

# BUILDING A BEAK

How a Toucan's Rescue Inspired the World

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## ACTIVITY GUIDE

In the wild, Grecia the toucan loved to soar from branch to branch and sing for all the creatures of the rainforest. Until, one night, loud voices echoed through the trees, sticks and rocks flew, and Grecia fell from her favorite avocado tree, tragically breaking her beak.

She was unable to move. Unable to sing.

Animal rescuers examined Grecia and found that she needed a new beak to survive. Though no one had ever made a toucan beak before, Grecia's determination to live drove their search for a creative solution—an innovative 3D-printed beak. As news of her story spread, people of all ages around the world came together, finding their own ways to help Grecia sing again.

While witnessing Grecia's determined spirit, readers will learn how this single plucky toucan became a symbol for the international wildlife protection movement and inspired real change in anti-animal cruelty law, saving countless animals from harm. Perfect for the young activist, engineer, or animal lover, Grecia's triumphant true story will resonate with readers of all ages, showing how determination and teamwork can make an impact and create lasting change.

**Becca McMurdie** is an elementary school educator in New York City by day. At night, she researches and writes children's books. She takes trips to climb up mountains, hike through rainforests, and swim in oceans and lakes any chance she gets.

**Diana Hernández** grew up in San Rafael de Heredia, in the small and beautiful country of Costa Rica. She works as a colorist and illustrator and hopes to work as a concept artist for the animation industry. She dreams of working on projects charged with emotions that make people feel understood, hopeful, happy, and less lonely.

This educator guide was created by Room 228 LLC, with public school teacher Shanika Parker as lead teacher. We at Room 228 believe in the goodness of people helping people...and people helping animals! For more information, visit [rm228.com](http://rm228.com).

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Even though this story is about Grecia the toucan, it is also about people and their impact on the world around them. In the story, there are two main groups of people. The people who help Grecia and the people who harm Grecia. These two groups both play a key role in Grecia's story. Compare and contrast the two groups of people and the roles that they play.
2. What emotions do you feel at the beginning of the story when Grecia is hurt? What about at the end of the story when she is rescued and rehabilitated? What choices do the author and illustrator make that might affect the way we feel when we read the story? Are they using certain words or certain pictures or color? Explain.
3. When word spread about Grecia's beak, lots of people tried to help Grecia by making beaks and sending cards. How does news spread? Can you think of other examples where news spreads and people took steps to help the situation?
4. When you think of an engineer, what do you think of? What about a Wildlife Rescuer? Even though the engineers don't work at Rescate Wildlife Rescue Center, they are able to help Grecia. The engineers step outside of their comfort zone to help others. They take a risk and it works! Grecia's beak is a success. How can you apply this to your own life? Have you ever tried something new? How did it turn out? Sometimes taking risks and doing new things fails. Why is failure sometimes a good thing in science?
5. "By reading animal rescue stories like Grecia's and discussing them with friends and family, you, too, are helping to build awareness about the importance of protecting our rainforests." Why do YOU think it is important for us to protect our rainforests?

# BUILD YOUR OWN BEAK!

In *Building a Beak*, lots of people try to help Grecia get a new beak. Eventually an engineer is able to make a beak just right for her. Now it's YOUR turn to be an engineer! Use whatever materials you have to make your own beak. Time to get creative! And remember, scientists' experiments sometimes fail. That's totally fine; it's part of the scientific process! They ask themselves what they learned from the experiment and they pick themselves back up and try again!

- » Take time to brainstorm. On page 6, the people who rescue Grecia are worried about her being able to survive because without her beak, she wouldn't be able to sing, eat, bathe, or balance. What does Grecia use her beak for? What materials would be best for that? How do we know if the beak will work? What makes the beak successful?
- » Create your own test to gauge your beak's success OR use your beak to pick up an object your teacher has provided for you.
- » After brainstorming, collect materials. These materials can be pre-chosen by the teacher or you can investigate, discover, and explore the world around you and search for materials that would help you create their vision. You can work independently or collaboratively. The possibilities are endless! Some optional materials: cardboard, paper clips, string, rubber bands, spoons, chopsticks, clothespins, clay, PlayDoh, etc.
- » Begin building and testing their ideas!
- » Finally, present your ideas/finished beaks to the class. This can be a traditional presentation or a Beak Bash where you and classmates show off your beaks and celebrate your creativity with music and a toucan's favorite fruit\*.
- » Reflect! All great scientists are reflective! What went great? What didn't go so well? What can we learn from our experiments?
- » Extension: If your school/community has access to a 3D printer, explore steps/ways to print your beaks into reality!

