The Duke Initiative for Non-invasive Neural Imaging seeks to discover what goes on in the minds of mouse lemurs. Stay tuned!

Do you have any crickets in your pocket?

I want to help cure Alzheimer’s!

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Leaping Forward: Diversifying the DLC’s Educational Opportunities

By Niki Barnett, Education Programs Manager/Development Officer

Here at the DLC we are constantly moving forward. We have made extraordinary leaps in our research programs, conservation efforts, and most recently, in our educational programming. This past year was extremely busy, but very exciting! Our tour program thrived. Over 18,000 visitors made their way to the Duke Lemur Center from all over the globe, 5,000 more than the previous record-breaking year! Not only did they come for tours, but also to partake in our wonderful new programming.

Last fall we piloted our Primates for Preschoolers programs. These programs enable children ages 3-5 a way to connect with lemurs in a new way. Our hands-on, parent-guided activities, focusing on lemur research and enrichment, provide children with a level of engagement that is usually lacking for this age group in our standard tours.

This summer, after more than a year of planning, we launched our Leaping Lemurs Summer Science Camp. Both sessions we offered quickly filled up, and were judged by campers and their parents, as well as participating DLC staff, to be a great success! Ranging from 4th graders from all over the country made their way to us to learn all about lemurs and the DLC! Each week-long session covered all aspects of the Lemur Center, from lemur husbandry and research at Duke to our conservation activities in Madagascar. The favorite activity of the campers proved to be the making and feeding out of aye-aye diets and enrichment. Next year we hope to expand on our camp program and offer similar camps for children of younger ages.

This summer we also started our Evening with the Experts seminar series. These classroom-based lectures give adults a way to delve deeper into what makes the Lemur Center so special. The seminars kicked off in July with Conservation Coordinator, Charlie Welch introducing people to the important conservation work being conducted in the SAVA region of Madagascar. In August, Lead Primate Technician Julie McKinney, talked about All things Aye-aye to a sold out crowd! Next up is Behavioral Management Coordinator, Meg Dye, and her presentation, Are you smarter than a lemur? This session will focus on how positive reinforcement training has enabled us to better manage our colony and to assist our researchers.

We are so excited about the response to our new programming! Stayed tuned for our winter classroom programs geared towards 6th-12th grade students.

I have known for the majority of my life that I wanted to study primates. Ever since I read a book by Jane Goodall as a child, I have been hooked. This group of animals never fail to amaze and fascinate me—how they can be like us in so many ways and at the same time teach us how we are unique. Duke is a natural choice for college. It is a very good place to be if, like me, you find yourself in love with primates. Unless you go to Madagascar itself, you will find more lemurs here than anywhere else in the world.

I knew immediately that I wanted to work at the Lemur Center. In fact, I landed a job as a tour guide the day before I even set foot on Duke’s campus. It has been a wonderful experience, seeing these amazing creatures every week and getting to share this passion with the Center’s visitors. I am also involved in other primate-related opportunities at Duke. I am the president of the primate conservation club Roots & Shoots, I work in a lab dealing with the Jane Goodall Institute’s chimpanzee data, and I am majoring in Evolutionary Anthropology. Duke and its lemurs have put me on my way to becoming a primatologist.

By Kyle Smith, Lemur Landing Work Study Student
Division of Fossil Primates News

By Gregg Gunnell, Director Division of Fossil Primates

I first went to the badlands in Wyoming in 1975. I was 20 years old with no clue what I wanted to do with my life. I returned to the Wyoming badlands this past summer for the 33rd time in 38 years. I sat on the top of Continental Divide, looking down through the Rocky Mountains for early area we worked was a critical route for early South Pass. And as I can. It is the history of discovery that brings us all back each summer – that and the thrill of discovery. As one of my close colleagues always reminds me, primates like to pick up shiny objects – why should humans be any different than our other primate relatives?

