering April, May and June, we are now working to fill a \$10,998 grant for July, August and September. If you haven't given towards our granting efforts yet, please donate if you are able!

Volunteers in Action: "Aki Aora"

Stefan DuBois was a wonderful volunteer who graced Friends of the Rainforest with his assistance for a number of months in 2019. Stefan was an amazing volunteer (we miss him!), but what's more amazing are the adventures that he's embarked on since leaving FotR. In this edition of News and Notes, we're putting our volunteer spotlight on Stefan who is currently exploring around New Zealand together with his girlfriend, Dagmar.



Meet Stefan DuBois!

Aki Aora: a unique combination of "Kia ora", a Maori greeting and "Aquí ahora", Spanish for "here, now" - and the name of Stefan and Dagmar's travel blog. Find it at akiaoratravel.com

around, they've found a new love of savory pies, aioli, and stargazing in a new hemisphere ("the moon is upside down!").

In the Fall, Stefan will be heading back to the US to begin a teaching position at the University of Denver. Good Luck Stefan!

Stefan and Dagmar have been traveling all around the country on a Holiday Working Visa. Together, they have been seeing all the beautiful national wonders that the country has to offer while working at a number of farm-stays. While they arrived pre-pandemic, they've been fortunate as New Zealand has done an amazing job containing the virus, and now they get to experience these beautiful tourist destinations during a very slow season. While traveling



Monteverde Spotlight: Fabio Araya



For those of us living in the U.S., it can be easy to feel disconnected from the rainforest. Over the years, we've discussed at lengths the importance of the guards who work tirelessly to keep the rainforest safe. But without an understanding of what their work looks like it can be hard to understand just how integral the guards are to the conservation of the Children's Eternal Rainforest.

So this time around, don't hear it from us! **Meet Fabio Araya, the Pocosol Station Manager**, in the Children's Eternal Rainforest who has been kind enough to share with us his experiences working on the ground to keep the rainforest safe.

"My regular day at the Pocosol Biological Station starts very early with a cup of coffee and some bird watching. Then I start preparing breakfast for the guests, could be from 2 people up to 35 people. I really enjoy Biology students and professors at the station, they ask so many questions so it's fun for me and I get to learn a lot from them. I also prepare a Coffee break in the afternoon for everybody and usually before dinner I do a 45 minute talk in the classroom about the bats of the Children's Eternal Rainforest and their importance for the ecosystem; seed dispersal by the fruit bats, insect control and pollination by humming-bats. After dinner, we go on a night hike searching for frogs, snakes, lizards, nocturnal animals. At night the forest is very active so I like night hikes!

I enjoy working for a company that is committed to education, protection and research of the tropical rainforest. My coolest experience was to be able to see and photograph one of the most bizarre fruit bats in the world, the wrinkle face bat. That was stunning indeed.

I wish people could be more understanding and thoughtful about the importance of the 23,000 hectares under protection of MCL for its unique species of wildlife and plants."



Friends of the Rainforest

Our mission is to promote a sustainable world by educating and inspiring children and adults to take action to protect, support and expand the Rainforest in Costa Rica and beyond.

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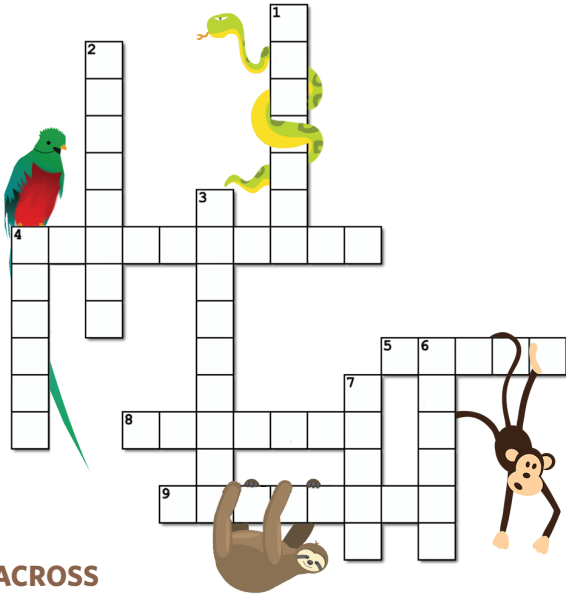
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Activity Corner



ACROSS

4. Friends of the _____
5. Our Education Coordinator
8. The name of Stefan and Dagmar's travel blog
9. Javier, our new Protect-a-Pal, is this type of animal.

