At just 29 years old, Tiffany has endured more hardship and suffering than most can imagine.

She was just 15 when she and her sister were kidnapped and sold into the human trafficking system. During her captivity, she was sedated with heroin, which started a lifelong battle with addiction. She was only able to escape because of the heroic acts of her sister, who was murdered in the process.

Since then, she has battled her opioid addiction, coped with the loss of her brother to overdose, and fought to gain custody of her two children, all between stints in jail and rehab. On Oct. 26, Tiffany stood at a podium before dozens of Natchaug Hospital staff and supporters to share her story and how Natchaug’s Care Plus program in Groton transformed her life.

“Today, I’m grateful to tell you that I will have four years of sobriety [in January], and if it wasn’t for [Care Plus] I don’t know where I’d be,” Tiffany said. “It’s rare when you come across a program like Care Plus. It’s amazing. It’s a big family. You feel at home.”

Tiffany was one of three Natchaug clients who shared their stories at Natchaug Hospital’s annual reception at the HHC East Region System Support Office. Each speaker offered gratitude for the services and support that Natchaug provided, which served as a reminder of how important the organization’s work is.

“Lives are being changed [at Natchaug Hospital] and I’m one of … Continued on page 2
them. That’s why I stand here today in front of you,” said Betty*, an oncology nurse and client at Care Plus. "To think that at one time I was suicidal boggles me. I’ll always be grateful for Natchaug and its programs.”

The third speaker, April, is a former client at Rivereast in Vernon who drew publicity for her work starting an impulse control support group after graduating from treatment. April was diagnosed with kleptomania after more than 20 larceny arrests and has used the support group as an opportunity to give back.

“If I can help one person not feel alone, it’s all worth it,” April said.

HHC Senior Vice President and Behavioral Health Network president Pat Rehmer applauded the courage of all three speakers and highlighted the importance of a recovery-oriented system of care.

“It’s critical that people with lived experience are involved in the decisions that we make and the programs that we develop and the care we deliver,” Rehmer said. “We are really moving the system in that direction, which is very important to me and the people we serve.”

Betsy Ritter, chair of Natchaug’s development committee and the state commissioner on aging, underscored the importance of having open and honest dialogues about mental health and addiction in her opening remarks for the event.

All three speakers received standing ovations for their moving stories, and they in turn, credited the clinicians, program directors and staff who helped them along the way.

“If only you knew how you guys make us feel and how comfortable, and knowing that you guys took the time to get to know me when I didn’t want to know me,” Tiffany said. “That’s what’s beautiful.”

*The use of first names only for the speakers in this story and names being changed denoted by an asterisk (*) are devices designed to protect each individual’s privacy.*
President Trump last week officially declared the nation’s opioid crisis a public health emergency, stopping short of issuing a national disaster declaration as originally promised.

“As Americans, we cannot allow this to continue. It is time to liberate our communities from this scourge of drug addiction. Never been this way. We can be the generation that ends the opioid epidemic. We can do it,” Trump said.

But while some addiction and public health leaders call the president’s announcement a good starting point, many are concerned that, unlike a national disaster declaration, funds to help fight the crisis won’t be immediately available and could get tied up in congressional gridlock.

“It’s a positive step,” said Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network Senior Vice President Pat Rehmer. “But, it’s a bit disappointing because every state including Connecticut needs the money right now to deal with this issue. We’re headed for more than 1,000 opioid related deaths this year in Connecticut alone. I’m not unhappy that he’s calling it a public health crisis. We’ve been calling it that for years. But without any immediate funding, there’s really nothing there.”

The declaration of a public health emergency means some grant money would be available for communities to fight opioid abuse, the expansion of telemedicine in rural areas to help patients who might not have access to treatment services, and the ability for states to fund additional addiction specialists.

Rushford Medical Director J. Craig Allen, MD, said he’s encouraged by the announcement and looks forward to more concrete recommendations expected next week from the President’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis.

“The president’s declaration brings needed attention and urgency to the opioid overdose epidemic. Drug overdose is the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of 50, and the number of opioid overdose related deaths has surpassed the number of deaths from HIV at the height of that epidemic,” Allen said. “This declaration opens the door for federal grant money and suggests a lowering of barriers to residential substance use care and the use of telemedicine for prescribing medication-assisted opioid treatment. However, there are no current dollars attached.”

