

# EKU Department Psychology Newsletter

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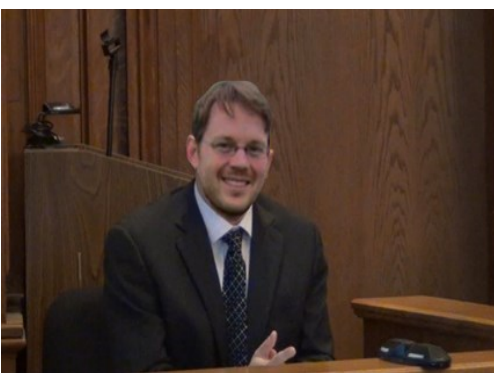
Fall 2016

## Taking Psychology Outside of the Class-

### Inside this issue:

Dustin Wygant, Ph.D. & Alex Varakin, Ph.D.

As an empirical science, psychology has the ability to address important situations encountered in the legal system. Cognitive and clinical psychology are two such areas where psychological knowledge can address questions and issues posed by the legal system. Forensic psychology as a discipline applies psychological science, knowledge, and methodology to issues facing the legal system. For instance, cognitive psychology covers a wide range of topics that include legally-relevant issues such as eye witness memory. Diagnostic psychological assessment is one area of clinical psychology that is relevant in the legal system. For instance, for a criminal defendant to be incompetent to stand trial or legally insane, most jurisdictions require them to have a “mental condition” such as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, or Intellectual Disability. Outside of the criminal arena, clinical psychologists sometimes get involved in civil litigation cases where a plaintiff claims Posttraumatic Stress Disorder as emotional damages in a lawsuit.



Two professors in the Department of Psychology at EKU, Dr. Dustin Wygant and Dr. Alex Varakin, are taking their experience outside of the classroom into court. Dr. Wygant maintains a consulting practice where he performs court-ordered psychological evaluations. Most of his evaluations involve an assessment of competency to stand trial and criminal responsibility (i.e., insanity defense). On occasion, Dr. Wygant testifies as an expert witness in court. Dr. Varakin is a cognitive psychologist whose research on change blindness and visual memory has implications for eyewitness testimony. Change blindness is the failure to notice visual changes that occur from one view to the next. Laboratory and field research have demonstrated that in a wide variety of situations, people are surprisingly bad at detecting visual changes, even when the change involves the identity of an actual person. Dr. Varakin has consulted with defense attorneys, and recently testified in court in order to educate a jury about the limits of visual awareness and memory.

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## New ECU Faculty Members Join the Psych Family

**Michael Chen** was born in Taiwan but he grew up in Belize, in Central America. He graduated cum laude from Berea College in 2006 with a degree in Biology. Dr. Chen returned to Taiwan and completed his military service for two years before attending the University of Kentucky for graduate school. He earned both his master's (2012) and doctorate degree (2015) in cognitive and human factors psychology from the University of Kentucky. Dr. Chen is coming to ECU from his first teaching job at Florida International University in Miami, FL.



Dr. Chen has been married for six years and has a three year old son. Dr. Chen's second child is due later this year. In his free time, Dr. Chen enjoys spending time with his family, playing guitar, working on his car, and playing ultimate frisbee. Dr. Chen is also a Kukkiwon certified black belt in Taekwondo and led the University of Kentucky's Taekwondo club for five years while he was a graduate student.

Dr. Chen's research focuses on the strategies and tools that could improve learning. His current research includes educational technologies such as computer generated speech and also teaching strategies such as the usage of in-class small groups. Dr. Chen is currently looking for nerdy undergraduate students with interests in technology and teaching to join his lab.

**Sara Steele** was born and raised near Allentown, PA. She earned her B.S in psychology from Kutztown University in 2011. While at Kutztown, she was the president of Psi Chi as well as participated in student-lead research projects. She had the opportunity to present her research findings at a conference during her senior year. While at the conference, she met her future advisor in graduate school. She is a first-generation college graduate in her family.



After completing her B.S at Kutztown, she moved further south to the University of Alabama for her Ph.D. in cognitive psychology. During her time in graduate school, she participated in several research projects associated with spatial cognition.

She also had the opportunity to be the instructor of several courses such as cognitive psychology, introduction to psychology, statistics, research methods, and history of psychology. Dr. Steele is very passionate about teaching and has recently been honored as the 2016 recipient of The University of Alabama Excellence in Teaching Award.

