This report represents WILDLIFE RESCUE AND REHABILITATION INC.'s responses to Charting Impact, a joint project of BBB Wise Giving Alliance, GuideStar USA Inc, and Independent Sector. Charting Impact uses five simple yet powerful questions to encourage strategic thinking and help organizations share concise information about their plans and progress toward impact.

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Mission:
To rescue, rehabilitate, and release native wildlife and to provide sanctuary, individualized care, and a voice for other animals in need.
1. What are we aiming to accomplish?

Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation’s goal is to relieve suffering and save lives of distressed animals and to be a voice for animal and habitat protection. We work with anyone who requests our services, mostly within Central Texas but often, during our 40 years, WRR has participated in rescue or advocacy efforts that are state or national in reach. Over 7,000 wild animals annually who are injured, orphaned, or ill are brought to our hospital at the sanctuary near Kendalia and the outreach facility in San Antonio for rehabilitation and eventual release once they are ready for autonomous lives in their natural habitats. Permanent care within our 212 acre sanctuary is provided to native and nonnative wildlife who cannot be released due to the nature of their physical conditions or disabilities resulting from lifetimes in exploitive and otherwise damaging circumstances (presently about 350 animals, about half of whom are primates and the rest an assortment of wild birds, mammals, and reptiles). And farmed animals as well (about 300) who have been abused or endangered. We also offer limited rescue, medical care, spay/neuter surgery, and adoption of companion animals whose lives are in jeopardy. All of these direct interventions will be offered for as long as they are needed. Our education, advocacy, and apprentice training components represent our efforts to contribute to societal changes leading toward more respectful relations with the nonhuman world. Environmental education is aimed at children but includes presentations to adults. It includes “Through Animals' Eyes” (a video and interactive program intended to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by wildlife in a human-dominated world and of ways to live more harmoniously with them) as well as natural history, and animal protection issues. Our advocacy initiatives are intended to work collaboratively with others on regulatory and legislative efforts and to publicize, through both traditional and social media, emergent problems involving human-wildlife conflict and their humane resolution. Our goals for the foreseeable future include continuing to increase our diverse expertise in wildlife housing and care—to further build already excellent, well-known and respected animal intervention programs. Additionally, each year the number of animals brought to WRR increases and with over 11,000 phone calls for assistance received annually from the San Antonio area the need for a larger facility is critical. In response, WRR is renovating a recently purchased 7,000 sq. ft. building that will allow us to care for more animals within the City. This will allow us to care for more animals, expand education and advocacy endeavors, and free up space for animals in our sanctuary hospital who need more intensive care.

2. What are our strategies for making this happen?

Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation is one of the oldest organizations of its kind in the country, having been in operation since 1977. As a result of longevity, a commitment from the beginning to be the best at what we do, and active collaborative and other engagement with individuals and organizations nationally we are often looked at as a model in our fields of expertise. In 1999, we received a million dollar gift which allowed us to buy 187 acres and build a sanctuary and rehabilitation center from the ground up; this allowed us to create first rate facilities which the ensuing years have seen us steadily modify and improve. In short, the pursuit of excellence in what we do is woven into our daily practice. Our strategy for enabling this way of operating to continue and strengthen focuses on the following areas: 1) attracting and retaining highly competent staff, including animal caretakers, vet techs, a veterinarian, and associated personnel; 2) developing the resource base to support adequate pay rates (our minimum wage is $12/hour, which is above average in this field and considered more than a living wage in our community) and benefits along with the materials, specialized diets, medications, and equipment needed to care for the animals; this is pursued through a comprehensive fund development program; and 3) developing the managerial and governing competence to guide and support these efforts. Additionally, we recognize that the nonprofit world has changed considerably over recent years and we strive to ensure that all dimensions of our work are responsive to those changes and in the best possible manner. For example, over the last year we have extensively revised the presentation and content of our quarterly newsletter. We have also initiated regular e-newsletters and are utilizing several social media platforms to keep our name and activities visible and attract additional involvement and online donations. We have always been a primary resource to area radio and TV news regarding issues that arise concerning animals, and we are working to strengthen and broaden these contacts. WRR has recently hired a highly qualified staff who have the appropriate abilities for implementation and to ensure that the efforts are effective. In essence, strategic pursuit and accomplishment of goals—whatever the goals and whichever the organization—always depends crucially on resource development, principally to assemble the right...
people and to enable them to work with sufficient funding and other support toward well-defined goals. Ongoing, it requires creating a working milieu with clear, shared values, and leadership that is responsive to external threats and opportunities and capable of building effective teams and getting from them the best they have to offer. Self-criticism, individually and organizationally, is always expected.

