

What's Next? podcast

Sarah Spangler

[Snip-it's from Podcast] Sarah: I'm not even joking, most of what I did in that class was just break the glassware while I was washing it. Like you'd hear a glass crash and I swear the TA would look at me like, are you OK? Because I know that was you like is anything but is there acid all over the floor? And I would be like, oh, that. And it was always me...

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

[Introduction] Welcome to the What's Next? podcast. Let me just start off by saying. Not everyone has the same background. There is no roadmap for success. Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone. Leaning into your curiosities. It does suck when you grow up. We're all still figuring out who we are. You can't just sit back and be silent. Black lives matter. It is the little stuff that makes the biggest difference. Do you have another hour? [Laughs]

[Bouncy theme music fades.]

Cody: Hello, Beaver Nation, welcome to the What's Next? podcast. I'm your host, Cody Stover. Our guest today is a champion for wildlife and serves as the executive director of the Chintamani Wildlife Center, a wildlife rehabilitation hospital and education program, all in Corvallis, Oregon. She's a 2015 OSU grad with degrees in biology and international studies, and she also had minors in chemistry and anthropology. Sarah Spangler, thanks for joining us on the What's Next podcast.

Sarah: Yeah, thanks for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Cody: I think I speak for all the guests that we're excited to dive into the whole world of wildlife.

But maybe you can give us a little bit of background first. What kind of brought you to OSU in the first place?

Sarah Yeah, so I am an Oregon native. I grew up in Tigard, Oregon.

Cody: Tiger, Tiger.

Sarah: And I think Tiger Tigers. Yes. And I guess in high school, I always did pretty well academically, just to be honest about that. But I know once I started getting into the Ivy or AP classes, biology is the first class I ever failed a test in. And it was not I mean, it was a good experience, but I would say in the moment, like I need to drop this class, like that was, you know, like I ended up being valedictorian high school, but I definitely was one of the I don't know, looking back, it's a little bit sour because I definitely was avoiding things that were difficult.

But I will never forget after failing that test, our teacher, her name is Dr. Karen Harris, and she was like Berkeley in the sixties. She was always barefoot, actually in the classroom and would knit little sweaters for her Chihuahua named Pippin.

And she gathered she gathers around the ones who had failed and was like, So you guys didn't do very well on that test. And we were like, we know. And she was like, she was a cheerleader for us, you know?

But she was like, you're not stupid. If you weren't smart enough, you wouldn't have even qualified to be in this test. But I'm willing to bet that at least some of you you've never had to study before for any class, and that's probably been fine so far. But if you want to take this class, then you're going to have to learn how to study and actually really work hard. To get the grade, obviously, you're free to drop the class, but I also strongly suspect that if you drop that class, you'll eventually regret it. Like if you're not going to buckle down right now and learn how to work for hard things, then you might never get that.

So now in high school is a great time to risk something and try something, even though you're not sure that you're going to succeed.

And so in the end, I kept with the class. I think probably in that moment I took it as a dare of high school. If I drop that, she's going to be like I knew when I told you. And so I didn't drop the class. I ended up, like, really loving biology. I spent, like, my senior year. I think I only took science classes. And so when it went to choosing a university, I was looking at all the state schools for a lot of reasons. But OSU, I think, was the one where I was like, I think that's where the scientists go and that's where they are. And so that's where I end up going. And I was initially kind of like reluctant to declare a major I think it was a year and a half in before I actually bit the bullet, I guess, and became an actual biology major. And I had all these ideas about like maybe I want an anthropology or sociology degree or maybe I want an English degree. And I didn't necessarily want any of those things. But so along the way, I picked up kind of a cluster of miners and things like that. Yeah, I really enjoyed it. I think I wanted to be there for, like, the science research vibes that I got. And then pretty soon into my college career, I started taking like lab classes or research classes and really realizing I didn't like it. Like I took, um, there's this quantitative analysis class that you have to take to get that chem minor.

And I'm not even joking most of what I did in my classes just break the glassware while I was watching it, like you'd hear a glass crash. And I swear the TA would look at me like, are you OK? Because I know that was you like is anything cut, is there acid all over the floor?

Cody: They weren't even looking at other students.

Sarah: And it was always me and I was like, I'm sorry, me again.

So I didn't like the traditional biology tracks that I saw. And so I, I definitely really struggled toward the end to find. Like the career, I guess I was looking for, and it was I remember it being kind of scary to be like, I don't want to work in a lab. I don't think I want to do like research or field work. I don't want to be a doctor or a veterinarian, and I don't want to be a teacher. And I kind of think those are my options. So it was just like this. Where do I go from here?

Cody: Yeah, and I was in the College of Business. And so I'm one. I'm curious for your perspective, being in bio, do you feel like as you went through that Major, you said it was kind of scary to not know what to do? Does it feel like in those science fields, like a

lot of other folks kind of have this clearly defined vision of like, oh, yeah, I'm doing bio and then I'm going to become this doctor, like does everyone else, like, quote on quote, seem to have that vision?

