

## Love What You Love Podcast

### Episode 50: Wildlife Rescue with Laura Hawkins

#### October 19, 2021

Welcome to *Love What You Love*; I'm Julie Rose. I'm insatiably curious about people and the world around us, and absolutely in love with passion and unselfconscious enthusiasm. Every other week, I geek out with someone about the thing that they love, and then I share it with you.

Welcome back! Or, Welcome! Before we get started, I just have to note that this is Episode 50! Yay! As you can probably tell, I love doing this podcast, and it's such a joy to know that there's other people who are interested and listening, so thank you so much.

I've been lucky enough to work with some of the very best around. Zeke Rodrigues Thomas of Mindjam Media was unbelievably helpful in terms of editing and helping me get up to speed when I first started. And the delightful Emily White of The Wordary continues to create the best podcast transcripts around. Seriously, if you have a podcast, reach out to Emily. She does the best, hand-crafted, artisanal transcripts you can imagine. For real, they're so good. Also, I've been super honored to chat with the most interesting people who are interested in the coolest things.

Speaking of, let's meet this week's guest. Laura Hawkins is the Executive Director of the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley, whose mission is to provide sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife with exceptional free care, rehabilitation, and the opportunity for release. They also educate the public about coexisting peacefully with local wildlife. It was super cool to talk with Laura.

In this chat, we talk ducks that act like dogs, what to do when you find a baby animal, why you shouldn't trim your trees until late October, saving squirrels in India, why it's a really, really stupid idea to keep a wild animal as a pet, fighting for the underdog, and so much more. Find out why Laura loves rescuing wildlife, and why you might learn to love it too.

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**Julie:** Hello, Laura! Thank you so much for joining me today.

**Laura:** Thanks, Julie. It's great to be here.

**Julie:** You are the Executive Director of the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley. How long has that been around and how long have you been involved?

**Laura:** So, we have been around for about 28 years. We were established in 1993 and I've been with the organization about six years.

**Julie:** How long have you been rescuing wildlife? Were you doing that before you came to the wildlife center?

**Laura:** I would say, quite unprofessionally. I grew up with a father who loved animals, just like I did. When we would have something, like a bird strikes the window, something going on in our backyard, we would tend to these animals and return them to where they belonged once they recovered. So, I would say not professionally, but I always had a love for wildlife.

**Julie:** Sure. And do you have a background in biology or...? How did you come to joining the center?

**Laura:** You know, it's funny. I don't have that kind of background. But again, lifelong animal lover, from cats and dogs to... You name it, I was always bringing something home. So, I was in another profession for many years. I was in public relations, and marketing,

and investor relations, and it really didn't fit me and who I was anymore. I was looking to do something else and I actually started the first privately-run doggie daycare in San Francisco.

**Julie:** Ah!

**Laura:** Yeah, so I took off from there. And when I sold that business, after I raised my kids, I knew I wanted to get back into the animal world. I have a good friend who I contacted again, we did a lot of rescue together and things like that, and she said, "Well, I have this job and I'm not really sure it's a job yet, but how about this?" And so, that's how I got into wildlife as a project manager for our organization here and another organization. It was, kind of like, boots on the ground.

**Julie:** So what was it about this role that made you go, "Oh yeah."? You've been there six years now; what is it about it that makes you just light up?

**Laura:** Oh my gosh, how much time do we have? [laughs] You know, the thing is... And this may sound a little hokey, but it really feeds my soul. I can't imagine doing anything else because it merges two of my loves, which are people and animals. And you know, I'm kind of a fight-for-the-underdog kind of person, and wildlife, I have to say, is kind of misunderstood, and gets short shrift sometimes. And I get it, we're so used to our domestic companion animals and we identify with them; and wildlife, it's quite different. We don't own them, and as beautiful as they are, they're not going to cuddle up to you.

