

WHERE **SCIENCE****HISTORY****AND****ART** CONNECT

To: Raven Hill friends

From: Cheri

Date: April 5, 2025

Re: Destination Animal Room

Most people are fascinated with animals because they offer a direct connection to the natural world. They capture our imagination, spark empathy, and reflect both the wildness and the wonder of life itself. From the tiniest insects to majestic predators, animals remind us that we're part of a much larger web of life. Their behaviors, adaptations, and relationships open doors to understanding biology, ecosystems, and even us.

Turtle skeleton



A turtle's shell is part of their skeleton. They cannot crawl out and walk around in their long underwear like in the cartoons.

Checkers the corn snake



Hands down, Checkers is the favorite resident in the Animal Room.

Spike the bearded dragon



Spike is so tolerant and loving with visitors of all ages.

At Raven Hill, the Animal Room is a perfect example of how this natural fascination can become a powerful learning tool. The Center is much more than an orphanage for pet store animals who need a home. It's also a living classroom where curiosity comes to life. Visitors don't just see animals—they experience them. They observe how snakes “rib walk,” how some lizards have a third “solar” eye that reacts to shadows and protects the lizard from flying predators and other threats from above. They learn where animals naturally live, what they eat and how big they get or small they stay. The room is full of stories that cross disciplines from the sciences of biology, anatomy & ecology; the history of human-animal relationships, pet store beginnings and animal preservation over time; and the art of colors, patterns, textures & movement.

The Animal Room at Raven Hill is home to more than just living creatures—it also features animals preserved through taxidermy, tanned hides, skeletal displays, and other forms of scientific and cultural preservation. These specimens allow visitors to explore the structure, function, and adaptations of animals in ways that living exhibits alone can't offer. Together, the live and preserved animals tell a fuller story of the animal kingdom—past and present, inside and out.

The fascination with Raven Hill's animals goes beyond entertainment. It's about engagement aligning perfectly with Raven Hill's mission to provide hands-on learning that connects science, history, and art. In the Animal Room, both living and preserved animals are used to spark curiosity and build meaningful connections, helping visitors gain a deeper understanding of the natural world.

When exploring the Animal Room at Raven Hill visitors embrace wonder everywhere and learning comes alive through sight and touch. A child's moment of wonder may be brief, but it can leave an impression that lasts a lifetime.

The perfect python teaching team!



Leroy the royal python hangs out around a visitor's neck, while Buddha the reticulated python's skin stretches out 20 feet on the wall. Believe it or not, Leroy is over 29 years old and Buddha was only half grown, when it got pneumonia & died at the ripe old age of 11 years.

Hammerhead shark



The hammerhead shark helps visitors understand the difference between real, living and once living.

Leo the leopard gecko



It's true. You can look in one ear AND see out the other!

This is a great time to visit the Center. Raven Hill is open weekends—noon to 4pm on Saturdays; 2pm to 4pm on Sundays, as well as holidays and other times by appointment. Families and field trip groups can visit and explore both indoors and outside or book a science, history or art class for any age and ability. The Center is a perfect place for scout and 4H activities, birthday parties for youngsters & adults, retreats, weddings and other gatherings. For more information about onsite or outreach programs, email info@miravenhill.org or call Cheri at 231.536.3369. Until next time...

Cheri