In her free time, Dr. Steele enjoys watching documentaries, gardening and Sudoku puzzles. She is a fan of both dogs and cats, with a particular love for hound dogs. She is very excited to be a part of the ECU psychology department.

## Faculty Research - Tether to Home, Connectedness, and the Appalachian Student

This article is an assessment of a concept called Familial Tethering, which was created by Mandy Renfro. Mandy proposed that students from Appalachia feel a pull to remain connected to home, and that this pull then makes it difficult for students to experience connectedness to the university. We tested this hypothesis in our first study, and we found that students from an Appalachian county (as well as students from large families) reported that they felt more pressure to return home frequently. They also reported lower levels of connectedness to the university. In our second study, we decided to assess Familial Tethering more completely, and we created the Familial Tethering Inventory. This inventory assesses whether students want to return home to spend time with family and friends (Social Tethering), whether families wanted their student to return home frequently (Externalized Tethering), and whether students wanted to return to see the landscape of home (Ecological Tethering). We found that Appalachian students were more likely to experience Externalized Tethering, which was then related to having a lower GPA. We also found a group of students who experienced Ecological Tethering, but these students were not necessarily from Appalachia. The students who experienced Ecological Tethering also had lower GPAs. In conclusion, we make several suggestions for supporting students experiencing Externalized and Ecological Tethering such developing internships, recreational, and service projects in students' hometowns. This would allow students to complete their education, connect to others at the university, and remain connected to the strong roots that bind them to home.

Mandy Renfro and Eric Muncie are former graduate students at ECU. Jodi Treadway and Eric Muncie are currently an adjunct faculty member at ECU. Marion Blake is a colleague from Texas A&M University, Kingsville.

Wilson, S. P., Gore, J.S., Renfro, A., Blake, M., Muncie, E., & Treadway, J. (2016). The Tether to Home, University Connectedness, and the Appalachian Student. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 0(0) 1–22.



During Summer 2016, these ECU students traveled with Dr. Bundy and the Kentucky Institute for International Studies to Bregenz, Austria to study the Psychology of Good and Evil and to learn more about Freud and Psychoanalysis. They visited Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site as well as Freud's home in Vienna. Dr. Brubaker will be taking students to Paris this summer.

Congratulations to Clinton Nowicke, who was presented with the Outstanding Graduate Student Diversity and Inclusion Award by the University Diversity Committee





## Chautauqua Lecture

The annual Chautauqua lecture for the 2016-2017 year opened on Thursday September 1, 2016, with a lecture co-sponsored by the Psychology Department. Dr. Nancy Potter, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Louisville, presented on the topic of *Heroes, Maverick, and Psychopaths: The Virtue and Vice of Defiance*. Her lecture focused on the interdisciplinary fields of philosophy and psychiatry and explored the concept of defiance, combining theory and case studies of individuals with oppositional defiant disorder, borderline personality disorder, and psychopathy. She offered a nuanced and complex look at the social contexts in which defiant and deviant behavior may arise, arguing that those living in adverse conditions such as oppression, systematic disadvantages, and disability may act defiantly for good reasons. The talk was well attended by students in faculty in the Department of Psychology as well as the university at large.

## Psychology Colloquium

Dr. Melissa Burns-Cusato from Centre College presented for the Psychology Department on *Threats from the Past: Barbados Green Monkeys Retain Fear of Predators After Centuries of Isolation*. The behavior of the East African *Chlorocebus aethiops* population and closely related West African *Chlorocebus saebus* has been studied extensively by Cheney & Seyfarth and Price & Fisher, respectively. A unique aspect of the *Chlorocebus* behavior is their use of different alarm calls to signal different predators. Predator-specific alarm calls then elicit antipredator behaviors that maximize escape from the associated predator. Nearly 400 years ago, green monkeys (*C. saebus*) were brought from Africa to the island of Barbados where their only predator are humans. Long-term isolation from ancestral predators (leopard, eagles, and snakes) has created a unique opportunity to investigate the mechanisms that underlie the species-specific alarms and anti-predator behaviors. In a series of experiments, she found that Barbados green monkeys recognize an image of a leopard face as threatening, with leopard spots being the most salient feature. Furthermore, Barbados monkeys respond to the leopard alarm of a West African green monkey with anti-predator behavior appropriate for escape from a leopard. Together, the results support a role for genetics in the predator recognition and avoidance of *C. saebus*.