While Rehmer said the emergency declaration is a positive step, she remains concerned that the Trump administration’s continued push for cuts to Medicaid — a major tool in helping state’s fight the opioid crisis—will have a devastating impact on those battling addiction.

“That’s a major concern especially in Connecticut. There is a large population of patients with substance abuse disorders covered through Medicaid expansion [under the Affordable Care Act]. They will lose coverage and access to care [if cuts are approved],” Rehmer said. “If we do receive federal dollars under the president’s plan for the crisis, I would love to see it come in the form of grants for people who don’t have insurance. But I don’t think that’s coming any time soon.”

Rehmer said, in many cases, local communities and addiction agencies have been relying on private donations to help fight the opioid crisis, such as a recent gift from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut (CFECT) to supply Narcan to families of Natchaug’s Care Plus site and first responders in New London.

“Natchaug and Rushford have been very successful in securing funds to help us battle this crisis. But, there are only so many times we can ask a foundation for money for this,” Rehmer said.

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**Help for those who need financial assistance**

Do you know a patient who is in need of financial assistance? Hartford HealthCare can provide help to patients in need. Learn more about the program at [https://intranet.hartfordhealthcare.org/inside-hhc/patient-support](https://intranet.hartfordhealthcare.org/inside-hhc/patient-support).

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**About BHNews**

BHNews is published every other Friday. Story ideas or submissions may be sent to amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org or steve.coates@hhchealth.org.

Articles must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Every effort will be made to run the article in its entirety, but due to space constraints and style requirements, editing may be necessary.

The deadline for the next edition of BHNews is Tuesday, Nov. 14, at noon.
**Kiss your e-mail**

**Good-bye**

*(The Sequel)*

Effective Nov. 15, 2017 all Hartford HealthCare e-mail will automatically be deleted after:

- Seven years for directors and above
- Three years for managers and below
- Deleted items folders will continue to be emptied once a week

**Mid-2018: Six-month e-mail retention policy strictly enforced.**

All e-mail auto-deleted after six months.

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For information and instructions for saving and storing your important business documents, visit the Information Technology page of HHC Connect.

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This notice reflects stricter enforcement of Hartford HealthCare’s existing e-mail retention policy. Non-compliance and improper storage of business documents may create business and regulatory risks.

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Got a great story to tell? We want to hear about it

We want to ensure everyone is aware of two new media integrations that Hartford HealthCare will launch in the next few weeks. These additions to our content marketing line up will help us become more visible in targeted regions across the state.

Like everything we produce, our topics will be strategically chosen with clear goals in mind and clear calls to action.

The first is called “Advances in Health,” a two-minute, weekly segment featuring our experts on WTNH/Good Morning America. It is a recorded segment that will air Thursday mornings in the New Haven/shoreline region where HHC is expanding.

The second will be called “Connect to Healthier LIVE” and launches in December. This will be a longer format segment that airs monthly and taps into the robust social media following of the Hartford Courant. It will be rebroadcast live on the Courant’s Facebook page from the Hartford HealthCare studios.

We have worked hard to secure these strategic integrations over the last several months. Both are directly related to the success of the other segments that we produce in-house:

- Medical Rounds on WFSB (followed by Facebook LIVE)
- HealthCare Matters on WTIC
- The Rob Dibble Show on 97.9 FM
- Connect to Healthier on NBC

We are reaching out because we need you to be our eyes and ears. We are actively seeking experts on topics that appeal to the morning show audience, topics that elevate Hartford HealthCare, and topics that will help us grow our key service lines and institutes. We want you to pitch us great experts and ideas, but please know that we will selective — and not everything will make the cut.

We have done a lot of research as we choose topics, polling our community so that we have a better idea of what will be most successful in these integrations. We will balance that research with our growth initiatives.

As always, all of the content we produce will cascade. You will see it on social channels, on the internet and intranet, in waiting rooms and in screens across the system, even in local shopping centers.