Like, what was that like?

Sarah: I don't know. I mean, I at least I was a great student, like I did pretty well in all my classes and I had a decent GPA, but I feel like I they at least found things.

I think that career wise they were like, oh, I really like lab work, you know? And that's like I could see myself doing that or I can't wait to, like, be a teacher and I can, you know, like I can teach the world's next scientists or really I want to be a doctor. I want have I think students come in like having a career in mind as to why they're going to get the degree. And I just was so in love with the subjects. And so I don't know what the better way of doing it is. In the end, I found a career and it's all worked out so far. But it was like it was definitely. Just like overwhelming, bewildering, and I remember looking around being like I do really well in my classes, but other people are finding opportunities or internships or they have a research lab that they work with. And I just I remember feeling two things. One was I didn't have that and I felt like I should have something. And two, I didn't even want it. And so it was this weird, you know, I got to my fourth year halfway through and was like, so maybe a biology degree was not what I should have gotten. And I don't feel that way anymore because there are many things from my biology degree that I take with me into my job every day. But it was like panic inducing for sure. I ended up getting an internship, I guess, a step back. So when I was in school, I did the International Degree program that involves some kind of study abroad or international education. So I was very lucky. I got to do my internship in the Galapagos Islands.

And it was I'm not I don't even, like, downplay it when people are like, was that amazing? I never like, oh, it wasn't that cool? Like, it was OK. It was amazing just being able to be there for like three and a half months. It was awesome. It's like fueled my love for just like living on a tiny island with barely any amenities. The wildlife there is I mean, it's like it's just the coolest. The history of those islands, you know, like biologically and anthropologically are really interesting. And there's just a lot going on there, I think, for people who are interested in biology or evolution, like, it's just kind of like that's our

that's the place that we think about. And I remember coming back from that that trip of that internship and then being in a biology class from anthropology class. And you were like, oh, this guy Darwin and then these islands. And I was like, I'm homesick, like, you know. Yeah. And so it's interesting to contextualize it all. It was very real to me, I think, when we would talk about those things. So I did that internship and again, it was like one of those moments I was meeting with an advisor and he was like, so you're doing well in school. But like what else do you do other than class? And I was like, what do you mean? And he was like, OK, so like, normally you'd want like an internship or a relevant job or like do research or lab work or what do you are you going to do some of those things.

And I was like, I don't, do I have to. And he just it was a broken cloud. The famed biology deviser was like, you need to be more than a student. Like, you know, classes are good, your degree is important. But that's not really how you get jobs and that's not how you get opportunities.

Like your professors are not going to get you a job, but an internship is what would do it or some research experience or lab experience or honestly, anything.

You're not giving me a lot here with just like your coursework, your GPA is cool, but it's really not that impressive.

Anyone can have that GPA, which I was like, that's a little bit harsh. I'm feeling attacked.

It was like it was like Katherine Harris 2.0 where he was like, not good enough. Sorry, you're not it's not going to get. And I was like, OK, fine. And so that is what led me to go abroad and do the Galapagos thing.

Cody: And your like what now, Brock? I've been to the Galapagos now

Sarah: He was like, keep going you need to do more.

You want to be competitive. And so I was looking at other internships and I remember. And this is a thing I still have, it's like you read the job description and you're like, well, I've done 90 percent of the things, but not 100% so I probably shouldn't even apply. I

don't think they'll even want me, which is like now I'm like, oh, just apply. If you've done two percent of whatever, apply it and they'll just cut your application. It doesn't matter. So and I remember I was talking to friends who, you know, is Kyle. So as I was talking to a friend and I was like, you know, I might not apply. I don't think they would even hire me for the internship and tough love moment. Look me in the face and was like, we are in college. And the whole point is to, like, take opportunities and build a career out of them. And I honestly don't understand why you wouldn't apply for an internship. That is literally why we're here. And I was amazed and I was like, OK, I guess I will apply, and then I got inside me like, I don't really know if it's normal, but I think my life is consecutive.

Just a string of these moments of people who were like, you know, none of them were like, I hate you and I hope that you fail. They were like, I truly want you to succeed. But like. You know, you need to, like, work hard. You need to do something differently than you're doing it. And so that's true for every job I've had and every opportunity I've gotten. I'm always find myself talking to somebody and like with them trying to talk myself out of it, and then they'll catch me and be like, yeah, no, stop doing that. Just like buckle down. Just go ahead and do it. So and that's how I got the internship I think that led me to like my entire career was that one where he was like, you need to apply your stupid and honestly do so.

So, I applied and it was with a local kind of environmental nonprofit, and that was when I was still at school.

Cody: So you were doing this at the same time as finishing your degree or finishing studying?

Sarah: Yes, I listen to your podcast too much, so I know where you're headed with this, but and it but it overlap.