## New Arrival in the Department



We are happy to announce the newest member of the department family. Sawyer Lynn Barnes, born to Dr. Henning joined us at 4:03 A.M. September 29, 2016. Sawyer weighed 7 pounds 4 ounces at birth. Congratulations to Dr. Henning on her newest family member!

## Annual Chili Cook-off

Congratulations to the School Psychology program for winning the annual chili cook-off! In addition to bragging rights, the School Psychology program won the Mr. Clean trophy.



## Psi Chi and Psychology Club

It has been another amazing year for EKU's Psi Chi and Psychology Club! Under the leadership of our second term President Kristen Gibson, the Chapter has had a very productive year. Our annual Induction ceremony was held on April 26<sup>th</sup>, with 23 new Psi Chi inductees and 11 new Psychology Club inductees. We welcomed our newly elected and returning Psi Chi Officers for the 2016-2017 term: Returning President/Webmaster: Kristen Gibson, returning Vice-President: Michaela Herbig, newly elected Secretary: Hogan Gagle, returning Treasurer: Lona Hensley, Co-Historians: Michael LeFlamme and Kendra Smallwood, Campus Liason: Tiffani Peel and Events /Fundraiser Coordinator: Hannah Steiger. We are also very proud to announce that during the spring 2016 semester, we were able to introduce our first live streaming of monthly Psi Chi/Psy Club meetings on April 20th, allowing our eCampus members to actively participate.



Additionally, our Chapter participated in a number of civic, social, and professional activities. Most notably, the Chapter had a number of members attend and present at conferences, including the Kentucky Psychological Foundation Spring Academic Conference, the EKU Undergraduate Presentation Showcase (UPS), and Posters at the Capitol in Frankfort. Our Chapter had a number of award winners, so special congratulations go out to the following recipients: Psi Chi Research Award winner, Alyss Hudson; Psi Chi Writing Awardee, Melissa Napier; Veronica Seawall, who was selected to receive one of three College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Award of Merit for 2015-16; PSY majors Jasmine Wilson & Tonya Lunsford and ANS major, Veronica Seawall for receiving the Dr. Rosanne Lorden Outstanding PSY and ANS Co-Op Awards ; Clark Hull Award of Excellence winner, Brianna Wilson; William & Pauline Knapp Scholarship winner, Elizabeth Bartelt; and Douglas & Nancy Stewart Hindman Career in Professional Psychology Scholarship recipient, Kendra Smallwood.

During the spring and fall semesters the Psi Chi Chapter and Psy Club hosted informational sessions on 'Forensic psychology' and 'GRE prep and getting into graduate school'. And finally, we had an informational booth to help the EKU Counseling Center to promote awareness for National Eating Disorder Awareness (NEDA) Week in February; participated in a Walk for Veterans at the Alumni Coliseum on campus on March 8<sup>th</sup>, held a Psi Chi/Psy Club informational Lunch for Psychology Majors in September, led a fundraiser for the Special Olympics that was held on September 13th, and hosted two recent social events (a trip to the Baldwin Farms Pumpkin Patch on October 4th and Galaxy Bowling Night on November 16th). Upcoming events include a joint venture with the EKU Track and Field Team conducting a can drive for Colonel's Cupboard and taking up donations for holiday gifts for a local nursing home facility.



## EKU Ranks Highly Among Best Online Psychology Programs



Eastern Kentucky University's online psychology bachelor's degree program has been recognized by AffordableColleges.com as a "Best Value" program! The ranking considered graduation and tuition rates using data that was gathered from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Eastern Kentucky University was ranked #30. The editor highlighted that the psychology degree comes with several options for concentrations, including Substance Abuse, Workplace Psychology, Autism Spectrum Disorders, and Child and Family Psychology.

Eastern Kentucky University was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> among SR Education Group's 2017 Most Affordable Online Colleges for Social Science Degrees in Forensic Psychology. The set of rankings represents schools across the nation that are making an effort to provide economical options for students seeking online social science degrees.



Congratulations to our own Dr. Bundy. She received a grant of \$4,500 from the WHAS Crusade for Children to help fund the social groups she and her students run in the Psychology Clinic. This is the eighth year running that she has received this money.