By studying hibernation, a Duke Lemur Center team is providing a window into why humans sleep. Observations of little-known primates, the dwarf lemurs (Cheirogaleus spp), both in captivity at the DLC (Cheirogaleus medius) and in the wild (Cheirogaleus sibreei) have revealed that these squirrel-sized nocturnal lemurs found only in Madagascar can get away with the deepest part of sleep during their winter hibernation season. The findings support the idea that sleep plays a role in regulating body temperature and metabolism. Despite decades of research, why we sleep is still a mystery. Theories range from conserving energy, to processing information and memories, to removing toxins, to things that build up when we’re awake. “If we spend nearly a third of our lives doing it, it must have some specific purpose,” said lead author Andrew Kryštál, a sleep researcher at Duke. One theory is that sleep helps regulate body temperature and metabolism. In a study that appeared September 4th in the journal PLOS ONE, researchers have found support for this idea in the fat-tailed dwarf lemur (Cheirogaleus medius). The closest genetic relative to humans it is known to hibernate, the fat-tailed dwarf lemur spends up to seven months each year in a physiological state known as torpor, where the regulation of body temperature stops and metabolism slows down. In torpor, these lemurs can drop their heart rate from 120 to a mere 6 beats per minute, and breathing slows to a crawl. Instead of maintaining a steady body temperature like most mammals, their bodies heat up and cool down with the temperature of the outside air, fluctuating as much as 25 degrees Celsius in a single day. For most mammals, a change in body temperature by more than a few degrees for any period of time would be life-threatening. But for the fat-tailed dwarf lemur, hibernation is a way to conserve energy during Madagascar’s long winter dry season, a time of year when food and water are in short supply.
Summer Intern Program

By Meg Dye, Student Project Coordinator/Animal Behavior and Enrichment Coordinator

On August 3, 2013 Duke Lemur Center staff, graduate students and faculty gathered for the 2nd Annual Intern Project Symposium. The Symposium marked the conclusion of a 10-week summer internship by 19 participants. The summer interns were both local and from out of state and represented a variety of Universities including UNC, Duke, NCsu, DePauw, Clemson, Tuskegee and George Washington University. During the 10 weeks with us the interns focused their time and projects with a particular area of choice including Data Research, Field Research, Husbandry, and Animal Training and Enrichment. In addition to learning and helping in a specific area, the interns came together every Tuesday to listen to a seminar presented by a department manager. The goal of the seminar series was to teach the interns about all aspects of the DLC and how all the departments are closely intertwined to achieve the DLC’s goals of research, education and conservation.

All of the 2013 summer interns did an excellent job contributing to the daily activities of the DLC as well as contributions to what we know about the animals that live here. We are already looking forward to our 2104 Summer Intern Program! Upon the conclusion of the summer internship program, we were pleased to hear positive feedback from the participants, including the following:

The Husbandry Internship definitely exceeded my expectations! I was truly amazed at how much animal contact we were given as husbandry interns, and I loved that I saw the animals everyday.

-Jamie So, Husbandry Intern

As far as getting to spend time with the animals, learn a lot about the facility, and actually do research all the expectations I had about the internship were definitely met...

Overall I would definitely recommend the internship to any of my friends interested in primatology! I am going to miss the place...

-Arthur Juliani, Data Intern

I enjoyed this internship so much, it was genuinely sad to leave! I love telling people about it and about lemurs!

-I really enjoyed meeting everyone and learning about the amazing work that everyone has done and is doing.

-Katrina Keith-Hillhouse, Field Research Intern

I have nothing but compliments and praises for this internship! It was absolutely more than I had expected and I love every minute. To be able to work so close with the lemurs and do so much for them, as well as working with the staff was just amazing.

-Holly Noel, Husbandry Intern

I think everything this summer was fantastic, I got more from this experience than I could have expected. The Summer Seminar series was great; I loved learning about the different components of the DLC... I had no idea just how involved the DLC is in Madagascar.

-Michelle Stiles, Animal Training and Enrichment Intern

Favorite Species:

Sifakas. The comical way they leap around never ceases to make me laugh.

Why you volunteer at the DLC: I give regular tours once a week and also work in the veterinary department, currently on a research project regarding the mortality of the Coquerel’s sifakas.

Length of volunteering: I have been volunteering since the fall of 2009.

Volunteer role at the DLC: I am a Technician Assistant (TA) so I help the primate technicians with whatever tasks need to be done on a given day.

What do you do for a living? I am currently a junior at NC State University majoring in Biological Sciences.

Length of volunteering: I began volunteering in the fall of 2009.

Volunteer role at the DLC: I give regular tours once a week and also work in the veterinary department, currently on a research project regarding the mortality of the Coquerel’s sifakas.