Cody: How do you know where I'm headed?

Sarah: You know how to clear. You also sent me those bullet points are very too sorry to ruin the match.

Cody: There's no format here. So we can go wherever it's true.

Sarah: And that's a whole that's my motto for my whole life and my whole career. We can go wherever, but it really overlaps. Like I, I would say, I was in college and then I started doing internships and then the internship that kind of transitioned into a job.

I started doing that like at the end of my junior year in college.

Cody: What organization was that with the internship?

Sarah: That was with the Corvallis Environmental Center. I was working on this project. It was like this nationwide energy efficiency competition. And so I started coordinating that. And then, yeah, I just had like a string of other nonprofit jobs. And I like the field of nonprofit in general, and I like for the environmental nonprofits that was just a little bit closer to my degree. And then also I still get to talk about science stuff which I like. I just don't like doing it in the lab where I'm constantly smashing beakers together basically and then eventually I got offered or I applied for a position and that was, again, not to like be a broken record. I almost didn't apply. I looked at the job posting. I was like, oh, I don't qualify. I'm not going to apply and to do fundraising actions in Chintamani wildlife center. And I was kind of interested in I ended up being like, you know, I don't think they would hire me.

It was a director level position. I didn't feel like I was there yet.

And then one of my friends.

Cody: I was going to say, who was the person this time?

Sarah: Her name's Heather.

She's still one of my good friends. And she was like, hey, I was talking about you with someone today. I was like, oh, no, why? And she was like, no, I was talking to, she's on the board at Chintamani wildlife center and she was asking like, do you know anybody who'd be good? We were kind of curious if someone's out there and you know a lot of people, Heather, who would you recommend? And she was like, actually, yeah, my

friend Sarah. I think she'd be perfect. Like, I you should definitely consider her like Marnie. You need to call her and set up a meeting. And so then I was like getting coffee with the board president and she was like, please apply. Like we're really interested to work with you and I that hadn't really happened necessarily before where they were like, we want you. And I was like, but why you know, I don't I don't necessarily always think that I'm like the most qualified or the best person for the job. But the best advice that I've ever had, the one that's gotten me all the jobs I've ever had was like just apply. Just apply. You never know. So if I applied and I got it and then I was doing fundraising for about eight months and then I eventually became the executive director, still at Chintamani.

Quick pause, not letting you talk.

Cody: That's an amazing story and interesting to hear how they're yeah.

Those people at different points of the way that are there to bump you to the next thing or as far as like when you're stepping into this role like you knew you loved bio, which is broad, right. Like encompasses plants, environment, wildlife. So when you went into this role, were you like, oh, yeah, wildlife like this is my thing. Like I want to soak up as much as possible. Or was it more of just like this seems like a cool opportunity. I'm interested to see like what the world of wildlife is.

Sarah: I think it was both. Yeah. The you know, the job I initially accepted was much more specific or narrow.

What I do now like being hired to do fundraising. First of all, it's not a job that everybody likes. There's something inherently, I think, like I have the scientific term for it is just icky. Like people are just like I just there's something icky about asking for money. And I feel like I'm begging I feel like people are going to be angry with me or hang up the phone. And so I got hired to do that. And I actually was interested because I was like a lot of I guess it was like a challenge. Like so many people are like, I would never fundraise. I would literally not enough money in the world. But I was interested. You know, I think there's a way to do fundraising that doesn't come across as like give me all your money. And in the bad ways, I think that are really off-putting to people are like cold calls for, you know, please donate or, you know, you make a donation that you

think is very generous and not thanked very well. And then the next time you hear from the organization, it's another it's Cody Silver who is like, hey, do you want to give us more? And you're like, No, Cody I don't

Cody: I haven't heard from you since the last one.

Sarah: Yeah. Like, you didn't even say thank you. Like, I don't, you know, why would I why would I do that? And so I was interested in how do you do fundraising where people feel appropriately thanked and feel like really as part of the team with the mission or whatever the work it is that you're doing their part of the solution. And then like many of our donors are, I think that they do feel that way like they're at . Usually they give before I even have to ask, and so that I have to go out of my way to make sure I talk to them because it's so you know, we're not there. They're an ATM. I have to have some kind of relationship.

And there are for the most part, they're great people that I want to talk to anyway all the time. Some of them are shy and are like, please don't reach out. I just really love you, but I want to love you from a distance so it's hard to do fundraising and I like that for the challenge. So immediately when I got to Chimanimani I was not doing like hands on animal care, I wasn't really around them, I kind of viewed it as like fundraising to some extent. It's like this technical formula and a process that you followed. Execute it well, then you'll have great results, which is like a science, your way of looking at what is what is frankly, like a very personal, like communications heavy, even psychology heavy practice.

So, you know, it was more about that to me, I think, at the beginning.