So for me, it was coming in and going, "I hope that through this organization we can educate people and help people to understand wildlife more," and to really appreciate them not only for how beautiful they are but how important they are to our ecosystem. So, it was a wonderful departure from the domestic work I used to do. I'm fascinated every day, I learn something new every day, and I come up with all sorts of factoids that I just tell everyone about. And you know, I don't know what they think, but I love it.

**Julie:** Good! When you love something and you info dump, that's the best thing in the world. I love that.

**Laura:** I don't know if they're that excited about my cocktail party talk, but you know...

**Julie:** [laughs] Well then, they need to get a clue.

**Laura:** [laughs]

**Julie:** So, let's step back and... What is involved in a rescue, and what do we actually mean when we say 'wildlife rescue'?

**Laura:** So, we are the wildlife hospital. People bring us sick, injured, or orphaned animals. And when we talk about rescue, it's really bringing that sick, injured, or orphaned animal to us for treatment and the opportunity for release. So, we get animals from many different sources. We get them from the general public, animal control agencies, local park services, and things like that. So, once an animal comes in... That's the first part, getting them here. I guess that's the technical rescue part, and then it extends into what we do for them here.

Each patient, when they come in... I think it's important to mention this so people really understand how we work; I think there's some misconceptions. Every animal that comes in gets a head-to-toe exam. It's like if you make a trip to the emergency room,

they give you a head-to-toe exam to determine then what course of action to take with your healing, and that's what we do here. So, I think the rescue part extends to our care for the animal until they're able to be released.

**Julie:** How many vets do you have on staff?

**Laura:** We have one vet on staff and then we have an extensively trained animal care group. These people have many, many years of animal care experience. Our hospital manager, she started doing this when she was 11, and she is now in her early 30s. She's been doing this a very long time. Another employee that we have has also been doing it for a very long time. So, while we have the one vet, we also have a super trained staff that does the work on a daily basis.

**Julie:** How long does an animal typically stay with you? Have you had animals stay for months and months, or is it more of, like, "Do it quick and then move them on to another kind of facility"?

**Laura:** All animals stay here until they're ready to be released. So, they don't go anywhere else after they get here except back to the wild. We have patients that are as long-term as a year and we have patients that, you know, come in just several weeks. It really depends on what their status is when they come in. For instance, one of the longest patients we had was a hawk - and this happens sometimes - that flew into an incinerator and singed all its feathers, and the feathers... they were gone. So, he stayed with us for a year or two to make sure that all his flight feathers could come back, to regain his strength, and go step-by-step with us because they have to be able to, obviously, fly adequately and live hunt before they go.

Also then, we have... During our busy season - which I should mention is usually March through the end of September when everybody's having babies, we will undoubtedly get coyote pups, and bobcat kittens - and things of that nature. The bobcats, our last batch we kept for almost a year because you have to release them at their natural dispersal time. Everything we do is in concert with what they'd be doing in the wild.

**Julie:** You mentioned coyotes and bobcats. You're in San Jose; what kinds of animals do you get in your center that would be different than rescues around the US?

**Laura:** We take in all native California wildlife. So, it's anything that's particular to us here. And geographically, things differ from state to state, but we take in gray foxes; we take in waterbirds of all kinds. There are a lot of species specific to this area. We take in about 161 different species that we'll see throughout the year. It could be your typical skunks and opossums, to something... We once got in an indigo snake that somebody had dumped that was a pet, in the foothills. We were able to place him with a specialist who then was able to give him a really good home.

So, we don't turn any animal away. It's important to mention that we do not treat domestic animals. There's very clear guidelines about that, around what we do and what we don't do. We are permitted by the state so we're very conscientious of doing that. So, there could be anything. I think it's the species... Same kind of... We all do songbirds, right? There's songbirds all over the United States, but there might be species that are particular to California.

**Julie:** Would you say you primarily get birds, or among the species that you do get, what's most prevalent?

**Laura:** There's a couple species of animals. We get in, yes, a huge amount of songbirds. We get in a huge amount of eastern gray squirrels. There's two squirrel seasons a year, so we do probably 7-800 squirrels.