My volunteer day at the Lemur Center is often the happiest day of my week. I love introducing people, young and old, to these amazing creatures and telling the tales of their native home in Madagascar. Not only do these beautiful primates quickly capture people’s hearts and imagination with their sweet faces, quirky jumps and playful antics, but the world they come from is truly fascinating as well, the perfect image of a land filled with wonder that we desperately need to protect. It is a rare profession when one can both fill people with joy and excitement, while still educating and promoting the conservation of our most vulnerable lands. I’ve been fascinated by lemurs since I first learned about them in my college evolution class, and to be able to work with them on a daily basis, live and in the flesh, is more than I could have ever hoped for.

Favorite species: Coquerel’s sifaka

What do you do for a living? Geriatric Physician

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FENCING IN THE FUTURE

By Greg Dye, Operations Manager

Have you ever heard the saying, “good fences make for good neighbors”? This is especially true when your neighbor houses over 250 lemurs, as many as 80 of which might be free ranging in forest enclosures right next door. Since May, the Lemur Center has been slowly replacing nearly three miles of fence line installed in the late 1980s. All new fencing is being buried one foot in the ground to keep raccoons and other animals out, which might have developed a taste for monkey chow over the years, outside our boundaries.

Why so much fencing? First off, there is the brand new eight foot high perimeter fence surrounding the entire 70 acre Lemur Center campus (replacing the old six foot high fence). Then there are the entirely separate fence lines (all six feet high and topped with electronet to deter lemurs from climbing) used to establish the nine free ranging lemurs enclosures in Duke Forest. Not all this fencing is being replaced, but over a mile of it is. Even more fencing is needed where two lemur enclosures are adjacent.

In this case, two parallel fence lines are constructed resulting in a ten-yard wide “no lemurs land” corridor between each enclosure to prevent lemur neighbors from fighting through the wire.

These forested enclosures allow the lemurs to live nearly “wild” with their families and social groups in acres of Duke Forest. The ability for the DLC to house a large portion of the lemur collection in this way is another feature that makes the Center so unique and valuable to its researchers and guests. These enclosures encourage natural behaviors such as foraging and climbing and allow researchers the rare opportunity to observe and collect data that can otherwise only be collected in the forests of Madagascar. For our guests, touring these enclosures and being able to get within a few feet of the lemurs can be life-changing.

In August, DLC Director, Anne Yoder, Duke’s Director of Research Communications, Karl Bates; and myself set off for Madagascar for a whirlwind two weeks: first to tour DLC conservation projects in the SAVA region, then to attend the Prosimian Congress in Ranomafana National Park at the nearly opposite end of the country (see Dr Yoder’s article this issue). After the seemingly endless series of flights to Madagascar from Durham, we checked into our hotel beds in the capital of Antananarivo (Tana) at midnight, only to be rudely awaken just a few hours later to get back on the road to catch an early morning flight to Tana’s airport. No time for jetlag!

After a chaotic check-in at the Tana airport, and 40 minute flight, we were met in Tamatave by Madagascar Fauna Group (MFG) project manager Maya Moore, and in the late afternoon we met the DLC long-term conservation project at Parc Ivoloina 12 Kilometers north of town. Andrea Katz and I began working at Ivoloina in 1987, as part of a collaboration between the Duke Primate Center and Madagascar’s department of Water and Forests. Over the years, Ivoloina was developed into a multi-faceted conservation project that is now managed by the MFG, of which the DLC is a founding and managing level member. The conservation work at Ivoloina continues to grow and evolve under Maya Moore’s capable guidance. While at Ivoloina, we visited the Environmental Education Center, where Malagasy students are introduced to Madagascar’s unique natural world. We toured the tree nursery and visited the educational facilities, including the visitor center- with meeting space, a laboratory, and a dormitory. And of course we visited the fabulous zoo with its beautiful displays of lemurs and other creatures of the eastern rainforest. Anne got the opportunity to meet many of the capable Malagasy staff who make Ivoloina such a successful conservation initiative. At the conclusion of our tour, we traveled to Sambava, where we were triple cheek kisses galore!, and Marie Helene had us planting ceremonial trees, touring her new environmental interpretive center, and walking around in her forest of planted native trees.

We look forward to future collaborations with Marie Helene!

In typical Malagasy VIP fashion, as we visited Ivoloina, our baggage, airline tickets, and passports were whisked away to the airport ahead of us, so that we could prolong our stay in the gardens. We arrived at the airport to checked baggage, freshly issued boarding passes, and, thankfully, our passports! We boarded the 15 seater Twin Otter aircraft and were on our way back to Tana. The flight went as smoothly as such a small plane can travel – perhaps thanks to the woman in the front row who had her hands clasped in prayer, with eyes cast skyward, for the entire flight.

