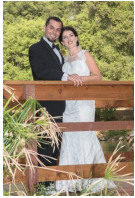




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California Wolf Center Celebrates 40 Years



The California Wolf Center plays an active role in wild wolf conservation. Photo by Michael Peak, Courtesy of the California Wolf Center

By Angela McLaughlin - Ramona Home Journal • Thu, Oct 05, 2017

In 1977, Paul and Judy Kenis opened the doors to the California Wolf Center in Julian. They started with just two wolves and a vision of educating people about wolves and their importance to the ecosystem.

Over the years, the organization has grown to include more wolves and volunteers, eventually becoming a nonprofit in 1984. Today, the center has a network of 93 volunteers and houses 29 wolves on the property. Focusing on wild wolf recovery and coexistence between wolves and humans, the center uses many outlets to accomplish its goals — from community education to building relationships with ranching communities and more.

The center's participation is vital to Mexican gray wolves in the Southwest and North American gray wolves in Northern California. Recent successes include a litter of six

Mexican gray wolves born in May, participating in cross-fostering with a wild pack in Arizona, and developing positive relationships with ranchers across multiple communities.

Program coordinator John Murtaugh says, "The wolves are kind of a symbol, like pandas, that are this iconic symbol of conservation. They represent a species that was nearly brought to the point of extinction, but because of conservation efforts, we've been able to recover them to this point where they have a chance now."

The center is celebrating its 40th anniversary on Oct. 14 at an annual fundraiser. The event will take place from 5 to 9 p.m. at Hilton San Diego Mission Valley, 901 Camino del Rio S. The catered dinner will feature a silent and live auction, speed painting with "Live Art with Heart," and live music. Information about the fundraiser and the center may be found at www.californiawolfcenter.org.

As the center is almost entirely volunteer-run, this is an important event for the organization.

"It is our most important and largest fundraiser," says Kim Carey, director of volunteers. "We do make a difference in the wild, and we are the only group in California that is doing this."

"This is the next state — this is where they are coming back to. It's a really important thing to have wolves on the landscape and to teach people about them."

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