But then it's like inevitably when you're at a wildlife center every day, you just get sucked into it and you're just like, this is the coolest place in the world. And that's how I feel about Chimanimani. Like I can't even explain to people when they're like that must be such a nice place to work. Like, you know, it's like fresh air, good view and the birds. And I'm like, I don't think you understand. Like, I walk around kind of the grounds or whatever you want to call it. And there's like we've got our Raptor handlers and they just walk around with like a falcon sitting on their arm, like on their fist. And that's like day to day is like to walk up and be like, hey, Kathleen, how's Penny doing today? Penny will

then start like yelling at a turkey vulture. Penny is a bird by the way, our staff don't yell but Penny, the bird will start yelling at turkey vultures who are circling in the sky. And then we see some quail or some cottontails run across the grass. And it's just like a very and sometimes it's very serene. It's very peaceful to be outdoors and like really close to nature. And then on the flip side, we run a wildlife hospital. And so that is it's not really like a peaceful, serene environment. It's a clinical veterinary environment and it's also an emergency environment.

So we're constantly coordinating, you know, like wildlife rescues and admissions in the peak of our busy season will be admitting twenty new patients every day for like a two month period. And those accumulate. They stay with us. And so in the end, we end up serving upwards of two thousand patients per year. Last year, I think we did about twenty three hundred. Those are all kinds of animals. We are one of the kind of all species rehab centers, and so we admit all kinds of Raptor's, songbirds, other birds like herons or ducks or crows, we admit reptiles and amphibians, very, very few. They're not very common and then also mammals. So the smallest of those are like little brown bats. That's the actual species name. Oh, little brown bats. And then the largest would be like bobcats, foxes and beaver patients.

So we're really all over the map. There is never a dull moment. We were even joking earlier, like the we wear many hats phrase, but that's kind of what it is. It's when you operate an operation that's that big. I mean, two thousand animals is honestly, objectively a lot.

It's kind of like all hands on deck all the time. And so, you know, my job now, the executive director, it involves really everything. And it's usually whatever I'm doing is like, well, what's most critically needed right this moment.

So sometimes that means I've got to keep up on the finances and the fundraising and the administrative side of it. There's a bunch of HR stuff that I end up doing. There's grant writing and then there's like facilities coordination. So like, I literally sometimes will be like, OK, I'm going to take apart the washing machine. Same thing out pump has failed and some of that is nonprofit. We're trying to save money.

So if I can sort of diagnose the problem first, there's no sense in me paying someone a hundred bucks an hour or more to and figure it out, you know, I can kind of split that out. So I've picked up a lot of tricks along the way in terms of different, different things I'm good at that I never realized would be a job someday. And then sometimes, you know, what's most critically needed is like someone needs to step up in and help with a tour or help with a rescue or just whatever.

So my job is a lot of just whatever needs to happen. That's kind of what I jump in.

Cody: Hey, listeners, this podcast is proudly supported by your local Toyota dealers as the official vehicle of Oregon State Athletics, Toyota is a proud partner of Oregon State, both on and off the field and congratulates all OSU alumni for their accomplishments and achievements. Visit your local Toyota dealer or Toyota.com to find the perfect vehicle for you.

I wanted to say to his folks are listening to this, if you're in a safe place to do so, you can pull up their Instagram at CWC, Wildlife at CWC, Wildlife on Instagram and kind of look at some of these photos of the animals that Sarah is talking about or some of the stuff that goes on. There is a cool visual if you're if you're following along. But Sarah, maybe too.

So CWC has this rehabilitation function.

I guess my question is how do animals get to you in the first place, like to folks just find these animals that are in need or and bring them in? Or are you alerted to them? Talk me through some of those stories, I guess, of how animals get to you.

Sarah: Yeah, definitely, it's everybody's favorite question to ask. I think so.

It depends really on the situation. A lot of times we always encourage whoever's found the animal. Step one is give us a call and we'll help you figure out what's going on,

Cody: How broad is your circle too? Are these just animals in the greater Corvallis area or how big is that circle?

Sarah Oh, yeah. So we serve I think at this point it's like a six county area. That's our service area. And so we sort of stretch out looking like north, east, south and west, up north, there's, a center in Salem. And so that's kind of our cutoff point. About forty miles to the east, we stretch kind of over to the mountains like the Cascade Range. So we'll serve like Sweet Home. Some of those communities over there to the south, we serve into Lane County.