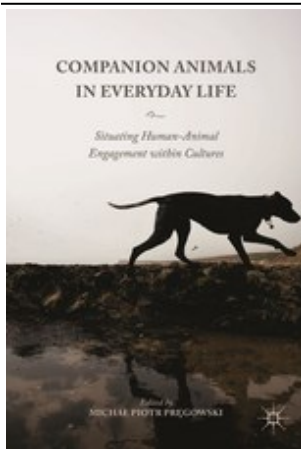
## Undergraduate Student Research Accomplishment

The graduate students in our programs have the opportunity to engage in high quality research with any of our faculty members. Although not always typical, our undergraduate students also have that opportunity and some of them even get published in professional journals. This year was particularly eventful as four of our graduates published the research they worked on while they were undergraduate students in our department. Tiffany Aldridge's article, "Linking Personality Traits and Well-Being: The Influence of Primary Social Roles" and Dustin Griffin and Dakota McNierney's article, "Does Internal or External Locus of Control Have a Stronger Link to Mental and Physical Health?" were both published in the journal *Psychological Studies* (Springer).

Jeremy Gibson published his second article based on work he did as an undergraduate on how women perceive men's behavior, depending on how normal his behavior is and how attractive he is. This experiment examined whether a heroic deed or an everyday, positive action by a stranger is perceived as better. The article is entitled, "Is He a Hero or a Weirdo? How Norm Violations Influence the Halo Effect." Both of Jeremy's articles were published in *Gender Issues* (Springer). We are all very proud that our students could represent the great work of the ECU Psychology Department!



## Companion Animals in Everyday Life: Situating Human-animal Engagement within Cultures



Michał Pręgoski, a sociologist and assistant professor at the Warsaw University of Technology in Poland, came to the US in 2013 on an EU-sponsored month-long visit to find out about the Animal Studies program at ECU. He came back in the fall of 2014 for a year as a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence. He became an active part of the ECU community and Animal Studies program, and was one of the co-organizers (with Drs. Robert Mitchell and Radhika Makecha) of the second Living with Animals conference at ECU in March of 2015. While here, Michał developed the idea of doing a book on cross-cultural studies of human-animal interactions, and he was able to collect many contributors from the Living with Animals conference. The book, entitled *Companion Animals in Everyday Life: Situating Human-animal Engagement within Cultures*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2016. The book is a fascinating read, where the reader encounters studies—some delightful, some disturbing—of diverse human-animal interactions from around the globe, focusing

on dogs and cats, with a few forays to other animals like pet rabbits and ferrets as well as to questions of what counts as a companion animal. Topics range across Frisbee-playing dogs in Poland, cat cafés in Japan, animal abuse in the Netherlands, animals in space in Russian history, eating dogs in some Asian cultures, stray dogs in Mexico, and animal adoption in the US, to name a few. There's even a chapter by ECU's Rosanne Lorden, on the feral cat situation at ECU, entitled "Polarized opinions and shared goals: Feral cat management in an academic community in Kentucky." (ECU's Robert Mitchell wrote the preface.) Each chapter is a delight to read, and the book will engage anyone interested in human-animal interaction (though the price of \$119 makes its purchase difficult for most of us). Dr. Lorden died during the publication of the book, and it is dedicated to her memory.

## ECU Alumnus, Dr. Jaime Anderson, begins Tenure-track Faculty Position

Dr. Jaime Anderson graduated with her Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from ECU in 2011, having received a bachelor's degree in Psychology and German from The University of Dayton in 2009. While at Eastern, Jaime completed a master's thesis that was focused on improving the detection of feigned pain symptoms in court-ordered psychological evaluations under the direction of Dr. Dustin Wygant. She also completed clinical training rotations at the Fayette County Jail and Lexington Forensic Neuropsychiatry. Jaime was honored by the Kentucky Psychological Association in 2011 for having the best oral research presentation. Upon graduating from Eastern, Jaime attended the University of Alabama, where she graduated with her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology (Psychology & Law focus) in 2016. To date, she has published 16 peer-reviewed papers in top-tier journals in the area of personality disorders, personality assessment, and malingering. She was honored by the Society for Personality Assessment with the Mary S. Cerney Award in 2016 for having the best student paper in the area of personality assessment. In the fall of 2016, Jaime began her tenure-track faculty position in the Department of Psychology at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas.