Visiting both Ivoloina, and especially our SAVA project, were very important for Anne, as DLC director. No matter how many photos you see, or descriptions you read, there is absolutely no substitute for seeing it in person. Erik, Lanto and I certainly enjoyed showing off the various project activities. Karl Bates will be writing articles about the DLC’s conservation efforts in Madagascar, for both Duke Magazine, and other publications, so keep an eye out for alerts about those upcoming articles!

SAVA Conservation Project

Director Anne Yoder Visits DLC’s SAVA Conservation Project

By Charlie Welch, Conservation Coordinator

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**Save the Date**

**Travel to Madagascar with an Expert!**

Duke Lemur Center is proud to be partnering with IMAX Corporation and Warner Bros. Studios to promote the release of Island of Lemurs: Madagascar, the incredible true story of nature’s greatest explorers – lemurs! Captured with IMAX® 3D cameras, the film takes audiences on a spectacular journey to the remote and wondrous world of Madagascar. Lemurs arrived there as castaways millions of years ago and evolved into hundreds of diverse species but are now highly endangered. Join trailblazing scientist Patricia Wright on her lifelong mission to help these strange and adorable creatures survive in the modern world. Narrated by Academy Award® winner Morgan Freeman, Island of Lemurs: Madagascar opens in select IMAX theatres April 4, 2014. Stay tuned for more updates!

**Looking Ahead to Breeding Season**

By Andrea Katz, Curator

As the days get shorter and the nights get cooler, our thoughts turn to the upcoming breeding season for the diurnal lemur species (except sifaka, whose breeding season has just ended). This fall-winter season, 11 breeding pairs are planned – crowned lemurs, blue-eyed black lemurs, mongoose lemurs, ringtailed lemurs and ruffed lemurs. Based on past breeding histories, we’re confident that nine of these pairs will be successful and produce healthy infants in the spring, while the other two pairs (mongoose lemurs Guadalupe and Pedro and crowned lemurs Set and Ike) include aged animals that may be post-reproductive.

We carefully consider which pairs will breed in a given year. It’s a nearly continuous process, based on both the DLC’s animal collection plan and research needs, as well as the needs of the entire U.S. population for each species. The overriding goal is the same – to contribute to the survival of lemurs through captive management that promotes healthy, genetically diverse populations that are sustainable for lemur generations to come.

We can’t breed every lemur every year. Currently we have nearly 50 potentially reproductive females in the diurnal lemurs, and about another 40 in the nocturnal species. If every female gave birth annually, the DLC colony would double from its current 260 animals to about 500 animals in two quick years! Definitely not sustainable in terms of housing, staff or our operating budget, as we strive to provide the best possible care to every animal in our charge. Nor is there enough quality space in all U.S. zoos combined to maintain lemur population sizes on this scale.

So how do we decide which pairs will breed and which females will be on contraception? We work closely with the national Species Survival Programs and other managed programs of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), to evaluate each previous year’s breeding success across all participating institutions. Target population sizes are established based on space and resources; these are re-evaluated every five years through a comprehensive survey. Then we determine how many pairs should breed, to achieve or maintain the target population size for each species. Best pairings are determined for demographics and to maximize genetic diversity, leading to recommendations for transfers between institutions to establish new breeding pairs. Additional factors such as an institution’s husbandry experience and success in breeding and birth management are also considered. And as you might expect, the DLC gets more breeding recommendations, and produces more lemur infants, than any other institution in the U.S.

So here’s to another fall breeding season, and all those infants to come in the spring!

**ISLAND OF LEMURS: MADAGASCAR**

Duke Lemur Center is proud to be partnering with IMAX Corporation and Warner Bros. Studios to promote the release of Island of Lemurs: Madagascar, the incredible true story of nature’s greatest explorers – lemurs! Captured with IMAX® 3D cameras, the film takes audiences on a spectacular journey to the remote and wondrous world of Madagascar. Lemurs arrived there as castaways millions of years ago and evolved into hundreds of diverse species but are now highly endangered. Join trailblazing scientist Patricia Wright on her lifelong mission to help these strange and adorable creatures survive in the modern world. Narrated by Academy Award® winner Morgan Freeman, Island of Lemurs: Madagascar opens in select IMAX theatres April 4, 2014. Stay tuned for more updates!