There's a Raptor rehab facility in Eugene. And so they and they do great raptor rehab and they're kind of a specialized center. So but like mammals and any non-raptor bird species we'll admit from Eugene. So that's anything that's not like basically an owl, hawk, eagle or falcon we admit those. And then we go out to the coast. And so we work a lot, kind of in conjunction with the other rehab centers in those areas. And we're coordinating transport between centers. If it's something that they specialize in, we send it to them. That is where you get the best care. And we work in coordination with the state level. So ODFW Department, Fish and Wildlife. And then at the federal level, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we work with them and they manage our permits. So to do any kind of wildlife rehab, we need permits at the state and or the federal level. So we have permits, States and the Feds to do rehab. And so that means that the general public. So just honestly, me as an individual or you as an individual, we wouldn't be allowed to do rehab of wildlife in our own home. And so what we are allowed to do, just as you know, the general public, is to get a wild animal, to establish or come to understand that needs help. And then we have twenty four hours to transport it to a permitted facility somewhere in the state. And so very often someone will find an injured wild animal. There's definitely like a language barrier there. They don't you know, wild animals do not understand that we're...

Cody: They don't know that you're there to help.

Sarah: Yeah, it's it. We're predators. And so we go to great lengths to minimize all kinds of stimuli. And so that looks like when you grab them, we'll say get a heavy towel, work gloves and get a towel and just kind of draped over them. Usually that's how you catch them safely. But also how you calm them down because when you when you remove all the stimuli, the visuals and basically we don't want them to see a lot here, a lot smell along, feel a lot.

They don't like being touched. They don't like being sniffed by a pet dog.

They don't like a child kind of running off and looking at them and touching them. We try to just prevent all of that stuff because that really contributes to stress and shock if they're in shock from some kind of traumatic injury. So we walk people through it. We advise them on how to transport because again, not always obvious, not always easy. So it's usually we'll say warm, dark and quiet. It's kind of the motto. So get them in some kind of box where they can breathe out of it. So maybe holes in it and then something that's warm, dark and quiet and then drive them to the center. So that's how I would say almost all of our admissions come to Chimanimani as somebody calls and they get instructions and they bring it themselves, there are the more rare cases. And usually it's when we're talking about some kind of predatory animal that might be a large raptor or might be a mammal. And those are the ones where we're like, you know, probably we don't want you to try to grab this bobcat by yourself or this eagle or whatever. Sometimes people are able to do that using, like, live traps or the animal's so, so injured and so messy that it really doesn't put up a fight. But there's definitely cases or just the circumstances are a little bit tricky. And so we'll get a call and then our staff, like there's these fun moments or they'll look at each other and be like, I think one of us needs to go out to rescue. And we don't do it often. If we did it for every single one of the two thousand every day.

We wouldn't ever have time to take care of the patients that are already in our care. But the most memorable ones, I think, this year have been boat rescues, which sounds probably more exciting than it was. But we get these calls and it's normally people who are out on the water for whatever reason. They're out fishing or just boating and they'll say, you know, I saw like this eagle this morning or yesterday morning and then I saw it again, it hadn't moved. It just looks something's weird.

Shouldn't have flown away. And we'll say probably. Probably it should. I'm there like you always like on the ground, just kind of like sitting there doesn't look something looks off and then you can just kind of tell them. And so they call and then we say we might ask for photos or videos or just kind of asking for other assessments over the phone. So I would encourage people to call and then say, yeah, like this. I'm trying to think. Back in February, I think we got a call about a pelican. It was a white pelican. They're beautiful birds. And this guy, his name is Tony. And he was like, there's this pelican.

I've seen it like three days in a row on the same little kind of tiny little island in the river. Something's weird, you know, it doesn't look like it can fly. I just feel like I should give you guys a call and our rehab or head rehab or Mary was like, yeah, that sounds kind of weird, but you said he's on an island in the middle of a river.

So, I mean, do you have a boat like how we're going to do this? He's like, yeah, yeah, I've got a boat we can get out there.

And so Mary called me and was like, hey, do you have time to go do a boat rescue?

And I was like, I would drop almost anything to go boat rescue. So we, like, hopped in the car. We get the carrier ready, we grab the nets and we head on down to the boat ramp and then, yeah, Tony, meet us there.

And he's like, all right, here's life jackets. The bird's right over there. It's like a five minute little boat ride down there. And I'll drive. And I mean, you guys are the experts. You guys, I guess, have the nets and you will grab them. And I'm looking at Mary, like this is you're the rehab. I'm just here for the for the fun of it and whatever support you need. And she's like, I got this. She's been doing it for like 60 years. So there's almost no situation where she's never seen it before. So we hop in the boat and we like we get down the river and we see the pelicans hasn't moved and I mean, like capturing the birds. It's never like very graceful. There's no wild animal or something else really wrong with them. Sure. Pick me up. I would love to come with you. You guys seem great. They're always like, I don't want to go with you. I'm already injured and they view us as a danger as a predator. Like, I don't want this big, scary human, especially three of us on the boat. You know, I don't want to go with you. That looks very scary. And so we find ways to capture them where they don't enjoy themselves more and they don't want more stress and more in shock. So sure enough, we like grab the pelican.

And then we had a quiet ride back to the car and then a quiet car ride back to the center. And so and yes, some rescues are like that. We had a couple this year, a cluster of like four or five bald eagles come in around July. And two of those eagles were, again, boat rescue.