**Julie:** Oh my goodness!

**Laura:** Yeah, they are plentiful, as are possums, Virginia opossums. And you know, the songbirds can be anything from... we get in a lot of house sparrows, and we get in a lot of finches, and you know, American robins, and a lot of the birds you see typically in your backyards; mourning doves, that kind of thing. So, I would say the songbirds, and opossums, and squirrels are some of our biggest patients.

**Julie:** I loathe to ask this question, but is there a typical kind of complaint or injury that you see?

**Laura:** Yeah, so actually, 95% of the patients that we see have had some sort of unfortunate interaction with humans. So, the animals that come into us... it could be anything from, you know, birds caught in fishing line, to animals that come in injured because of illegal traps. We have animals that are hit by cars quite often, and we do get some cruelty cases in. We had an opossum come to us... someone had purposely put a zip tie around its middle. So, we get ones like that in, and we were able to treat that animal, and he was successfully released. So, it's mostly human interactions.

And you know, obviously, they're not all intentional. We try and educate people, you know, "When you're out fishing, pick up your fishing line." If you're flying a kite, get your kite string. Watch for nocturnal animals at night crossing the road. We get a lot of animals hit by cars and things like that. Those are most of the reasons that they come into us. They're sick because of poisoning... One of the biggest ones, and we try and put a big message out about this every year, is from tree trimming. We get squirrels, and baby squirrels, and baby birds, and inevitably it will come down to tree trimming. So, we do suggest that people not do that until the tail end of October or early November.

**Julie:** Oh, that's good to know. Now, I mean, being an animal lover and seeing these injured animals all the time, how do you deal with it?

**Laura:** You know, I also volunteered in shelters, and what I try and look at is, "What can we do for them immediately?" You know that they will not all survive, so we try to think, "What is the best that we can do for them at the moment?" How can we set them up for success in the best way possible? It can be a really sad job sometimes, but we focus on what we can do for them, and even if it's just doing the best we can. And that's what we always do.

So, yeah it is hard to deal with some days, but I think that if you didn't look forward and keep a positive attitude, this kind of thing could really destroy you, and basically, the love of the animals keeps us going. It's really important work.

**Julie:** Are there wildlife centers like yours? I mean, how prevalent are they? Is it a pretty typical thing you see around the country?

**Laura:** I would say that we're a much smaller population than, you know, shelters. We are the only one in Santa Clara County, except there's a very small one in an area just south of us. You know, we never turn any animals away, but I would say, nationally, you're not

going to find them as readily as a shelter. And we get people that will bring them to us from quite a ways away. And like I said, we never turn away an animal in need.

**Julie:** So if you're in a place that doesn't have a wildlife rescue, then these people just take the animals to, like, a shelter or a vet?

**Laura:** It really depends from location to location. I can't really speak to a lot of places around the country, but you know, there are, I imagine, some places that will bring wildlife to, let's say, a shelter for holding. There are individual rehabbers. Everybody has to be licensed by the state of California and it's a rigorous process. So, there are independent rehabbers as well. And you know, oftentimes we get calls where people will say, "I'm in such-and-such area and I don't think there's anything around me." And we'll go on the web and see if we can find the closest shelter for them.

Actually, we even took a call from India one time. A couple had found a squirrel and they were trying to do the best they could for it, and they actually ended up calling us with a particular problem and our hospital manager was able to walk them through it. So yes... And she was able to find a rescue center near them that they really didn't know about. So, it comes from all places, you know. And the education is a huge part of what we do.

**Julie:** Wow. That's incredible. So, if someone runs across... That's a terrible way to say it. [laughs] If someone finds an injured wild animal, what is the first thing they should do?