3. What are our organization's capabilities for doing this?

After almost four decades in operation, we have developed significant capacities for moving forward and accomplishing our goals thanks to having done good work that attracted loyal supporters in growing numbers over the years. The development of our physical infrastructure is the best example of this. The main operations are now on 212 acres in the Hill Country northwest of San Antonio and southwest of Austin, and a second rehab and drop-off facility was purchased in San Antonio. A one million dollar gift in 1999 allowed purchase of the first 187 acres and this was followed by $200,000 from another donor to purchase an adjacent 25 acres. Over the years following the first gift, we raised approximately $2.5m. for construction through grants and gifts. Similarly, the San Antonio location (though which almost all wildlife now come who need rehabilitation) was made possible when a long-time supporter asked about our greatest need and, when told, proceeded to fully fund it and has continued with annual contributions to its staffing, maintenance, and improvement. WRR is currently renovating a new, larger facility to meet the growing needs. The first answer to this question, then, is that our capabilities rest to a considerable extent on the strong bond that has developed between the organization and its supporters. For the future, we are working to widen and deepen this bond by additional efforts to motivate those who have the means to increase their level of support. In addition to general major donor cultivation we have an ongoing endowment campaign. Our current endowment is now at approximately $4 million. Since a loyal donor base is essential to our growth and stability we are planning carefully targeted acquisition efforts over the coming year. These will focus on mailings within Texas and gatherings hosted at member homes around the state to which people with large giving capacity but who are not members will be invited. To strengthen bonds with area members we also host small gatherings at the sanctuary which allow people to see how their help is used and to encourage additional help. Finally, we have relationships with several foundations, some of which provide substantial annual funding and others that can be counted on for less frequent but significant grants. Internal strengths, as mentioned above, reside in the quality of our staff. The animal care component has grown in numbers, tenure, and quality over recent years, and this has been key to developing high competence at what they do. WRR has recently hired an experienced administrative staff that are committed to enhancing the organizational capacity and infrastructure.

4. How will we know if we're making progress?

To recapitulate, our top goals are quality of animal care (including, of course, quality of animal caretakers), development of reliable financial resources, and expansion of education and advocacy components. Animal care indicators include: 1) tenure and competence of staff as monitored through regular performance evaluation, as strengthened through continuing education, and as made more effective through research and implementation of new treatment protocols; 2) animals' response to rehabilitative intervention as measured through survival-to-release rates, disease prevention and control, and creation of a treatment milieu that best serves the needs of myriad species through minimization of stress, specialized diets and handling, and optimization of natural behaviors while in captivity; and 3) creation of housing for animals in sanctuary that mimics as closely as possible natural conditions for their species, that allows and encourages normal species-specific behavior, and that incorporates enrichment and specialized care modalities that off-set as much as possible the inevitable diminishments of captive life. Fund development indicators: 1) steady growth in major givers and major gifts; 2) increasing numbers of members and annual donations; 3) growth of endowment and accomplishment of major capital goals (expanded hospital); 4) development of more diversity in ways of giving and more effective promotion; and 5) increased emphasis on planned giving vehicles, particularly bequests. Clearly, the best indicator collectively here will be the bottom line. Education and advocacy: WRR recently hired a Volunteer & Education Coordinator who will lead these efforts. This person will create and facilitate educational programs, and address issues and engage collaborations on behalf of advocacy initiatives. Comprehensive monitoring and assessment of our programs occurs through daily and weekly animal care staff meetings.
Similarly, fund development is monitored through weekly development team meetings, grant tracking reports and analysis of the revenue budget and its component categories. Annually, a day-long board-staff meeting is held in December for review, assessment, and planning. We are also an accredited member of the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries, which conducts in-depth assessment of administrative and program performance every four years along with interim reviews, and of the BBB Wise Giving Alliance.

5. What have and haven't we accomplished so far?

Wildlife Rescue’s direct care goals have been steadily and incrementally achieved over recent years. As mentioned, the new facility on 212 acres, along with opening the outreach/rehab center in San Antonio, have given the organization considerably more space, physically and programmatically, to augment and improve services. For example, sanctuary enclosures are usually 1+ acres and carefully situated so as to give animals more of what they require for satisfactory captive existence. Also, the current San Antonio facility, which is an hour or more closer to where most injured and orphaned wild animals are found, means that the animals receive almost immediate care and more timely disposition planning resulting in reduced suffering and mortality. Simultaneously, we have continuously upgraded the animal hospital and surgical suite, and the skills of staff who work there, so that more specialized treatments and better aftercare are possible. And new rehab enclosures tailored to the needs of incoming animals who are more prone to come carrying contagious diseases have enabled more effective quarantine. In short, forty years of wildlife rehabilitation with continuous leadership from the founder (to this day) and unrelenting emphasis on care quality and life-saving have allowed us to set and meet high standards. The next step will be an expanded hospital furnished with the best of modern equipment. Veterinary and animal care staff work with dozens of species and thousands of animals every year, and their ability to respond to the array of diagnoses and injuries with precision and species specific interventions will be further enhanced with these improvements. Additional support for these augmentations comes from development of our Apprentice Education & Training Program, which works with twenty-four college graduate apprentices annually, each of whom is here for a year. In addition to discharging what we consider our responsibility to the profession by passing on knowledge, these numbers allow intervention in more individualized and intensive ways, and their training promotes a continuous atmosphere of learning and growth within the organization. To develop dependable funding to support all this, along with our education/advocacy goals, and to attract large gifts as part of our capital and endowment campaigns, we have employed more skilled development staff. Over the last decade our budget has nearly doubled to a current level of approximately $2m./year; we have been able to meet this swift increase in expenses through more comprehensive and assiduous fundraising, but we recognize that this growth and our aspirations require that we focus continually on strengthening this component. We believe that, for the most part, we have the staff quality to continue our progress and the necessary confidence of our members and foundations to support it.