So, yeah, it's always, you know, we try to take turns. And so different staff members have gone out on the rescues. But, yeah, it just kind of all kinds of stuff. Even the even like re-nesting is a thing we try to do as often as we can. So we've had to have like a power company come with a big bucket truck and lift our veterinarian up one hundred feet in the air to get a bald eagle back into the nest, just like all kinds of things. And, you know, I'm happy to have found this kind of work because it's exciting and it's varied enough for I'm not ever. Nothing is monotonous, everything is different every day, and I'm actually liking it that way.

And if I break glassware, that's fine. They don't put me near the glass anymore. So definitely exciting. Exciting stories just last night.

I know we admitted the bobcat's and we've got a couple this year and they come in, you know, tiny and cute. And then we do our best to we're really hands off with a species like that. And so when we release them, if we've done our jobs right, they're still you know, they grow up, we overwinter them and then they become like a mean, feisty scary. Don't go near that bobcat. She's going to scratch you. And that's what we like in our wildlife. We don't want to release animals that are very friendly, friendly bobcat, friendly raccoon, friendly skunk. These are all bad things. And that would be really a failure on our part if we were doing that.

Cody: Yeah, these are incredible stories that you're walking us through. And also it sounds like incredibly fulfilling work. And, yeah, you're taking your I mean, I guess I use the word intervening with this animal, but not because you like the ideal situation, right. Is that you humans never have to intervene with an animal. Right, like that. They are allowed to live as a wild animal. But you're helping the ones that need that extra bump. What is I guess the it's when you talk about re-nesting or releasing is the goal. And when they're in your care, the goal is always to get them back out into there where they should be as soon as possible.

Am I right in saying that? Or I guess what's kind of like the main steps you take to make sure that that's a good transition?

Sarah: Yeah, that's a good question. Our goal is always for the best possible outcome, that's kind of a cop out answer

Cody: Like are there are some areas where the animal is not ready to or can't go back into the wild. Does that happen?

Sarah: Definitely, yeah.

So and it's sometimes it's a tricky question to answer because it is it's a sad question to answer to, because ideally every single mission would result in the animal being successfully rehabilitated and then rereleased right back where it came from. And it goes on to live a happy life.

And of course, that's what we all hope for. But that's not always the case. So there are some instances when there's some kind of injury and then our vet or we have or will be assessing the animal.

And then we start getting into judgment call territory when we say, OK, well, here's what we know about the injury. And very often it's not the same as you going into the doctor or even you taking your pet into the doctor, because you can say he ate a whole tray of brownies. And so my dog. Yeah, that much. And the vet goes, that is a lot of chocolate. And we're going to have to pump his stomach or whatever. A bird comes into us and they're very stoic. They don't, you know, like a wild animal is never like a very injured exhibit, though. It's a great defense mechanism that they have. And so our staff have to kind of way our options. So we might say we're just definitely an injury here. There's definitely some kind of fracture. And then we think through and they do this pretty much intuitively at this point. You think through what kind of care it would need. So that's how long would it be in our care? How extensive is the injury? Like, what are the odds that he'll even recover?

Because with wild animals, there's not always a situation where we say, well, that wing didn't fully heal, but he'll survive because if we're talking about a migratory bird that really relies on fast flights, agility, and we say, well, I mean, it can get up in the air, but it can't. You know, we can't with good conscience.

I think really release that animal, knowing this, not going to survive very long in the wild. And so we're weighing on these options. And it does also come down to like how much

stress are we going to put that animal through as a result of trying to rehabilitate? At a certain point, we can't justify the amount of trauma that we're going to put it through in the hopes of saving it. There's no way for us to communicate that, you know, when you when you go in for surgery, your doctor said you don't says here's all the risks. Here's what you're going to experience. And there's no we don't get consent from the patients. There is no like, hey, hey, Eagle, do you want to do this? And he's like, you know what? It's going to be tough. But I, I know what I'm signing up for and I want it to him. It's not a situation that we're in. And so we sort of have to make those judgment calls that are incredibly difficult to make. We want every animal to survive and be released. We always do. But it's just not always what's in the cards. It's not always something that I think ethically makes any sense at all. So there are those sad cases. We also see patients that come in and they're there too habituated to humans. And so sometimes, like on the far end of the spectrum, they've been imprinted. So very often that means someone took a bird from the nest or took a baby mammal in hand, raised it and treat it like a pet. And so that is the case with some of our birds like Penny.

She's an American kestrel and she lives with us permanently because she came into another center and she's what's called an imprinted bird. And so she looks like every single natural instinct to like she's not a hunter. She sees big, big, scary birds that would be predators toward her. And she's just like, hey, what are you like, what's up?

And that's not normal behavior. She probably would never mate in the wild. She probably just wouldn't she just would not survive. And she definitely wouldn't thrive.