**Duke Alumni Travel and Education** has just announced they will be organizing a tour of Madagascar for 11 - 25 October, 2014. The tour will be led by DLC Conservation Coordinator and Madagascar specialist Charlie Welch. Itinerary details available soon on the Lemur Center and Duke Alumni travel websites. < http://www.dukealumni.com/learn-travel/wildlife-madagascar-2014>. Note: Duke Alumni tours are open to all, past attendance at Duke is not required!

**TOTAL INFANTS**

2013 birth season: 25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Number (Average)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fat tailed dwarf</td>
<td>3 (3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crowned lemurs</td>
<td>3 (2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue eyed lemurs</td>
<td>3 (2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ring-tailed lemurs</td>
<td>4 (2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mouse lemurs</td>
<td>5 (2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sifaka</td>
<td>3 (2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>black and white ruffed</td>
<td>4 (3.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What’s a Lemur Baby Weigh?
By Sarah Zehr, DLC Data Manager

With the recent spate of spring births, I thought it was time to calculate the average birth weight for each of the DLC’s 11 breeding species so that we can better monitor the little guys when they’re born. Being science-minded out here, we track weight in grams rather than pounds or ounces. But I realize that most of you are American-minded and therefore think in pounds or ounces rather than grams. So I thought I’d give you an idea of the infant sizes by comparing them to a few everyday objects that weigh roughly the same amount.

Infants pictured are as follows: 1) Fat-tailed dwarf lemur. 2) Aye-aye. 3) Mouse lemur. 4) Mongoose lemur. 5) Ring-tailed lemur. 6) Pygmy slow lorises. 7) Blue-eyed black lemur. 8) Black and white ruffed lemur. 9) Coquerel’s sifaka. 10) Crowned lemur. 11) Red-ruffed lemur.

Duke Lemur Center teams with “Mister Lemur” author to raise money for SAVA
By Hans Hartvickson

During the week of October 14-21, the publisher of the award-winning “Mister Lemur” books will donate $5 for each book sold on www.lemurstore.com to the Duke Lemur Center’s SAVA conservation project. This money will help fund SAVA’s silky sifaka conservation efforts in and around Marojejy National Park.

Mister Lemur stories combine concepts from science, math and geography in a fun, rhyming context. They are written by Stanford-educated authors Hans and Jen Hartvickson, who fell in love with lemurs while on a 2006 trip to Madagascar. Hans and Jen now travel the country full-time getting elementary students excited about reading, writing and lemurs!

* “Mister Lemur’s Train of Thought”, a 151-page collection of Shel Silverstein-esque rhymes, won the gold medal for children’s poetry in the 2011 Moonbeam Awards. It is ideal for grades two through five.

* “It Will Take a Lot of Us to Lift a Hippopotamus” features Mister Lemur, Silky and their friends learning a humorous lesson about teamwork while trying to rescue a hippo on a safari. Well-suited to students in grade two and below.

* Get a jump on your Christmas shopping with “The Santa Claus Alarm”, by Mister Lemur’s little sister. The book features an adorable female hero in her quest to finally meet Santa Claus. Along the way, she learns that giving can be just as rewarding as receiving. For grades two and below.

You can learn more about each of these books, and support silky sifaka conservation, by visiting www.lemurstore.com by October 21, 2013.
It’s a Ruffed Life: A Tale of Two Varecia Groups

By David Haring, Registrar/Photographer

I hate to anthropomorphize when it comes to our lemurs, but sometimes it’s hard not to do so when comparing the fortunes of some of our larger social groups. Just like human families, some lemur social groups seem to thrive and prosper, while others just can’t seem to catch a break, and slowly decline and fade away. Consider the black and white ruffed lemur group led by Kizzy (free ranging in NHE 6) compared to Carina’s red ruffed lemur group (free ranging in NHE 4). There are a lot of similarities between the groups not only had they the Ruffed Lemur SSP given recommendations recently for the adult pairs in each group to breed, but both groups also suffered the recent loss of their breeding males. Kizzy’s mate, the legendary Amor, died 17 May 2013 at the ripe old age of 32. Carina’s mate, the respected and admired Alphard, died in March, 2013 at the age of 24. Strangely enough, both males were well into adulthood before they produced their first offspring. The first of Alphard’s five offspring (all with Carina) was born in 2008, and Amor’s first of eight (all with Kizzy) was born in May, 2009.

