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Scranton Area Community Foundation Grant Funds Low Cost Day Camps at Indraloka Animal Sanctuary

Dalton, Penn. — When **Indraloka Animal Sanctuary** founder Indra Lahiri, PhD, hired full-time Director of Education, Sarah Thornton, it was an act of faith. The Sanctuary had expanded from 35 acres in Mehoopany to 100 acres in Dalton and had begun welcoming children’s groups to its programs that incorporate farmed animals in a new context, by combining kindness and compassion with outdoor activity that is free of electronics. Then the pandemic hit. Indraloka pivoted to virtual field trips; children worldwide “visited” the sanctuary. But the healthy goodness and beauty of Indraloka are best experienced in person. And thanks to a generous Community Needs grant from the **Scranton Area Community Foundation**, more children than ever are enjoying weeklong summer camps, daylong events, storytelling, art and music making, and fun educational activities at Indraloka.

“It’s extremely rewarding to see the vision we’ve held for Indraloka gain momentum. We’ve been able to increase the amount of programs, camps, tours, and events we host every year. Because of the generous support of the Scranton Area Community Foundation, our dream of offering every child who wants to come to Indraloka the opportunity to attend camp is becoming a reality,” Dr. Lahiri says.

An \$8,000 Community Needs grant from the Foundation is helping keep registration fees low for upcoming events, including August’s [**Earth Camp: Water Week**](#), which will take place from **August 7 through August 11**. Cost for the entire week, which includes a delicious, healthy lunch and snacks, is \$150. Scholarships are available based on need. On **August 15th**, the daylong [**Happy, Healthy, Hopeful**](#)



[Heroes.](#)" which is geared for middle school-aged kids, will focus on human-animal connections, social and emotional wellness, and healthy self-expression. The cost is \$30.

"My son LOVED camp at Indraloka. He came home happy and was excited to go each morning. It was a great week!" one parent said.

For decades, numerous studies show how time spent in nature helps boost mental health. New, groundbreaking research has discovered how farmed animals, specifically, help people heal from depression and trauma.

"Farmed animals are prey and are, therefore, highly alert. But they're also very calm. Being with the farmed animals helps people see that there is a way to cope with trauma through stillness and quiet observation. We believe we have a solution that helps ease stress, anxiety and depression. We have seen it with our own eyes. People are overcoming trauma by spending time with our gentle, loving animals."

In addition to establishing [Indraloka Animal Sanctuary](#) in 2005, Dr. Lahiri has 20 years of experience practicing organizational psychology. At Indraloka, Dr. Lahiri draws on her own background—professionally and personally—to spearhead programs that help people heal from the trauma of abuse and neglect.

Set on 100 acres of verdant pastures rimmed by Northeast Pennsylvania's Endless Mountains, Indraloka is home to nearly 200 farmed animals of all species. The sanctuary focuses on rescuing animals from the most desperate circumstances, animals that escaped from live markets and slaughterhouses, left unattended on abandoned farms, and rescued by humane police from extreme abuse.

Indraloka offers year-round programs, including meditative walks and meditation classes, art and



music courses, summer camps for children of all ages, healthy (and delicious) food preparation, Reiki healing sessions, and dozens of other events. Each November, the sanctuary celebrates [ThanksLiving](#), a spectacular feast that honors the Indraloka's many birds. It is one of the most popular outings in the area.

Dr. Lahiri is available for interviews and media tours. Indraloka has been gaining national attention as one of the preeminent farm animal sanctuaries in the world. The sanctuary's educational programs are hailed as the future of education.

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About Indraloka Animal Sanctuary

Indraloka, a 501(c) nonprofit, provides "heaven on earth" for farm animals that have nowhere else to turn. We inform, inspire and empower the community, especially children, on ways in which we can better care for ourselves and the environment while helping animals in need. We advocate for a kind and compassionate lifestyle that protects animals, the earth and our own health and. As educators, we offer a wide range of STEAM-based learning programs, summer camps and field trips for children, K-12. The community is invited to tour the sanctuary; reservations are required. We host live, public and virtual events throughout the year for adults and children. Visit us at Indraloka.org.

About Scranton Area Community Foundation

The Scranton Area Community Foundation is on a mission to enhance the quality of life for all people in Northeastern Pennsylvania through the development of organized philanthropy. With over \$90 million in assets under management and more than 315 charitable funds, the Scranton



Area Community Foundation has served as a steward, grant maker, charitable resource, and catalyst for change since 1954. The Foundation leads various initiatives including Women in Philanthropy, the Center for Community Leadership and Nonprofit Excellence, NEPA Moves, NEPA Thrives, and the NEPA Animal Welfare Collaborative. Additionally, the Foundation hosts and facilitates NEPA Gives and the NEPA Learning Conference. The Scranton Area Community Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization confirmed in compliance with National Standards of U.S. Community Foundations. More information about the Scranton Area Community Foundation can be found at www.safdn.org.