DOWN

1. We promise to fight for educational, environmental, and racial _____
2. This illegal activity is a reason why the rainforest guards are so important
3. The Children's Eternal Rainforest is located in this country.
4. The founder of Friends of the Rainforest
6. The name of the volcano that Ben remembers spitting out flaming debris
7. The Pocosol Station Manager

E P P L K C O H V H H Y N H N
O C G R L A S C L K G T I M H
Y O B Z O V U Z D U M I O L U
X V N O W J S D R L T F W L Q
N I H C U P A C N U P Q Z I S
B L I E W K L K O A M P Y T T
X A H L V H S G T M M K J A H
S Z C A I M A N Y W A A P O Q
Y T N A C U O T A O V R T C N
H E X J N U P C C E F R G Q V
Y U R A P B A E L D R R E A T
S Q A G D M L I K R U V O G Y
I H K U P O N S N A K E I G K
Z R H A T A M C E E P R E L O
V S X R U G J L Z R L I E R V

Agouti
Caiman
Capuchin
Coati
Frog
Jaguar
Javelina
Macaw
Margay
Ocelot
Quetzal
Sloth
Snake
Tamandua

If you get stuck on the crossword puzzle, check out the rest of this edition of News and Notes to see if you can find some answers!

Once you've completed the activities, head to www.friendsoftherainforest.org/activitycorner to check your work!



Then and Now: Ben Swank A Look at the Lasting Impact of the Rainforest

Ben Swank first visited the Children's Eternal Rainforest (CER) in 2007, during the summer after 5th grade. Along with his mother, Penny, he was part of a group led by our late founder Rachel Crandell. While his trip was many years ago, Ben recalls the experience of watching the Arenal Volcano spitting "flaming debris into the sky and mountain" and listening to Rachel describe the ways in which the animals and plants are connected in the CER.

Afterwards, Ben became a student ambassador, traveling to elementary and middle schools to present on the CER and the importance of protecting its amazing biodiversity.

He shared why it's important to be environmentally conscious and to care for even the smallest animals in the rainforest. More students began to travel to the CER and to work together to raise money for the rainforest.

Ben went on to get a degree in economics, although he maintained a focus on environmentalism through a fascination in ecological economics and environmental justice. While his current work isn't directly involved with environmental activism, he spends his time reading up on regenerative agriculture, indigenous peoples' relations with land, and other environmental topics. "I do not think that perspective would have been present without my trip to the CER" he says.

For us at Friends of the Rainforest, Ben's story is a success story. It is a testament to the powerful influence witnessing the rainforest first-hand has on young minds. Our goal as an organization is to make visits to the CER more accessible, and our hope is to have more stories like Ben's. Learning about the rainforest at a young age can inspire life-long care and consideration for the environment - both in the rainforest and at home!

"I think about the treatment of the earth each day. I have Rachel and the opportunities given to me through my work with the CER to thank for that."

Do you have a similar story to tell? We'd love to hear from you - email us at info@friendsoftherainforest.org



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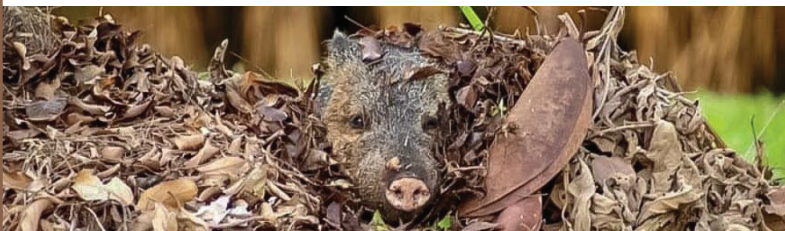
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Javier Joins the Family

Javier the Javelina is the newest addition to our Protect-a-Pal family. While javelinas may look similar to barnyard pigs, they are actually quite different. They're much smaller and more social than a typical pig. Javelinas are also very important for a healthy rainforest ecosystem, as they spread seeds around the jungle as they digest them!

Support the Children's Eternal Rainforest and the javelinas who call it their home with our Protect-a-Pal program! Find out more at:
www.friendsoftherainforest.org/protect-a-pal



Our New Board Members

We are happy to welcome two new members to our board, Melissa and Chad Hoener. Some of you may recognize Melissa. She worked as our development coordinator prior to joining our board, so she already has a deep knowledge of our organization and our donors. Before working for Friends of the Rainforest, she was a biology teacher; her passion for science and the environment has inspired her continued involvement with our organization! Chad has a similar passion for the environment and specifically, for Costa Rica. His college roommate was from Costa Rica, which prompted many visits to the country beginning in the early 90's. Chad will also bring his experience and knowledge as a financial advisor to our board. Together, they love to travel and explore. We're very happy to have them on our team!



After a 1989 visit to Costa Rica dedicated environmentalists, Rachel and Dwight Crandell were inspired by the example of the Swedish second grade class that took the initiative to support the Children's Eternal Rainforest. The efforts of the Crandells over 18 years ago have inspired thousands of people world wide to take action to support and protect Rainforest land.