

NONPROFITS ASSISTANCE FUND

Helping Nonprofits Thrive

At a clinic in Roseville, MN, a young patient waits to receive medicine. The nurse talks gently to the patient to calm her down. She shivers with nervousness and cries for her mother. Before she knows it the shot is administered, the nurse tells her she did a great job and then places the patient back in to the cage to play with her other raccoon friends. This scenario takes places hundreds of times a week at the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota (WRC).

Executive director Phil Jenni oversees WRC which sees approximately 8,300 wild animals a year. Forty percent of those animals are admitted to the emergency room. A few even require surgery provided by WRC staff on site. Surgeries range from fixing a cracked tortoise shell to actually creating and implanting new feathers. WRC's long experience has helped them to pioneer some medical procedures. The center also raises about 4,500 orphaned baby animals every year. WRC staff provides care and services that allow the animal to eventually return to its natural habitat.

One of the largest wildlife hospitals in the nation, WRC was established in 1979 at the University of Minnesota by a group of veterinary students. Over time, the services offered grew and WRC needed to expand to their own location. With a line of credit issued by their bank, WHC broke ground on their current location in 2002 and moved in a year later. However, due to uncertainties in cash flow and grant timelines, Jenni decided another line of credit would be needed to help cover gaps between revenue. Because of the large amount issued and still outstanding for the new site construction, the bank could not offer WRC additional credit. Luckily, the bank had worked closely with Nonprofits Assistance Fund and directed Jenni to their services.

Jenni met with Nonprofits Assistance Fund loan officer Janet Ogden-Brackett. After seeing the strength of WRC and their leadership, she was able to issue the line of credit he could not receive from his bank.

Profile of Success Wildlife Rehabilitation Center

"Wildlife Rehab Center is running a capital campaign that will eventually pay off the brand new building they occupy," says Ogden-Brackett. "Nonprofits Assistance Fund provided a line of credit that will allow them to continue the campaign even if pledges are delayed."

The line of credit allows Jenni and his staff to continue to offer the many services WRC provides. Mending a cracked duck bill, feeding baby squirrels, and fixing a broken leg on a red fox can



Photo by Dawn Vilella

continue along with the numerous education programs offered to elementary students, veterinary students, and interested caring citizens.

Jenni continues to discuss the financial operations of WRC with Ogden-Brackett. He knows that a strong financial standing is vital to every nonprofit. Unfortunately, not every organization has the strong and experienced staff that WRC does. Jenni suggests they turn to Nonprofits Assistance Fund to get a better grasp on their finances.

"There are a lot of organizations who are run by people devoted to the mission but they may not have a good business sense," states Jenni "The free tools on the website are really helpful, and the workshops are a tremendous service to the nonprofit community."

Strong financial management skills are vital to the health of nonprofits. Just ask the 2,195 rabbits, the 1,035 squirrels, and 656 ducks that visited the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota last year.