## Remembering Dr. Rosanne Lorden by Dr. Mitchell



Although I met Rosanne when I arrived at ECU in 1990, we didn't become friends until 2005, when she became my student in a Kentucky Institute for International Studies trip to Ecuador, including the Galápagos. Rosanne was a blast! She threw herself into my courses, and was one of the bright spots every day as she exuded her delight in being in Ecuador. Rosanne and I shared a room a few times throughout the trip, which was easy as we were both easy-going and fascinated by Ecuador, and we became friends. The funny part was how whiney Rosanne could be about writing the essays or papers for the course—she was the worst student that way! But then she'd laugh about her whininess—she was never one to focus on negativity,

and always turned to what was joyful in her life. When we went to Baños, there were large hot and cold pools for swimming, where the heat came from a local volcano.

Rosanne, irrepresible as always, wanted to go to the pools immediately (we did), and we went several times. The first morning we were in Baños, at 5am (when the pools opened), Rosanne was outside my door to wake me up, whispering loudly "Bob. Bob. Time to go swimming." We went, of course, and it was great to see the sun coming up over the mountain while in a huge heated pool. Several men hit on Rosanne at the pool, and it was funny to see how oblivious she could be about how attractive she was, and about how interested they were in her. Rosanne expressed pure delight when we arrived in Galápagos, a place both of us had wanted to visit for much of our lives. Rosanne had read several books about the place prior to our arrival and afterward, and it was like having a tour guide being with her. We both loved the sea lions, and it led us to visit the islands again twice during summers, with students, to study them more. We also, with Richard Sambrook, studied residents' and visitors' knowledge about and attitudes toward sea lions and nature in the Galápagos, and published some of that work in a paper on ecotourism, just in time for Rosanne to become Full Professor at ECU. It was a delight working with Rosanne on the research, and I miss her presence just



thinking about the work that has yet to be published.



Rosanne was ever present in the creation and maintenance of ECU's Animal Studies program. She was one of the founding faculty members, taught the course on animal training, and thoroughly enjoyed the Living with Animals conferences. When Michał Pręgowski, who became our visiting Polish Fulbright in Animal Studies in 2014-2015, arrived for a month in 2013 to learn about the Animal Studies program, Rosanne and Michał became fast friends. And when Michał came for the Fulbright year, Rosanne was an always available and generous companion to him and his family. So it was no surprise that

Rosanne came with me and my partner Randy to visit Michał in Warsaw. (Rosanne loved to travel, and had been to the Czech Republic with ECU faculty friends and other places as well.) Michał invited us to spend a few weeks in Poland, during which I'd be paid enough to cover my expenses in return for giving 7 lectures. The first talk was to be about the structure of ECU (I couldn't imagine why they were interested), and Rosanne and I did that 4-hour talk together to a packed audience. I couldn't have done it without her, but having both of us give the talk made it more fun than it would have been if I'd had to do it alone.



## Remembering Dr. Rosanne Lorden Continued

Rosanne, Randy and I shared a small room apartment in Warsaw, where I worked to prepare each day's lecture the night before and morning of. I was the one who was "keeping them in the style they wished to become accustomed," Randy took care of washing clothes and ironing, and Rosanne was the self-designated "kitchen wench." Michał and Kasia, his wife, showed us the wonders of Poland, and we had a wonderful time together. Rosanne and I also traveled together to present our work at two meetings of the International Society for AnthroZoology (ISAZ), one in Kansas City, and the second in Vienna. In the summer of 2015, Rosanne, Randy and I traveled to Japan together. We were all blown away by Japan, and our photos of Rosanne show her either jubilant or reflective. Like good American tourists, we ate breakfast from Starbucks many mornings. While we were in Nagoya, Rosanne developed a desire to run through a bamboo forest that was miles off course from our travel plans, but finally accepted walking through a path intersecting a different bamboo forest. She had planned to go to Barcelona for the ISAZ meeting this year. A central presence in Rosanne's life for many years was her partner Dick Martin, and a central moment was Dick's death in 2011. When Dick died, part of Rosanne died with him. Dick and Rosanne had been living their lives as partners for many years, and Rosanne expected that when she retired (which she had no plans to do any time soon, as she loved teaching at EKU) they would enjoy life together, and she felt adrift. She talked of Dick in the present tense for years, and feared that there would never be anyone like him in her life again. She failed utterly to see how attractive she was, and was (as at Baños) consistently surprised that men found her alluring. As usual, she threw herself into teaching and the other projects she loved, making students learn even when they didn't want to. They loved her for it.