**Laura:** So, we say that if you don't know what to do, please call us first and we can guide you through it. We tell people that if it is a rabies vector species, which contained within that group is a coyote, or a skunk, or a raccoon, that you do not handle that animal yourself. You call your local animal control agency, or again, if you aren't certain what to do, give us a call. Now, if it's something like an opossum, they do not carry rabies, we guide them through picking the animal up, putting it in a box, no food or water because - I always say, "The internet lies." - you could be feeding the animal wrong things. So, we just say, get it comfortable in a box, poke some air holes, put the animal in there, and bring it directly to us.

**Julie:** Are there diseases that you and maybe people who are dealing with wild animals, bringing them to you, need to be worried about, like besides rabies?

**Laura:** So, the typical animals we would see, I would say no. I mean, you have to be aware that, for instance - and I'm going to talk about this in a general way - raccoons, in their feces, they have organisms that can cause problems for humans if that is inhaled or ingested in some way. But typically, the animals that we see... squirrels also don't carry rabies. But I always say to people, with all wildlife, you're going to want to wear gloves. Animals come in with mites, but they're not a concern to humans, but they're just not great to have on you, right? So, it's that kind of thing.

I should also mention that the people that work here are rabies vaccinated, so we are able to... We have a very strict rule about that. If you're not rabies vaccinated, you cannot take the animal, even from the lobby area to the hospital. So, we make sure there are safety goals in place that can help us do that.

**Julie:** I want to step back just a little bit. I'm curious what your dad thinks of you doing wildlife rescue for a living.

**Laura:** He, of course, thinks it's a natural fit. I think he always thought this is where I would end up, and I think he's glad. I think because... you know, let's face it, he and I were the

ones that had “sucker” written on our forehead in our family. And my mom’s just like, “Oh god, not another one,” right? So, I think he’s really... It’s something that we share. I’ll send him anecdotes of what happened, whether it be a western pond turtle that we get in, or something else, he’s always happy to hear those stories. So, he knows that I’m in the right place and I think that probably means a lot to him.

**Julie:** So, you rescued wildlife. Did you also bring home strays when you were a kid?

**Laura:** Oh, you name it. I still do that. I mean, it’s like, “Oh god. What do I do now?” Yes, always brought home strays. And we only adopted shelter pets as well, because rescue, for me, is the way to go. So yes, strays of course. Kittens. Fish from the classroom; I can’t say they were really strays, but you know, the teacher’s like, “Who wants a fish?” So, I’d bring them home and, kind of, whatever crossed my path. And my parents were super understanding. I’m not saying that I had a zoo, but I definitely had enough.

**Julie:** A menagerie.

**Laura:** Yes! Yeah, and I do to this day. I take in old dogs. I’m really partial to old dogs. And you know, I’ve had three old dogs at a time. I’m down to two right now. That’s just what I like to do. I like to take the ones that nobody wants.

**Julie:** Is there any animal that’s come through your center that you’re like, “Oh, I’m really tempted to...” I mean, not that you ever would.

**Laura:** Right. Well, I do have to tell you, I have a fondness for Muscovy ducks. They’re a domesticated breed, but people will bring them to the center because people dump them everywhere. I happen to really like those. You know, we don’t keep them, but they are like little dogs. People think I’m nuts, but yeah, I really love those. I’m a huge fan. They’re great.

**Julie:** What’s the most unusual animal you’ve had there? It sounds like there’s a lot of... besides the native species, people unfortunately dump a lot of animals. What’s the most unusual animal you’ve had so far in the center?

**Laura:** Golly, that’s really... Well, a couple things. Like I mentioned, the indigo snake that someone dumped. That was beautiful. But we were also able to release this past year a golden eagle. So, we have only had five come in and one that survived, which is this one that we were able to release. It just had a soft tissue injury. Usually, these guys, they come in really beat up and often don’t survive. But I think one of the most spectacular things we’ve ever gotten was the golden eagle because, you know, we so frequently see them. And that was quite exciting. I was there for the release. And just to watch it go and be back to where it was supposed to be, it was amazing.

**Julie:** How big do those get?

**Laura:** Really big. I mean, as far as wingspans go, I couldn’t tell you exactly. But they’re very impressive. Just amazing to watch.

