

TURTLE TIMES



Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre*



Summer, 2019

Message from the Executive and Medical Director

By Dr. Sue Carstairs

College and university students from various backgrounds become a part of our OTCC team each summer, both here in our facility, and in the field where we are following a group of headstarted Blanding's alongside a group of wild-hatched turtles. Student employment is made possible by the following foundations and with our gratitude: The Eric S. Margolis Family Foundation, Echo Foundation, Helen McCrea Peacock Foundation, The Johansen-Larsen Foundation, The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation, and Canada Summer Jobs. We're especially grateful for student help because the season can be particularly overwhelming for us. This year, we have a winning team – everyone contributes toward the efforts of saving turtles and conservation, in one way or another. We thought we'd give you a unique viewpoint based on their experiences here at the OTCC. So without further ado, we give you some of our summer students' perspectives!



Margaret Chan, Veterinary Student



In the fall of 2017, I started volunteering at the OTCC thinking, 'this will be a great opportunity to do something different and it'll look great on my vet school application!'. Little did I know that I would become so fascinated by these amazing creatures and gain such valuable and meaningful experience working with them. In the first spring when I was volunteering, an email was sent out looking for volunteers interested in learning about the egg recovery and incubation program at the centre. Being especially interested in the veterinary side of things, I jumped at this opportunity and haven't looked back since! This will be my second summer working at the OTCC as a Vet Tech and while I am involved in all parts of the hospital and treatment of our patients on a day to day basis, a large part of my job is also in the post mortem room recovering eggs and collecting tissue samples from deceased turtles.

When they hear what I do, people often say, 'wow, that must be so discouraging dealing with so many dead turtles everyday...'. And to be honest, it is heartbreaking to see the lives that are lost on a daily basis. However, I also remind myself of the incredible people that are spending their own time to drive often hours around Ontario to pick up the turtles and transport them to the OTCC so that they can receive treatment or we can recover eggs. These people are amazing, and without their efforts we wouldn't be able to recover and incubate as many eggs as we do every year. I know that if myself and the other vet techs were not recovering the eggs, thousands of turtles would never have the chance to hatch and be returned to their native habitat. The eggs are given the very best shot at incubating and the hatchlings are allowed to make it through their most vulnerable stage in the safety of the OTCC before being released.

This is what keeps me going, knowing that there are so many good people out there doing their part to help, and knowing that I am able to do something so that the lives of those turtles were not lost in vain.



*"Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre" is the legal operating name of the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre
4-1434 Chemong Rd., Selwyn, ON K9J 6X2 www.ontarioturtle.ca info@ontarioturtle.ca
Registered Charity # 85752 4409RR0001

Rachelle Fortier, Community Environmental Education Liaison

It is never a dull moment working for the OTCC, especially in the Education and Outreach Program. This is my second summer working with the Education Program and I have gained so much new experience, met some amazing people and learned so much from everyone here at the OTCC. Wendy (Outreach and Education Coordinator) has developed an amazing Education Program for the Centre which is so informative and engaging. Our program is so great because it is always growing and changing, trying to find new ways to engage the public. I have heard from people more than once that they have seen our presentations multiple times and every time they learn something new!



I have to say the best part of the job is being able to see first-hand the impact the Education Program has on people. Whether they are young or old, you can see people's faces light up when you tell them the stories of our Education Ambassadors, or about how many injured turtles came into the Centre last year (almost 1000!). The days when kids come into the Centre with donations from their birthday parties where they asked for donations instead of presents after seeing us on a class trip or at their summer camp are the best and warms my heart. Knowing that something you have taught them in a short few hours inspired them to help make a difference in the world is so rewarding, and truly makes this the best job ever. Oh, and getting to hang out with turtles all day is pretty great too!

Isa Knor, Community Environmental Education Liaison



Hello! I'm Isa and I'm an Early Childhood Educator, B.Sc. Biology Graduate, and avid OTCC volunteer/employee. Since being involved with the OTCC I have met so many like-minded people, people like you reading this. People who genuinely care about our turtles and know that their value transcends and exceeds any anthropogenic evaluation placed on them.