The life force that was Rosanne died on Tuesday, 2 February 2016. I had talked to her on the Saturday before to see how she was doing, as she'd been sick for a while, and she promised to go to the doctor on Mon-

## Eastern Kentucky University Suicide Awareness and Focus on Suicide

Eastern Kentucky University was awarded a federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Garrett Lee Smith grant this fall which will continue through 2019. The grant named, Eastern Kentucky University Suicide Awareness and Focus on Suicide (EKU SAFE), seeks to create a safer and more caring campus community to assist those at-risk for suicidal behavior and to support those who are concerned regarding the welfare of members of the community. This project will be accomplished by using a public health model which expands on current campus practices to create a systemic program of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention that integrates service, policy and referral networks. The grant represents over \$100,000 in grant funding each year to EKU. Dr. Melinda Moore will direct the grant and will work closely with a project coordinator, and an interdisciplinary, university-wide Advisory Group. EKU SAFE will expand current prevention and gatekeeper training efforts, increase awareness and availability of mental health services to students, and better link the various means by which students access support and mental health resources at EKU. The goal is to reduce both direct and indirect population risk while also sealing the cracks in high-risk or critical cases by improving appropriate referral, treatment and follow-up. EKU SAFE will more closely tie efforts between the Psychology Clinic, the Counseling Center, the Student Health Center, and academic departments, such as the Departments of Psychology, Social Work, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, and Paramedicine. Suicide prevention efforts at EKU, which have been led to-date by the Counseling Center, have garnered substantial interest and commitment from both university leaders and front-line departments in developing solid partnerships and a more systemic structure for managing critical student incidents, mental health emergencies and suicide.

## NAMI @ EKU's "Walk for Hope"



On Wednesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) at EKU Club held the "Walk for Hope" in EKU's Ravine with a luminaria walk after the event. The event raised awareness about the problem of suicide in the United States and in Kentucky. Nearly 43,000 Americans die by suicide every year in the US and over 700 Kentuckians die by suicide annually.

The Walk honored those whose lives have been lost and those who are left behind in the wake of suicide death, called suicide survivors. For every person who dies by suicide there are at least 125 people who are impacted with at

least 25 people being profoundly impacted. People who are seriously impacted by suicide are at higher risk for depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempt, said Dr. Melinda Moore, NAMI @EKU club's faculty advisor.

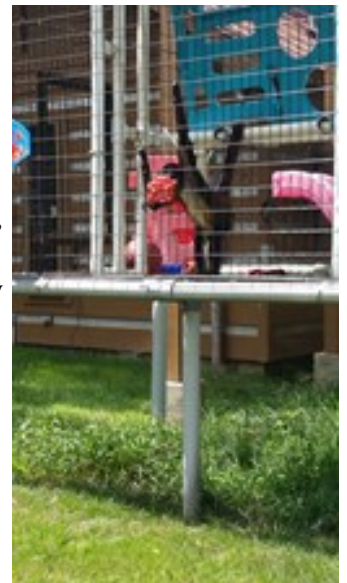
Guest speakers for the Walk included Mark Cain, founder of Shelby's Way, a nonprofit dedicated to raising awareness about the problem of suicide within the hot rod community. Music was provided by Department of Psychology Director of Clinical Training Dr. Dustin Wygant on acoustic guitar and Amelia Chase, a first year Clinical Psychology doctoral student. After the presentations, participants walked around the Ravine, which was lined with luminaria representing those individuals who have died by suicide.



## Animal Enrichment



This past summer, EKU psychology and animal studies students took an enrichment course where they learned how to design enrichment (anything that mentally or physically stimulates an animal) for animals at the Kentucky Equine Humane Center, the Primate Rescue Center, and the Louisville Zoo. Additionally, the Cincinnati Zoo took the students through an educational tour on how they do enrichment for their education animals as well as their manatees and cheetahs. Among the enrichment that students designed was a watermelon puzzle feeder for spider monkeys at the Primate Rescue Center (see picture) and an alfalfa ball for macropods at the Louisville Zoo (see picture). All in all, the students not only received a great education on enrichment, but had fun and contributed to animal welfare while doing so!



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**Let's Hear from Alumni**

We love to hear from our alumni. We want to know what you have been up to so that we can expand our alumni update section in the PsyQ. Please send us your updates by e-mailing Dan Florell at [dan.florell@eku.edu](mailto:dan.florell@eku.edu).



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