**Julie:** And what’s the process of rewilding animals? Does it happen in stages? All at once? How do you guys do that?

**Laura:** Well, it can happen in stages and it can happen all at once depending on the animal. But you know, one of the things I think is really a good example is that sometimes we will get in raptors that have been injured in some way. And if they’re critically injured we start them in our hospital in our isolation room, because they really need quiet from the rest of the hospital. And so, once they’re able to progress from there, we have kind

of an intermediate step we do. We have an enclosure out on our property in which they are... you know, it's enclosed yet it is outside, it's not in the hospital, so they can get acclimated to that next step. They have more room, but they are kept individually so that we can attend to them all properly and exclusively.

And then we will move them to a larger enclosure which has perches and things of that nature, and we'll start feeding them... we'll do some live feeding with them. Because one of the things we have to make sure of is that they can hunt on their own. We will never send an animal back out there that is not going to be able to be successful. That is just not in our belief system. We want them to be the best that they can be. So, once that's underway and we've noticed that they're building up their flight strength... that is one of the most important things when they get to the larger enclosure outside. We watch them all the time to see how they're doing. And if they're not getting it so quickly, they will be in that enclosure for longer.

When we think they're getting stronger, we have a 50-foot flight enclosure that they graduate to. And that's where they can really build up their strength, and it's after that point that we will release them. If they're good to go... if they're not getting it, we're going to keep them longer. But those are the intermediate steps, and we found that we're most successful when we offer that outside intermediate step. So, they don't just go quickly... From inside to this, to this, to this, it really helps them orient themselves.

**Julie:** How big is your facility? Like, how many animals can you care for at a time?

**Laura:** So, we're a little under an acre and we have quite a few individual enclosures. So, let's see... sometimes we have as many as 500 on site.

**Julie:** Whoa!

**Laura:** Yeah, so in our busy season, because... I will tell you that this has been our biggest year ever. Last year, the whole calendar year, we had 6,200 animals. Right now we have 6,200 animals since January 1, and we're not even to December yet. So, we could have as many as 500 at a time on site. Now, that could be also groups of ducklings; we'll get 13 in at a time, so it sounds a little bit more extreme than it actually is. But we keep a lot of animals here and we're able to do that because of how we're staffed.

But we also do, I should mention, we have a great home care team of about 40 different people. So, when we get in the young squirrels, and the young opossums, and the young songbirds, we have people that do that exclusively for us. They might split their volunteer time between that and working here at the center, or they might do just home care. And these people are experts, and it's really good for the young, small animals to get that attention. So, that's super helpful for us, especially during the pandemic.

**Julie:** Sounds like you've got a pretty strong cadre of volunteers.

**Laura:** Yes, on and off the property. I will say, it was pretty challenging during the pandemic. It was quite a feat and I was really proud of us, my staff, when we were able to get through that part of it.

**Julie:** I'll bet. And speaking of, kind of, those smaller animals being fostered, in a way, what should you do if you have found a baby animal?

**Laura:** I'm really, really glad you're asking this question because if you... for instance, if you find a baby bird, birds have an awful sense of smell. They will take their baby back.

What we say is, just put it back in the nest, unless of course it's a perilous situation. But we always say, put it back in the nest and give it a try. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. If it doesn't work, then we ask them to bring it to us.

If parents... We really want to caution people. We'll get calls that say, "The parents have abandoned the nest," and we'll say, "Just wait," because as the birds get a little bit older, the parents don't sit on them anymore after they hatch. So the parents will often come and feed them intermittently. It's enough for the babies, but sometimes the thought is, "They're not coming back." But we have to remember, just as we take care of our kids, they go in stages. They need us less and less over the years. Some would argue that they don't. [laughs]

But you know, when you find a baby animal... We actually have a really good flow chart, but let's start here. Mammals and the baby birds we're talking about, nestlings and that young, we say to put them in a box, get them comfortable. We recommend t-shirts because it's not something that anybody can get their claws caught on, and to keep them really warm. We recommend that everyone get a heating pad that doesn't turn off (for safety or something like that) and put it on low. And you know, if you find one during the time that we're open, please bring it immediately to us. Again, you can always call us.