If you have experts that you believe would be good guests, please let our senior content producer Melissa Dethlefsen know at melissa.dethlefsen@hhchealth.org.

— Rebecca Stewart, Director, Content Marketing

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Aetna helps offset the cost of Apple Watch purchases

From now until the end of the year, Hartford HealthCare employees can buy an Apple Watch with a $75 discount from Aetna.

The promotion is part of a partnership between Aetna and Apple designed to help employees stay active, track their health and keep track of their insurance.

Employees of Hartford HealthCare will be able to purchase an Apple Watch online and pay for it with a credit card or, if they are eligible, spread the cost over a year, using interest-free payroll deductions.

To learn more, including purchasing instructions, click on the Wellness Incentives page of HHC Connect.

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Dr. Saunders speaks about Stewart; Dr. Allen on Fox

Dr. Laura Saunders from the Institute of Living was quoted in a story in the Hartford Courant about former UConn superstar Breanna Stewart opening up about being sexually abused as a child. “The word I would use is courage,” said Dr. Laura Saunders, a child psychologist at the Institute of Living. “It takes courage to release the secret. Once you release the secret, it’s not a secret anymore and it’s a step toward decreasing the isolation and decreasing the shame.” http://www.courant.com/sports/uconn-womens-basketball/hc-sp-breanna-stewart-1101-20171031-story.html

Dr. Craig Allen spoke about the opioid addiction crisis on The Stan Simpson Show on Fox 61. https://youtu.be/5229h55ng30

For more behavioral health news updates, subscribe to the BHN’s e-newsletter on www.healthnewshub.org.

Mental Health First Aid classes are now found on HealthStream

In an effort to standardize BHN registration for trainings, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training schedules and registration are now found on HealthStream.

MHFA training is offered at the Institute of Living on the third Friday of each month from now through September 2018. A minimum of 10 participants must be registered in order for the course to be run.

If you are interested in scheduling a training outside of the Hartford region, contact MHFA coordinator Patricia Graham at patriciac.graham@hhchealth.org.

Deadline for flu shots fast approaching

Everyone who works, learns and volunteers at Hartford HealthCare stands firmly against influenza. Through our Influenza Prevention Program, we are achieving nearly 100 percent vaccination rate and significantly reducing the risk flu poses to our most vulnerable patients. We also are protecting our co-workers and families.

All non-exempted staff members must be vaccinated by Nov. 6. For more information on the flu prevention program, or to find a vaccination clinic, visit hhconnect.org and under “Community”, select “Initiatives” and click “Flu Prevention Program.”

DEADLINE EXTENDED!
BrainDance Awards for Student Projects on Mental Illness

The Institute of Living at Hartford Hospital is sponsoring an academic and art competition designed to decrease the stigma of mental illness. The BrainDance Awards encourage high school students to gain knowledge about psychiatric diseases and develop a more tolerant and realistic perspective toward people with severe psychiatric problems. The competition also aims to promote students’ interest in careers in mental health care. To apply for the awards: please log on to: www.nrc-iol.org and follow the link to BrainDance for application forms, information and procedures.

13 Reasons Why

The Netflix original series “13 Reasons Why,” based on a young-adult novel in which the protagonist, Hannah, commits suicide and leaves behind a cassette tape detailing the reasons why she did it, will begin a second season in 2018. Although details about the sequel have been scarce, many have criticized the original series for glamorizing suicide and risking an increase in copycat incidents, while others applauded the series for opening a dialogue about the prevalence of teen suicide.

To continue the conversation, Hartford HealthCare’s Behavioral Health Network hosted a town hall discussion and a screening of an episode from the series on Nov. 1. The expert panel, moderated by BHN Senior Vice President Pat Rehmer, included Dr. Hank Schwartz and Laura Saunders, PsyD, ABPP, from the Institute of Living.

Another similar town hall will take place Wednesday, Nov. 29, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Slater Auditorium, 108 Crescent St. in Norwich on the campus of Norwich Free Academy.
Dr. Laura Saunders will kick off our 5 year celebration by reviewing triumphs and learning moments in LGBTQ mental health over the years.

This year’s event will feature a panel of LGBTQ young adults sharing some of their experiences with the mental health and educational system. Attendees will be given an opportunity to ask the panelists questions, as well.

