

# Wild Kids



## Learn With Wild Kids

by Amy Hubbert

**M**y name is Amy Hubbert. Last year, when I was in sixth grade, I did a project on the International Wolf Center for my Talented and Gifted (TAG) class.

I have loved animals for as long as I can remember. I didn't only love the animals that everyone else loved, but also the ones most people found scary or annoying, such as snakes, lizards and rodents. Lately, the animal I have been focusing on is the gray wolf.

Since a vacation to Yellowstone National Park in 2014, I had been extremely interested in wolves. I read books and articles about the reintroduc-

tion of gray wolves to Yellowstone in 1995, and I wrote a research paper—a persuasive essay about why wolves are good for the park—and gave a speech about it in school.

Our TAG assignment was to choose a charity or a non-profit organization and then make a brochure and a stop-motion video to support it. A stop-motion video is a video made out of a bunch of pictures put together to look like they are moving. After a lot of web surfing, I figured the International Wolf Center was the best choice for me. I already knew a little about it before the project, because my family had been planning a vacation

to Ely (where the Center is located) this summer. When I was ready to get started, I did a bunch of research and put it all together on my brochure. It didn't turn out the greatest, but my video turned out *much* better. It took me a while to put together my stop motion. I tried several approaches, including drawing on a whiteboard, which is what most other TAG students did. When that didn't work out, I tried printing pictures off the internet, cutting them out and putting them together. That looked great! When my video was finally done, my TAG teacher posted it on YouTube with all the other student videos. I thought I was finished, but I was wrong.

A few days later I stopped by the TAG room to drop off some papers. The TAG teacher, Mrs. Kurth, smiled and said she was just about to call for me over the intercom. She told me she had gotten an email from someone at the International Wolf Center, and that they had seen my video on YouTube. The email said they would like to interview me and see about putting my stop-motion video on their website! I was really excited. After a lot more emails between Mrs. Kurth, the International Wolf Center and my mom, it was settled that since I was coming to Ely this summer, I would talk to the International Wolf Center Program Director, Kelly Godfrey, in person then.

When the time finally came for us to visit the Center, I had an awesome time! Seeing the ambassador wolves in real life was amazing. (I had seen them before on the International Wolf Center's web cam.) I spent hours just watching them! I talked to Kelly and we arranged for me to write this article for the 2015 winter edition of *International Wolf* magazine about my project and my experience at the Center. I would definitely revisit the Center, too, if I had a chance, so I could see the wolves again.

To see my video, search "Amy - International Wolf Center" on YouTube. The video is posted by Suzanne Kurth.



The author, Amy Hubbert, visited the International Wolf Center last summer.



## Meet the Pack



**B**oltz came to the International Wolf Center in 2012 when he and Luna were very young pups. It is hard to believe that this spring Boltz will turn four years old! Boltz continues to be the lowest-ranking male in the pack, and he watches for chances to challenge the higher-ranking males. He takes any opportunity to do a stand over or a chin rest on Denali—and especially Aidan, the male pack leader—trying to show them he is confident and wants a more dominant rank in the pack. At this point, however, he has not been able to change his lower-ranking status. ■



## Notes from the Field

**W**ith spring just around the corner, wolf pups will be born into the packs. The breeding female in the pack will have her pups in a den. Dens can be dug below large rocks or among tree roots. Pups will stay with their mother in the den until 8-to-10 weeks of age, when they are moved to a rendezvous site—an area within the pack's territory. By autumn, the six-month-old pups should be able to travel with the adults as they move through their territory finding food.



## Vocabulary

**Den** A shelter, often a small cave or hole dug out of the ground, to protect the breeding female and her young pups from weather and other animals.

**Rendezvous site** An above-ground area, usually open and near water, where pups are taken when they are old enough to leave the birth den. The wolves gather there to sleep, play and eat. Wolves may move from one rendezvous site to the next until the pups are old enough to accompany the adults on their hunts and travels.

**Breeding pair** The male and the female in the pack who mate and produce offspring.

**Dominant** Having power, control and privilege over others within a social hierarchy.

**Rank** The relative social positions of animals in a pack. The more dominant animals are higher in rank. In a free-ranging wolf pack, the highest-ranking members are usually the parents. The older siblings are higher in rank than the pups of the current year. In a captive group of wolves, rank may be determined through competition and sometimes conflict.

**Submission** The act of acknowledging another animal's dominance or higher rank. Wolves do this in several ways including lying on their backs and exposing their bellies, lowering their tails (or tucking the tail between the legs), flattening their ears against their heads and assuming a lower body-position. Another submissive behavior is food begging.