But if you can't, keep that animal in a box on low heat, only low. Do not feed or water that animal. As I mentioned before, the internet lies, and people will come in having fed these animals things that could actually really hurt them, and not because they were trying but because they just don't know. And that's... I always say to people, "Don't feel badly about that. You didn't know." But that's why we say no food or water because we get them on species-specific formula when they get here.

So, first thing, put it in a box, make it comfortable. Bring it to us during business hours; we're also open all day every day except for major holidays, 365 days a year (ish). That's what they should do. If they have to hold it overnight like I mentioned, put it on low heat in a quiet, dark place and bring it to us in the morning.

**Julie:** Got it. Good to know. And for mammals, same kind of thing?

**Laura:** Yes, for mammals and nestlings. Absolutely. Squirrels, opossums... Because retaining body heat is especially important if nothing else.

**Julie:** Let's say you find a couple of bobcat kittens. Just put them together in a box?

**Laura:** We say, probably don't handle them. Call animal control for that type of thing and give us a call. Always give us a call because we're happy to direct you through that process and get you in touch with your local animal control agency. And then they would come to us from animal control.

**Julie:** What is your happiest rescue story?

**Laura:** I have a couple. One of my favorites - and this goes back to the tree trimming thing - we had a squirrel come in that had been cut by a chainsaw. His nose, his front limbs, and the side of his cheek. He was kind of our miracle guy. I thought, "Oh gosh, this is not going to go well." The cuts looked pretty bad, but luckily, with what we were able to do with him, he made a full recovery and was able to leave. I couldn't believe it, quite frankly.

One of my other favorites is about a young coyote who was hit twice by a car in rapid succession. And he came in and we thought, "Oh gosh..." That's never good, right? So, it just turned out, he had no fractures. He had no broken bones. He had just really bad abrasions on his feet, on his paws, and we were able to treat him. He was here for a while because, you know, when those paws get degloved, it's not a pretty sight. But we were able to send him back out on his own. We don't know how that happened. But those are a couple of my absolute favorites.

And then of course, we had one where... the opossum with the zip tie, when he was able to go I was so pleased. And then we had one that... We had, actually, a coyote caught around the muzzle in an illegal snare trap. We were able to release him. He had cuts on his muzzle, but he was able to go. The ones that really come in broken and you just think, "There is no way," you know?

The last one that I think has really made an impact on me was a skunk. And people think we're crazy; we're talking about skunks and how endearing they are to us. But he'd gotten caught in some wire sticking out of the side of somebody's house. And he had wrapped himself in that wire and he was struggling for about 24 hours to get out. And what it did was made it a deeper, and deeper, and deeper incision into his abdomen. I mean, it was quite deep. So, when that one was able to be released, we were thrilled as well. Healed up good as new and able to go on his way. Those are the kinds I remember and are my favorites.

**Julie:** Oh my goodness. So, do you and the staff name the animals, or do you not get that attached?

**Laura:** No, we don't name them. We're very hands-off because they don't want to be around us. They need to be wild, so we want to send them off without having done anything that would habituate them. We have seen habituated animals and it's very sad because they're not supposed to be and it must be really confusing for them. For instance, with our coyotes, and all our predatory mammals... all our animals, but especially predatory mammals, we are as hands-off as possible. We even have installed feeding chutes into their enclosures so that we put the food through there so that we don't go in with them. We do go in for cleaning and things like that, but you know, generally we keep hands-off. That's our biggest goal.

You did talk about wilding up, and I do want to mention that we have had people who keep animals and keep squirrels, and we had one come in at five months old. So what we do is we say, "Okay, we're going to try and wild them up," so we put them with their conspecifics; we put them in our outdoor enclosure with other squirrels so they can learn how to be squirrels.

