

## 'Do good today': Enoch nonprofit founder reflects on year of lifesaving kindness, generosity

Written by Alysha Lundgren  December 20, 2023



**CEDAR CITY** — For Martin Tyner, this year was not only full of ups and downs but also of the “incredible” kindness of strangers — one who may have saved his life.



Martin Tyner holds Belle, the Farris Hawk, date and location unspecified | Photo courtesy of Southwest Wildlife Foundation of Utah, Cedar City News

Tyner told Cedar City News that he had “amazing grandparents,” describing his grandfather as the greatest man he’s ever known.

“Every morning when my grandfather would leave for work, he’d come in and wake me up at 6 o’clock in the morning and he would say the same words to me every day. ... ‘Martin, do good today. Do good,’” he recalled. “And I still, to this day, can hear his voice.”

And that sentiment of doing good carried forward when in 1997, Tyner and his wife, Susan Tyner, founded the Southwest Wildlife Foundation, a nonprofit organization “dedicated to wildlife rescue, rehabilitation and education,” according to the foundation’s website. They care for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife to return them to the wild. In 2021, the foundation

relocated to Enoch, Cedar City News [reported](#).

Over the last three years, the Southwest Wildlife Foundation has raised \$600,000-800,000 to build the new Enoch Wildlife Rescue facility, including an eagle flight chamber. He estimates the facility is 90-95% constructed and believes it will be completed in January 2024.

“It’s almost hard for me to walk into the new facility because every time I walk (through it) and I look around, I’m going, ‘Oh my god, it’s real,’” he said. “Like I said, it’s something that my sweet wife Susan and I have dedicated our lives to, and that dream is coming true.”

The total number of donations received has increased exponentially over the last few years, with people worldwide donating time, money and physical items from the foundation’s Amazon wishlist. People have purchased thousands of frozen rats, mice and quail to feed the birds, office supplies and furniture, and examination tables.



Martin Tyner tours the new Enoch Wildlife Rescue facility with Enoch City officials, Enoch, Utah, Dec. 13, 2023 | Photo courtesy of Southwest Wildlife Foundation of Utah, Cedar City News

"(Donations go) toward our ability to care for sick, injured or orphaned wildlife," he said.

Currently, the foundation is hosting "Critter Vlogmas" as part of a YouTube challenge, posting a live video every day since Dec. 1. The last video will be posted on Christmas Eve. With a fundraising goal of \$5,000, the foundation has raised over \$2,600 as of Dec. 19. Videos include a tour of the new facility with Enoch City Mayor Geoffrey Chestnut and other city officials, a peregrine falcon's flight, and Tyner's visit with the foundation's sponsor, Findlay Suburu.



Martin and Susan Tyner talk with volunteer Lanay Corbell and Helen, the peregrine falcon, Enoch, Utah, Dec. 8, 2023 | Photo courtesy of Southwest Wildlife Foundation of Utah, Cedar City News

Findlay also chose the foundation as part of its "Suburu Share the Love" event for the 10th consecutive year. For each person who purchases or leases a new Suburu through Jan. 2, the company will donate \$250 to their choice of charity and a minimum of \$75 to Root for Kids and the Enoch Wildlife Foundation, according to the nonprofit's website.

Throughout the process, Tyner has been recovering from heart surgery.

"I've been slowly going downhill for the last three years," he recalled. "I did not realize how sick I was. The major blockage was in the main article — the left ventricle artery that feeds most of the heart, and the blockage was more

than 2 inches long. ... They call that the widowmaker. And I was far closer to making my sweet Susan a widow than I could have ever imagined."

He was alerted to his condition by one of his YouTube followers.

"I credit (him) for saving my life," he said. "And this is how amazing these friends are — these people I've never met and probably never will meet, but I consider them close friends. I was feeling really bad, and I had an appointment with my doctor, my general practitioner. About an hour before the appointment, I get an email from a cardiologist who has been following my YouTube channel for years."

The doctor asked Tyner why he wasn't in the hospital.

"He says, 'I just watched your last video, and you have a severe cardiac issue and you need to get treated now.' ... It was a very somber warning," Tyner said.

The doctor gave Tyner a list of tests to ask his general practitioner for and was later recommended to a cardiologist.

"I was in trouble," Tyner said. "But, you know, somebody took the time to care about me and took the time to send a letter, literally demanding me to get this looked at. I was going downhill significantly faster, and I was feeling really bad. And I would have put it off. If another week went by, we may not be having this conversation."



Martin Tyner interacts with Scout, the Golden Eagle, date and location unspecified | Photo courtesy of Southwest Wildlife Foundation of Utah, Cedar City News



Martin Tyner walks with a raptor on his arm, Iron County, Utah, date unspecified | Photo courtesy of Southwest Wildlife Foundation of Utah, Cedar City News

Since then, Tyner has completed his physical therapy and will continue his fitness routine independently, he said in the eighth [Vlogmas video](#), adding that he's doing "wonderfully well."

Tyner said he is grateful for the foundation's volunteers, many of whom have become close to the family, visiting from locations worldwide.

"It is an amazing blessing," he said. "I'm just a dumb old critter guy — I am absolutely nobody special. My spicy, sweet, beautiful wife, Susan, she's quite special, but nevertheless, I don't understand. But, I greatly appreciate the kindness that people have been showing us."

To learn more about Critter Vlogmas and the foundation, follow this [link](#).