In May, 2011 Carina’s group was at its peak: Carina had just given birth to twin females Cordelia and Pandora, yet still their ill fortunes continued! Just over a month after Cordelia’s illness, her free-ranging days with the group were definitely over. Now Carina’s group had dwindled to three. Carina, Avior and Pandora, yet still their ill fortunes continued! Just over a month after Cordelia’s illness, her free-ranging days with the group were definitely over.

After the death of their patriarch, Carina’s group luck continued to decline. One glorious April day this spring, technicians grew concerned when Cordelia did not show up at feeding time. A search party finally located her close to the top of mature lobolly pine, barely visible (she was at least 80 feet above the ground!). Concern mounted over the next two days when Cordelia refused to budge an inch. In the decades that lemurs have free-ranged at the DLC, this particular predicament had never occurred: a forest dwelling lemur getting stuck in (or for some reason refusing to descend) a tree! There were basically two possibilities: she had a serious injury that prevented her from climbing down, or she was seriously ill. Finally, 72 hours after she was first reported missing, the DLC enlisted the climbing skills of a local tree service, and, as a large contingent of the staff watched breathlessly, a heroic tree climber (our hero for the day!) climbed the 80 feet to where Cordelia was resting, and gathered what appeared to be an exceptionally grateful lemur into his arms, and, without a sign of protest from the lemur (in fact she started licking the sweat off his neck half way down!), carried her firmly to the ground. Cordelia was rushed to the Vet office and although she was dehydrated, and diagnosed with a severe case of vestibular syndrome (which made her very dizzy and unable to climb), she was surprisingly strong, and in a few days was well on her way to recovery--although she still had a bit of a lingering head tilt, and her free-ranging days with the group were definitely over.

Now Carina’s group had dwindled to three. Carina, Avior and Pandora, yet still their ill fortunes continued! Just over a month after Cordelia’s illness, her big brother Avior decided he was going to go on a Walkabout. We are not sure how he escaped from NHE 4, but early on a Friday morning before the Memorial Day weekend, a passing motorist saw him dashing across Cornwallis Road, a quarter mile from the Lemur Center, and, thankfully, reported the lemur sighting to the local authorities. Alerted, the Lemur Center staff sprang into action. Special Thanks to the Sinnot-Armstrong family for being the DLC’s first Adopt a Lemur Champions!

ADOPT A LEMUR RAISED: $29,811
ADOPTED LEMURS: 180

Adopt a Lemur Champions!
Leesville Road Middle School
is the Duke Lemur Center. A language arts teacher, I’ve planned field trips for my students to visit Duke Lemur Center for the past 17 years. I’ve watched as new buildings have been constructed, animals have been added or (sadly) lost, and I’ve seen new tour ideas develop and grow. I’ve always been in awe of the rich resource that is the Lemur Center. As research is an important part of the 7th grade Language Arts curriculum, my students each select a lemur to research and write about. After completing this task, they then create 3-D models of their particular lemur, and the unit culminates with a visit to the Duke Lemur Center. The tour provides students with a deeper understanding of lemurs and their plight, but it also makes them aware of how lucky they are to have the Lemur Center close by. After all, where else besides Madagascar can you go in this world to see such a collection of rare and precious lemurs? What other groups are working so pointedly with Madagascar to aid and protect these endangered or vulnerable creatures? It has been my pleasure to introduce seventh graders each year to the invaluable resource that is the Duke Lemur Center.

Carol C. Brown, NBCT, Language Arts 
Leesville Road Middle School

It’s a strange but true phenomenon. All too often we overlook wonderful resources that are in our own communities, and I believe that one of those resources is the Duke Lemur Center. As a language arts teacher, I’ve planned field trips for my students to visit Duke Lemur Center for the past 17 years. I’ve watched as new buildings have been constructed, animals have been added or (sadly) lost, and I’ve seen new tour ideas develop and grow. I’ve always been in awe of the rich resource that is the Lemur Center. As research is an important part of the 7th grade Language Arts curriculum, my students each select a lemur to research and write about. After completing this task, they then create 3-D models of their particular lemur, and the unit culminates with a visit to the Duke Lemur Center. The tour provides students with a deeper understanding of lemurs and their plight, but it also makes them aware of how lucky they are to have the Lemur Center close by. After all, where else besides Madagascar can you go in this world to see such a collection of rare and precious lemurs? What other groups are working so pointedly with Madagascar to aid and protect these endangered or vulnerable creatures? It has been my pleasure to introduce seventh graders each year to the invaluable resource that is the Duke Lemur Center.

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