As a member of the Educational Outreach team I consider myself one of the lucky ones. I get to share my love for turtles and just how special they are with our community locally and provincially. Educating the public on the challenges that our native turtles face is particularly rewarding because I believe that the best way to overcome these challenges is through education and conversation! Creating turtle-friendly spaces is not an impossible task. While the OTCC hospital rehabilitates turtles that have become injured due to human interference the education team works to ensure our communities understand the best way to help turtles before they get injured. My goal is to help people create healthy environments where turtles are safe from negative human-wildlife conflicts and get a helping hand when they need one.

Together we can help mitigate habitat loss, conserve biodiversity, and create areas in which humans and turtles can coexist. Humans and turtles alike benefit from a healthy environment and I'm so thrilled to continue to meet more citizen scientists, turtle lovers, and new friends this summer!

REPORT YOUR CONSERVATION ACTIONS!

Have you helped a turtle in some way? We'd love to hear how! Click here to tell us all about it!

<https://ontarioturtle.ca/get-involved/conservation-actions/>

News from our Education Coordinator

By Wendy Baggs, Education Coordinator

New to our Education Program!

Throw your birthday child a fun filled, turtle themed “shellabration” at the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre!!



Birthday party duration is scheduled for 2 hours. Parties can be booked during the day from 10-12 or 2-4 pm, and evenings from 6-8 pm with some flexibility. The fee is \$200.00 (\$50 deposit required) for 12 children, additional children \$15.00 up to maximum of 18. Contact Wendy at education@ontarioturtle.ca or 705-741-5000.

Party features:

- Meet our amazing live turtle ambassadors
- Turtle themed craft
- Special birthday song with “Stunkly” the stinkpot turtle
- Turtle themed activities
- Photo booth
- Become a “Turtle Trooper”
- Receive a personalized “Turtle Trooper” certificate
- Download free party invites for your “Shellabration”
- Spotted turtle costume shell to be worn by birthday child
- Picnic tables
- Shelters
- Amphitheatre area for gifts etc
- \$5.00 extra per child for turtle cookie decorating
- *Guests should dress for being outdoors*

Madison Wikston, Hotline & Education Services Representative

Working as the OTCC’s hotline and turtle taxi coordinator has been an extremely rewarding experience thus far. I love animals and have worked in wildlife conservation for years, focusing most of my career on fieldwork. Choosing a job that takes place indoors and at a desk was a little nerve wracking for me, but I couldn’t be happier for having made that decision. I spend most of my time at work talking people through how to best help injured turtles that they’ve found, as well as organizing rides for those turtles across

the province to our centre in Peterborough. As difficult as it is to see so many turtles come in with life threatening injuries, the one thing that I take away most from every shift at the OTCC is optimism. It is such a relief to work with so many empathetic, selfless volunteers, staff members, and of course community members. It’s easy to feel like you are sometimes alone in your passion for conservation, but I see firsthand everyday how many others are out there, actively helping wildlife and working towards the same goals as I am, and for that I am very grateful.



Madison with a Blanding's

Pictured above: Madison (right) talks to a finder of an injured turtle while Holly (left) fills in our records and documentation required by the MNRF, for turtles in our care.

Notes From the Field



Our field crew has been very busy so far this summer, fighting off bugs, ignoring stormy weather and the many obstacles that get in their way while searching for turtles that have been tagged with transmitters. Each member of our field crew will post blogs throughout the summer, and two are already posted. We hope you enjoy them! Keep checking for more! We also post blog notifications to our Facebook page.

- 1) The first blog by [Grace Wiley](#)
- 2) The second blog by [John Ning](#)

Pictured left to right on a rainy, cold day: Donnell Gasbarrini (Turtle Programs Manager), John Ning, Kelton Adderley-Heron (Team Lead), Grace Wiley, and April DeJong

Volunteer Spotlight!