It's like a bittersweet ending because it's not the rehab and release that we hope for. But it is a good you know, those birds who are habituated and who are very comfortable being around people. They make the best education for kids because they we have tours and we do presentations. We take them off sites. They load up in a car and they're like the best education. Birds are ones who enthusiastically participate in basically the job we're asking them to do. And so they respond very well to training they enjoy or they choose. Our birds are trained and so they are forced to do anything, but they choose to interact with their trainers and they choose to participate in different enrichment activities that we provide.

It's the best solution for them because they get to have a job and we keep them busy.

We keep them healthy. And in turn, they educate at this point, like thousands of people every year, like you just kind of get so drawn in and you're like, this owl is the coolest thing ever. I've never seen them up close. And the owls just like staring right into my eyes, it's just captivating. That's kind of what we provide is that educational arm where people can kind of come judgment free. We don't care if you know anything about birds, but if you're curious about them and you have questions and you want to get to know more about them, then you come to a tour, book, a program and just see what happens.

Cody: And I hope to and thanks for sharing all this information, Chimanmani and the rescues that you do and the services that you provide, I hope that folks who are listening to who maybe are in that, as you said, like six county area surrounding greater Corvallis can now think of you all. If they if they weren't already when they see an animal that's injured or in a compromised position and know that that your resources there. But maybe before we wrap this up so and get into some of our little fun segments here at the end, if folks do want to get involved or they want to come visit or they want to donate or they want to support in some way, can they come visit you right now or what if things look like with COVID and everything?

Sarah: Yeah, so not to be too, too wordy here, we've operated our wildlife hospital every day. We've obviously adjusted staffing and different protocols.

So, like you would do a contact pick up for takeout or yourself

Cody: If you're bringing that with animal?

Sarah: Yeah, we do that with admissions. For tours, you can book online.

So there are always pre-booked now and we make sure that you're not overlapping.

I think probably the greatest opportunity I want to mention just on the podcast specifically is we do offer internships.

So if you're in college or you're just like an emerging professional, you're very curious about the world of working with wildlife, whether it's rehab or it's like on the education

side, working with our permanent resident ambassadors. We offer internships every single academic term and those aligned most closely with Oregon State's academic term. So if you're wanting to get really kind of in the weeds with it and take a deep dive, internships and then volunteer opportunities, you can learn about all of that on our website, which is just [Chimanimani wildlife.org](http://Chimanimani.wildlife.org).

Cody: And we'll make sure to post that in the show notes. So if anyone's interested in those opportunities are going and visiting or bringing in an animal, we'll post that link so you can find more on that. But thanks for sharing that, Sara.

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

Cody: Hey, listeners, sorry for the quick interruption here, the What's Next? podcast is brought to you by [OSU Next](#), an alumni network in partnership with the [Alumni Association](#). One way to stay connected with OSU is through the [Beaver Lodge](#). It's an online hub for bringing beavers together from around the world. That's over 200 thousand advocates, professionals and lifelong learners. Plus, the latest OSU events, news and activities sign up today by visiting osualum.com/BeaverLodge. All right, let's get back to it.

[Bouncy theme music fades.]

Cody: Ok, so this brings us to the famous final section of the What's Next? podcast, which is our fun segments.

Sarah: Is that fun and fun in quotes?

Cody: It'll be fun.

Sarah: I have fun with everything. Let's go.

Cody: This first one is one that we call give some and get some. So the premise here is imagine you just won ten thousand dollars. You get to donate half to a cause, charity, organization that you believe in or that you support. And then the other half you have to

use on something fun. So, Sara, what's your answer there to your first five thousand and your second five thousand? What would you do?

Sarah: I, of course, feel obligated to say I would give it to the Chimanimani wildlife center, but that seems like a fake answer, not because I wouldn't, but because it requires, like no thought and it's not revealing. OK for the fun part, for what I would spend on myself. Let's start there. I am desperately in need of new bedroom furniture.

So that's like the non glamorous answer.

Cody: If that's what you do for fun, you know, that's OK.

Sarah: I need it desperately. I'm not traveling very much right now. I'm not doing very many things. I joined a bowling league is not a 5000 dollar commitment.

Sarah: I'm the worst bowler, my average is like an 80, which is very bad.

Cody: I consider that good when I go.

Sarah: Oh okay. Then we're both great. But compared to the other folks in the league I'm not that good, For myself, yeah.

I mean I don't think I could drop five thousand on bedroom furniture. I probably would just try to save the rest of it.

Cody: Ok, that's responsible.

Sarah: Or I would buy Uggs.

I don't have a good answer, I don't I compulsively don't want to spend money. I think it's the nonprofit side of me rubbing off on you. You might need it. Your washing machine might break. So in terms of where you would give it, there is almost too many options.

I think this year my donations have been clustered with like different environmental climate groups and there's a million of those. And then different places like the NAACP, either a local chapter or like the broader or national ones. I would split that in some way.