**Julie:** So if you see somebody on YouTube who thinks it's cute to have a raccoon as a pet, don't do it.

**Laura:** No, don't do it. They're wild animals and people think that you can, I guess, train the wildness out of them. But they're wild animals. They're not going to be able to do that. And they make bad pets. They made really bad pets. And it is hard for people to part with them, but you know, part of what we do is just making sure they're equipped to survive on their own in the wild.

**Julie:** Are you aware of, like, a clearinghouse of other kinds of wildlife centers around the country?

**Laura:** Yeah, I mean, there are some on the east coast... There's usually a couple in each part of the country. We work with them, the local ones here. So there's some up in the Tahoe area and some down in the Morro Bay area not too far away from us. And we do help each other out, and I imagine the other rescues around the country do the same. If someone needs us to pair... if they have a lone coyote pup, they can sometimes bring it here if we have the capacity, things like that. You know, wildlife rescue grew up pretty organically, so we do try and help each other out and pass on tips that work and things like that.

**Julie:** Yeah, how long have wildlife centers been a thing?

**Laura:** Gosh... We're a thing for 28 years. I think, you know, it started a lot by individual rehabbers. I don't know that I can put a timeframe on other centers, but... We're not as... I don't want to say 'organized', in a bad way, but we're just not that uniform, I would say. So, I think people have been doing rescue for years.

**Julie:** Just to wrap up, if a listener really wanted to get involved in wildlife rescue, like as a volunteer, how would you suggest that they get started?

**Laura:** Definitely contact the local agency, the closest one to you and your area. And if you don't find something right near you, if you're willing to travel, there are places that really need it. Most of us are small nonprofits and we really rely on the volunteers for their help. So I would say, contact your local agency, your local nonprofit, and see what they have going for volunteers. We have an application on our website, and we encourage people to fill it out, and then they would start the process.

**Julie:** Are there particular things that you're looking for in volunteers?

**Laura:** We're just... You know, there's nothing that... You don't have to be a vet; you don't have to even go to school for biology. If you have an interest in working with wildlife and you're reliable and dependable, and you care about the animals, we do train. Most people like to do it just because they like the idea of supporting the wildlife that are so important to our ecosystem.

**Julie:** Awesome. Well Laura, thank you so much for being so generous with your time and sharing about this. This has been such a joy.

**Laura:** Thank you, Julie. I really appreciate you having me. I was so glad to be here.

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You can find Laura at [WCSV.org](http://WCSV.org), on Instagram [@WildlifeSiliconValley](https://www.instagram.com/WildlifeSiliconValley), and on Twitter [@Wildlife\\_Center](https://twitter.com/Wildlife_Center). I'll of course put links to everything in the show notes. Huge thanks again to Laura for sharing her passion with us this week.

Just a reminder that you can find this podcast on Instagram [@LoveWhatYouLovePod](https://www.instagram.com/LoveWhatYouLovePod), on Twitter, [@WhatYouLovePod](https://twitter.com/WhatYouLovePod), and the website is [LoveWhatYouLovePod.com](http://LoveWhatYouLovePod.com).

All of the transcripts for *Love What You Love* are available for everyone on the website. Thanks to Emily White, transcription magician and proprietress of The Wordary. If you need transcripts, reach out to her at [Emily@TheWordary.com](mailto:Emily@TheWordary.com). The music for *Love What You Love* is called "Inspiring Hope" by Pink-Sounds. A link to that artist is included in the show notes.

As always, thank you so, so much for listening. Let's hang out again soon.

**Links:**

Find Laura and the Wildlife Center on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [WCSV.org](#)

**My Favorite Nonprofits:**

[Humane Society of Silicon Valley](#)

[Southern Poverty Law Center](#)

[Town Cats of Morgan Hill](#)

[Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley](#)

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Check out my books at [JulieKRose.com](#)

LWYL Music: [Inspiring Hope by Pink-Sounds](#)

Transcribed by Emily White: [Emily@TheWordary.com](#)