Patrick White

By Diana Morrison, Administrator

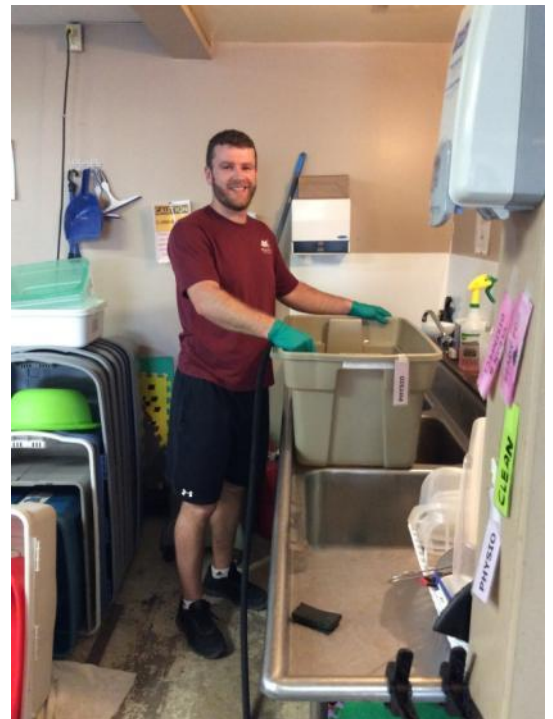


Patrick has been a volunteer with the OTCC for 1 1/2 years, and comes in each week to clean turtle habitats. He is also very gracious about coming in to fill in when we have open shifts, in fact he has been here so often that he's pretty sure he's cleaned pretty much every tank in our facility...and that's a lot!

Patrick has helped out with golf tournaments, and he's been a model...for our store merchandise! You may have seen him on our Facebook page.

When he's not here, he's worked as an Electrical Technician for 8 years and soon-to-be Radiation and Safety Technician. He lives in Peterborough and when he's not cleaning tanks or working, you might find him on a golf course or in a hockey arena. He's also traveled to a number of countries and scuba dives when he has the opportunity. In December he went to Guatemala and volunteered for a week working with native jungle species of animals such as monkeys, jaguars, parrots, macaws, toucans, etc. that were rescued from traffickers or were injured.

We really appreciate Patrick's willingness to help out when we're short on volunteers, and his reliability is commendable.



Thank you Patrick!

Upcoming Events

Twilight Turtle Gathering

Get out of the Rat Race...join the Turtle Pace!

Friday, July 12, from 5-8 pm

You are cordially invited to join us for a champagne reception at the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre in our beautiful outdoor education area. There will be a glass of champagne waiting for you, as you slip into the 'turtle pace'. We will have hors d'oeuvres, a fantastic silent auction, door prizes, a 50/50 draws, and more.



This event is for all ages! We're excited to announce that Christy Smith of [Face It](#) will be here to entertain the kids with her wonderful face painting and balloon creations!

There's so much to see and do. Explore our pathways and turtle ponds, tour our indoor facility and hospital, peruse our large merchandise selection in the gift shop, and of course meet Paddy! You can also meet our human ambassadors; our board members, staff and volunteers. We will have a cash bar for those who do not like bubbly, along with a Green Bog punch (non-alcoholic). Admission is \$20, and all proceeds go directly to the care of the turtles at our centre. Get your tickets now at <https://ontarioturtle.ca/product/twilight-turtle-gathering/>

If you would like to contribute toward the success of this event by donating item(s) for our silent auction, or sponsoring any aspect of the event, please email us at info@ontarioturtle.ca.

Help us to help turtles and Save the Heart of Ontario's Wetlands.

Different Ways to Donate!



GIFT SHOP: Our gift shop features some unique items, not always available online. Visit us at 4-1434 Chemong Rd., Selwyn to shop in person, or shop online at www.ontarioturtle.ca!

SAVE TURTLES AND TAXES BY DONATING SECURITIES TO OTCC

A donation of publicly traded securities such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds and segregated funds to OTCC may provide you with significant tax benefits, while conserving at-risk turtle populations.

When you transfer securities that are listed on a public stock exchange directly to OTCC you may not pay tax on capital gains. This may provide you with a tax saving of up to 50 percent and may be a greater tax savings than donating the cash proceeds from the sale of the securities. Donors also qualify for a charitable tax receipt based on the asset's fair market value. It's easy to give the gift of securities. Contact OTCC for more information and a transfer form at info@ontarioturtle.ca or 705-741-5000.