Cody: Yeah, that's great. So this next one, if we jump in here, is called my quarantine thing. So this is during these COVID times, people are trying all different new things. Their routines have switched up. They're looking back nine, 10 months ago and realizing they're doing all new things now. So do you have, like, a thing that's been like your, I guess, quote on quote thing since covid started?

Sarah Um, it's been so long, I have had a series of things.

Cody: Now it's routine

Sarah: Well no, because I just switched like I get hooked on like a certain thing.

Like for a while it was like the best cinnamon roll recipe. And then I just dropped baking altogether.

So, I mean, my quarantine thing lately is probably books.

I think that's like I it's hard to find time to read sometimes, especially when there's like the ever-present allure of, like, my could just be scrolling through Instagram.

Why would I read a book when I said there are so many great things like Facebook or whatever or Tick-Tock which have gotten me so sucked into those.

Cody: Does Chimanimani have a Tic-Tock?

Sarah: We have a Tic-Tock. I mean when a new platform comes out, I jump on it like snag an account and then say we may never use this but..

Cody: We got the name.

Sarah: I'll be damned if someone else is going to take our name on that platform. So if the account exists. But there are no videos content. Stay tuned. I don't know. Yeah, I would say books and reading and trying to get back into that. I've been reading like Patrick Johnny's books lately, which mostly are around leadership. Those are tough books for me to read personally because it's impossible for me to read them without acknowledging that it's great criticism. I think that's the thing I didn't anticipate about my job is being in a leadership role so soon I was twenty four when I became executive director. And ever since I have been like, I'm really not probably the best leader I could be and I'm probably not the great leader that Chimanimani probably deserves. So I have been reading those. It's a little bit like medicine or something like that.

Cody: Yeah. So I mean that's, that's. Yeah that's awesome. So this next one, as you said, you've been listening to a couple of these episodes, so you know what, this is coming, but this is our forty five second trivia challenge focused around OSU trivia. All right.

So I'm going to start the timer here and then we will go with some OSU trivia. What is the name of the campus newspaper, OSU?

Sarah: The daily barometer.

Cody: Yeah.

Sarah: I'm actually going to be good at this.

Cody: What?

Sarah: I live in Corvallis.

Cody: What was OSU called before it was OSU?

Sarah: Oregon agricultural college

Cody: Boom. Benny Beaver has not always been the OSU mascot, name another one.

Sarah: Oh, shoot, yeah, pass, I don't know,

Cody: Name another OSU in the US.

Sarah: Oklahoma State University's.

Cody: Name a Corvallis zip code.

Sarah: Nine seven three three three or three three zero or three three one, three three nine is the post office. Bet you didn't think I'd know all that?

Cody: OSU has a multitude of cultural centers, name one.

Sarah: The Asian Pacific Islander.

Cody: That was right at the buzzer, but we'll give it to you. You're at five.

Sarah: Or the Lonnie B. Harris.

Ok, we could probably we hit the buzzer anyway. I think still living here.

Cody: I was going to say you're in Corvallis.

Sarah: Did I get them all? Oh, what's another mascot? Not Benny, but who?

Cody: There is actually, according to my research, there was briefly a coyote named Jimmy in 1893. That was very shortly.

Sarah: Cody nobody knows that. That's an unsubstantiated rumor.

Cody: You need to do your research on OSU. I had to do mine to know that.

And then the Aggies were actually the name since it was agricultural college. And then officially, I guess I think it was Benny Beaver before this, unofficially, but then officially in nineteen fifty two, we were full speed ahead with Benny, but.

Yes, I did my research to get these also, so for those listening, I didn't just know this. I wish I did.

Sarah: I did just know most of those though.

Cody: You are in the lead at five, our previous leader was at three.

So you blew it out of the water.

You're the first to get the zip code question, but you live in Corvallis.

Sarah: I live here so it's not fair you know what I mean? I mean, I'll take the victory. Sometimes you just need to win. I'm not doing good at bowling, so I will happily take this OSU trivia win.

Cody: The question is, will Sarah's five point forty five second trivia challenge? Leaderboards standing hold up. We'll have to see you have to tune into the next episode.

Sarah: I surely will.

Cody: Well, Sarah, we appreciate your time. So much for coming on and sharing all that's happening at Chimanmani to many folks who are listening. We hope that you visit, support and think of them if you have a wild animal in need. But yeah. Thanks so much for the time.

Sarah: Thank you, Cody. I had a blast.

Cody: And to everybody out there listening, we will see you next time on the what's the next podcast?

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

Cody: Hey, listeners, our goal at OSU next to the alumni association is to build community, and that includes creating connections and sharing these unique stories with the rest of the nation. If you found this episode of the What's Next? podcast valuable, you can help us achieve this goal by writing a quick review, leaving a rating and subscribing to the show in your preferred podcast player. We're thankful for your support.

[Bouncy theme music fades.]