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"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society - Friends of the Refuge

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: WoW education intern Kimi Birrer will be helping the refuge with its bilingual outreach for WoW (Wildlife on Wheels) and overall conservation education.

Refuge welcomes WoW education intern

Kimi Birrer recently joined the team at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, thanks to funding from the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). She fills the role of educator and bilingual interpreter for the refuge's WoW (Wildlife on Wheels) mobile classroom and other educational "Ding" programs.

Born in northern Kentucky near Cincinnati, Ohio, Birrer graduated from Hanover College in Indiana in May, majoring in environmental biology and Spanish. This summer, she did some field work in Wisconsin and worked on a Kentucky horse farm before arriving to "Ding" Darling last week.

"Kimi is fluent in Spanish, so she will be such a valuable asset in helping us fulfill our mission to reach the local Latino community," said "Ding" Darling urban education leader Melissa Maher. "Our first priority with WoW outreach is to travel to underserved schools and other venues where kids and adults don't have the opportunity to visit the refuge."

"I've been studying Spanish seriously since entering college and have volunteered at a local

nonprofit at my school that aids immigrants in many ways, mostly with learning English and civics,” Birrer said. “I also spent a year abroad in Costa Rica, where I worked with biologists on various projects. I really enjoy language learning and being able to communicate with more people as a result. I’m looking forward to being able to combine my passions for conservation, cross-cultural understanding, and learning.”

An avid birder and traveler, Birrer highly anticipates spending the upcoming winter season on Sanibel Island. “I’m excited to inspire others to be passionate about the things that matter to me and everyone here at the refuge,” she said.

DDWS provides living stipends and other benefits for about a dozen interns each year. For more information about the refuge’s internship programs and supporting them, contact Lynnae Messina, DDWS associate director, at 239-472-1100 ext. 233.

DDWS currently stewards two named internships for the 2020-21 year and is accepting donations for three future named intern funds at \$12,500 a year, which is the cost for supporting one intern including stipends, travel, tolls, Sanibel Rec Center membership, and other expenses.

ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop profits.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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