DONATE: your financial contributions mean we can continue with our work. Donate in person by cash, cheque, debit or credit card, or donate online at www.ontarioturtle.ca. We appreciate your support and partnership in the effort to save Ontario's turtles!

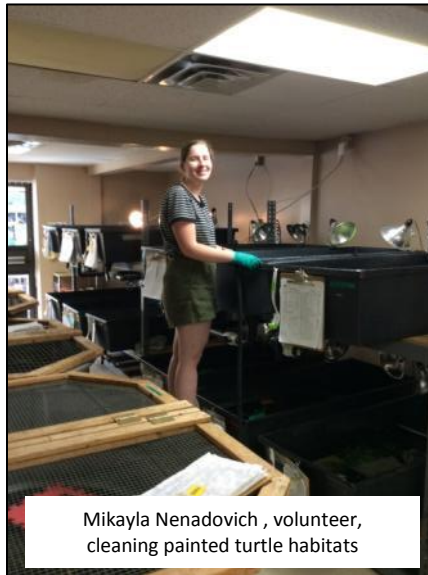
RIGHTCYCLE: Since enrolling in Kimberly Clark's recycle program, we have recycled over 500 pounds of disposable gloves that protect us and the turtles from the spread of infection and disease. As a conservation organization, we don't want to contribute to the problem of excessive waste in our landfills, or the garbage that finds its way into our ecosystems. We're thankful for the people who have volunteered to sponsor this program! If five more people were to contribute \$5.00 per month, the expense of this would be fully covered. If interested in helping with this program, please visit our website and click the donate button, where you'll have the option to give monthly, either by credit card or via your PayPal account.



A Day in the Life at the OTCC



Lorne Kelsey arrives to pick up & release a turtle that he and his wife rescued



Mikayla Nenadovich, volunteer, cleaning painted turtle habitats



Dr. Kristen Janke DMV and Amanda Klack, VT, checking charts of injured turtles



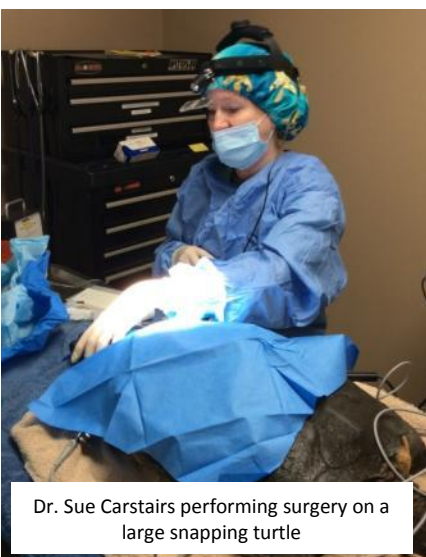
Ben Dixon, Vet Tech student, checking on hatchlings



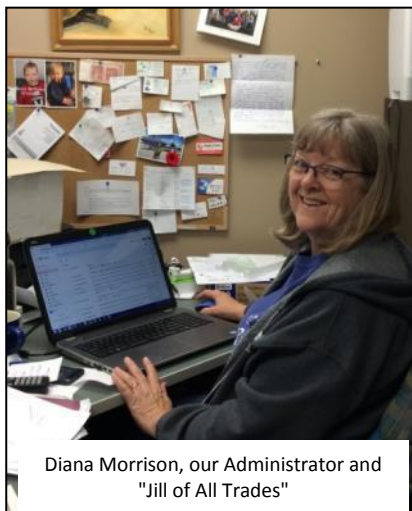
Joanna Hopkins, RVT, checks on an injured painted turtle



Volunteer Charlie McDonnell & Kristy Thompson, co-op student, clean hatchling tanks



Dr. Sue Carstairs performing surgery on a large snapping turtle



Diana Morrison, our Administrator and "Jill of All Trades"



Wendy Baggs, our Education Coordinator, & first sale of nest protector to Sylvia Detour