

Alaqua Animal Refuge Welcomes New Executive Director

FREEPORT, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, February 11, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Alaqua Animal Refuge is proud to announce and welcome Jeff Jacob as its new Executive Director. Jacob will be responsible for helping to lead the organization during an unprecedented growth period as Alaqua relocates to their permanent home, a multimillion-dollar facility with expanded programs and services.

A pivotal year for Alaqua, Jacob's hire demonstrates the non-profit's strong desire to partner with an individual whose passion and beliefs align with Alaqua's mission and vision, and who can bring the necessary background and experience to oversee and manage the important day-to-day work of the Refuge, while at the same time growing programs, expanding Alaqua's brand, and broadening horizons. The creation of this position represents a new era in the history of the 14-year old Refuge.



Jeff Jacob with Daniel, just one of the adoptable animals at Alaqua

Alaqua Founder Laurie Hood will continue in her role as President to set and drive the vision for the Refuge while strengthening and expanding national partnerships and leadership roles with organizations such as Animal Welfare Action, the Humane Society of the United States, Florida Wildlife Federation, and the E.O Wilson Biophilia Center. She will continue to lead Alaqua's advocacy efforts, rescue operations, coordination with governmental agencies in prosecuting animal cruelty offenders, and supporting their efforts in the judicial system.

"We are beyond thrilled to have Jeff on board. He brings a fresh perspective, approach, and philosophy that will drive us closer to our vision. He has demonstrated both organizational and inspirational leadership, strategic thinking, fundraising success, and is an overall animal

advocate—all with an entrepreneurial spirit that fits our culture,” said Alaqua Founder and President Laurie Hood.

“We have a lot of work to do and we are growing quickly. Not only are we moving into a new facility that is ten times the size of our current location, but we are also expanding our footprint into more community programs for healing and wildlife rehabilitation among other things,” iterated Hood. “As we developed our strategic plan and outlined our goals for 2021 and beyond, the writing was on the wall. Literally. It was apparent that we needed to restructure our organization and find someone that could come in at an executive level and help move us forward. And we found that person in Jeff. He has the passion and leadership qualities we were looking for in this position and I can’t wait for our community to meet him.”

Hood further noted that Jacob was someone that she felt like she has known and worked with for years because their beliefs and passions are so aligned. From Jacob’s point of view the feeling is mutual.

Jacob’s hiring comes as the non-profit ramps up its capital campaign, “Second Chances Start Here.” Building on past successes, Jacob will lead the charge to facilitate change along with Hood in the animal welfare community and will work towards the overall vision to become a national model for animal shelters and sanctuaries across the country. Working closely with Hood, Jacob will collaborate on the planning and execution of the capital campaign, future build out phases for the Refuge, and strategic partnerships. He will also work to expand outreach locally, regionally, and nationally through growing the capabilities, scope, and variety of programs.

Jacob brings more than 25 years of non-profit and operational experience to Alaqua, and has spent the majority of the last two decades advancing the interests of animals and people in healing environments. His past engagements include Director of Operations at Big Dog Ranch Rescue (Wellington, FL); Assistant Executive Director at B’nai Torah Congregation (Boca Raton, FL); Founder/Lead Facilitator at The Song Team (Nashville, TN); and most recently Executive Director at Face the Music Foundation (Fort Lauderdale, FL, Austin, TX, and Nashville, TN). An avid public speaker, he has been recognized for delivering an engaging TEDx presentation on ‘Collaboration,’ and is a sought after thought leader to facilitate leadership and collaboration programs for Fortune 500 companies such as Delta Airlines, Bank of America, Hilton Hotels, Mars Inc., Nissan USA, and Borders.

Animals are one of Jacob’s touchstone passions in life and as he describes it, “one of the miracles from above.” He believes that animals are one of the most unique and healing entities we have on this planet. Jacob shared, “I started out in non-profit, animal welfare before transitioning to other non-profit sectors, but all along, I hoped and suspected that the right opportunity would present itself to circle back to our furry friends and combine my experiences for one organization.”

“It was clear to me that Alaqua was doing amazing, purposeful work in saving animals, finding

them new homes and providing sanctuary to them. I loved the fact that it was also a place focused on helping people. The more I talked with Laurie, the more it felt like a perfect fit. She inspired me.”

Beyond helping shape the future of Alaqua, Jacob looks forward to giving even more second chances to animals and humans alike, while serving as a mentor to the amazing staff already assembled at Alaqua.

“The staff is going to teach me new things as well. It’s a give and take, as we’re all truly interconnected,” Jacob states. “Blending my joy in human programs with animal welfare. And vice versa. I really fell in love with the organization, the way they view the world, the way they treat their employees, and their singular focus on making change in our society. Laurie has this vision to really try and utilize that unique attribute which animals have to communicate with humans and heal humans through various types of programs. As effective cause leaders, we learn that you can be a data-driven organization, and still lead with your heart.”

Hood concludes, “Alaqua is my heart and soul. I’m not going anywhere. I’ll still be in the midst of things. Jeff is just one more valuable addition to our team in helping to lead our efforts so we can be a bigger and better organization for healing all animals, and the people that love them.”

Visit www.Alaqua.org to learn more.

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