\*Be sure to review your school's policy on classroom snacks and be mindful of allergens.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.3

Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

VA: Cr2.1.3 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Create personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## JOB POST

Rescate Wildlife Rescue Center is hiring a new wildlife rehabilitator! They need YOUR help to write the job listing! What do YOU think makes a good wildlife rehabilitator? What character traits would they have?

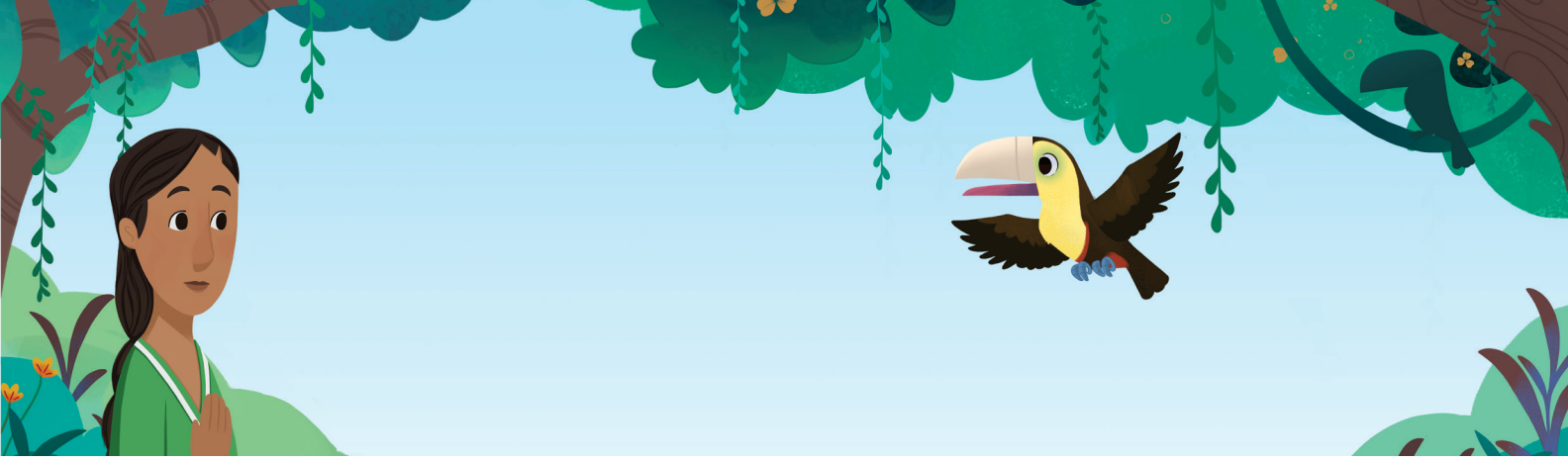
Some trait examples: **kind, compassionate, caring, hardworking, resourceful, thoughtful.**

Complete this table to help you create a job posting! Once you're finished, use the backside of this worksheet to create your Help Wanted ad using all of your wonderful brainstorming! Good luck!

Wildlife Rehabilitator Characteristics	Examples from the book	Examples from the Rescate Wildlife Rescue Center website and other resources

RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

VA: Cr2.1.3 Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Create personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.



## AMAZING ANIMALS!

Grecia's story is inspiring to so many people. She made a difference in so many ways. And Grecia isn't the only wild animal who is changing the world. The more we learn about wild animals, the more likely we are to love them, to treat them with kindness, to protect them from harm, and to protect the environments in which they live.

1. Discuss the different ways Grecia's story impacted the world around her. Can you think of another wild animal that has an inspiring story?
2. As you begin to brainstorm and share ideas (maybe something you've already read, seen in a movie or TV show, or watched on the news at home), think about another wild animal story that you would like to learn more about.

3. Some questions to think about when researching:

What animal are you researching?

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What happened to your animal?

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How do they inspire others with their story?

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4. After you research your animals, create a trifold or pamphlet to share what you learned!

W.3.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

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