

Jessica Gordon Helps The Peregrine Fund Take Flight

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[All](#)[Company](#)[Individual](#)[Nonprofit](#)[Sponsor](#)[Talent](#)[Time](#)[Treasure](#)

Talented Volunteer Manager 2024

Jessica Gordon, The Peregrine Fund

As the Volunteer Program Manager for The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey for nearly 10 years, Jessica Gordon has helped the nonprofit reach new heights through her innovative programming and vision. This year's Talented Volunteer Manager, Jessica is a powerhouse within the volunteer manager world, and others have taken notice.

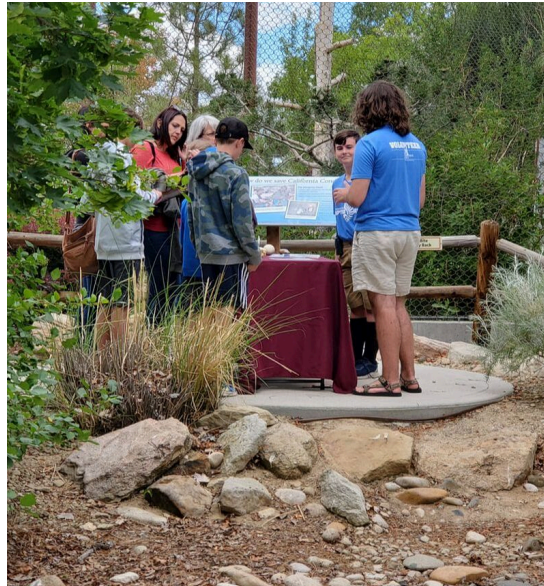
As Amanda Schmierer, Jessica's nominator and the Chair for the Idaho Directors of Volunteer Services (IDOVs), wrote in her nomination, "Jessica has a professionalism and care for volunteers like no other. Each year, she strives to make her volunteer programs better and better. She develops meaningful relationships with her volunteers, listens to them, takes their feedback, and makes them part of the process. She has some volunteers that have been part of the World Center for Birds of Prey for 20+ years!"

Amanda got to know and collaborate with Jessica through IDOVs. Jessica has been a member for many years and recently joined the IDOVs leadership team as Membership Chair. "She's really brought some fantastic ideas, some really great perspectives, and helped breathe new life into the organization," Amanda shared. "She's been a huge asset to the team."

Jessica has also inspired Amanda in Amanda's other role as the Biomedical Volunteer Engagement Rep for the American Red Cross.

"I looked to her when my work at the Red Cross looked for ways to include youth who wanted to be involved. She's got this really successful, great program going over there," Amanda shared.

demand for volunteerism among youth, Jessica developed this youth summer program where participants' work with birds is just the beginning of their growth. Raptor High participants also provide research, present to the public, develop customer service skills, and so much more. Through Raptor High, students gain valuable, lifelong skills that extend far beyond the end of the summer. Graduates of the program also get the chance to come back in a mentorship role and work with newcomers. Jessica created the entire curriculum for Raptor High, recruits from schools across Idaho every year, and oversees all aspects of this program.



For Jessica, the program is creating a lasting impact. “Raptor High has been such a labor of love because I get a chance to work with middle school and high school students that are interested in Raptors conservation, or just students and speaking in general, and the amount of growth that these kids have in the 11 weeks that they are with us over the summer is huge,” she said. “It’s so fun to watch them grow.”

Amanda spoke more about how Jessica is helping to shape and contribute to volunteer management in Idaho:

“She has really created an exceptional way to meet the youth engagement gaps we often see among nonprofits. Many of us have taken what she has developed and used her principles and practices in developing our own youth volunteer programs.”

Jessica is always willing to help other nonprofit organizations and volunteer managers. She is always willing to share the principles and practices she develops and will help guide others in reaching their full potential with their own volunteer programs. Jessica consistently not only strives to make her programs some of the best in Idaho, but goes outside the bounds of her own organization to help other Volunteer Managers succeed.”

Speaking to her efforts to connect with other folks who do volunteer management, Jessica said,

“It’s fun to share a little bit of what works. Collaboration is key, especially when you’re thinking about community members committed to a cause, coming in and sharing their time and talent.”

Feedback drives what we do the next year, and so hearing some of their feedback through the surveys has been really cool—to hear that it’s had such an impact on what they are interested in, or what they think they might do in the future, or just those things that have made them more confident as an individual, and that their voice matters, that we see them, they are part of the team, that that atmosphere that we create with our staff and our adult volunteers has been really, really fun over the summer.”



How did Jessica feel when she learned she'd won the Talented Volunteer Manager award? "It was an incredible surprise," Jessica said. "It was not even on my radar, so it was quite exciting."

The award came at a time of transition for Jessica as the AmeriCorps volunteer working with her had just completed her term. After having the support of the AmeriCorps member, Jessica was shifting back to doing volunteer management primarily solo. Jessica and the team were contemplating how to continue the growth she's worked so hard to build.

"And then here comes this email," Jessica said of learning she'd won the Idaho Philanthropy Day Award. "Volunteer services tend to be a little underrepresented, and so I've been a big party one for so long. We tend to undersell ourselves and our accomplishments. I like to be behind the scenes, so it was a nice surprise."

Fortunately, there are folks in Jessica's life like Amanda who recognize the momentous contributions that Jessica is making to volunteer management. Congratulations to Jessica on this much-deserved win, and thank you for all you do for volunteers!





Sonya is a writer living in Boise, Idaho. She loves hiking in the foothills with her family and teaching and performing improv. [Learn more](#)

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- Idaho Nonprofit Center
- Serve Idaho