This event is intended for healthcare professionals. Not a CME credit event.

You are invited to our 5th annual LGBTQ Networking Event to celebrate the opening of The Right Track/LGBTQ Specialty Track in Young Adult Services.

**We’re on the Right Track**

**Tuesday, November 7 • 6 – 8 pm**
Institute of Living – Hartford Room, Commons Building, 2nd floor

Dr. Laura Saunders will kick off our 5 year celebration by reviewing triumphs and learning moments in LGBTQ mental health over the years.

This year’s event will feature a panel of LGBTQ young adults sharing some of their experiences with the mental health and educational system. Attendees will be given an opportunity to ask the panelists questions, as well.

This event is intended for healthcare professionals. Not a CME credit event.

Anything to share?

Are you interested in sharing your clinical experience or knowledge with co-workers? Consider submitting an article to the Clinical Corner. For more information, e-mail amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org.
Family Resource Center Support Groups

The IOL Family Resource Center (FRC) holds regular support groups. For additional information, please contact the FRC at 860.545.7665 or 860.545.1888. All programs are free of charge and, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Massachusetts Cottage, First Floor Group Room at the IOL Campus, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford. The upcoming IOL FRC Support Group schedule is as follows:

- **Support Group For Those Coping With A New Or Chronic Medical Condition.** Nov. 3, 10, 17, 24, Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 (Every Friday), 1 - 2 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For young adults ages 17-26 struggling with a new diagnosis, chronic medical conditions, physical symptoms or limitations. The group will help with difficult losses and limitation due to a medical condition, and ways family members might better cope with the illness.

- **Depression: An Introduction To The Disorder.** Nov. 7, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This program is for family and friends of individuals who suffer from depression. It will present a basic understanding of major depression, its treatment, and ways family members might better cope with the illness.

- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** Nov. 8, 22, Dec. 13, 27. (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 5 – 6:15 p.m. in the Center Building, Young Adult Service Group Room. Support group for 16- to 23-year-olds who identify LGBTQ issues as being prominent in their lives. The goal is to discuss support strategies to manage life challenges.

- **Trauma Support Group.** Nov. 8, 22, Dec. 13, 27. (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 6-7 p.m. A peer-led group that offers a supportive environment for individuals with any type of trauma history. Attendees will discuss relevant topics and educational materials will be available.

- **Debt Management Program.** Nov. 7, Dec. 5 (First Tuesday of each month), 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Donnelly Conference Room, First Floor. Please join us as we bring together experts and those who want guidance, direction, and support. Space is limited — reservations are required by calling 860.545.7665.

- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** Nov. 15, Dec. 20 (Third Wednesday of the month), 6 - 7 p.m. Providing a place for parents of children on the autism spectrum, or another related disorder, to come together and get support and information. Monthly, peer-run support groups interspersed with special guests and speakers to offer additional guidance and perspective.

- **It’s Hard To Be A Mom.** Nov. 16, Dec. 7, 21 (First and third Thursday of each month), 10 - 11:30 a.m. Peer-led group that acknowledges the inherent challenges with modern-day mothering and offers an opportunity for mothers to come together, share experiences, and support each other. This group welcomes expecting mothers and mothers with babies to discuss any and all challenges associated with motherhood in a safe and open-minded space. Babies welcome! Space is limited. Please RSVP to 860.545.7324.

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Socialization program planned for autistic teens

The Institute of Living’s Child and Adolescent Day Treatment Program will be hosting an outpatient skills group for children age 11-14 who carry Autism Spectrum diagnoses. This six-week group will focus on learning and strengthening social skills and will be held on Tuesday evenings at 5:30 p.m. beginning in November 2017.

Requirements: Patients must have an existing outpatient provider, verbal communication skills, non-aggressive behavior and reliable transportation, or medical cab eligibility. For more information, or to schedule an intake, please call Laura S. Dodge, LCSW at 860.696.0005 or email at laura.dodge@hhchealth.org.
Discounted BJs memberships for Natchaug employees

Natchaug Hospital is again offering discounted new memberships and renewals to BJs Wholesale Club. Employees who sign up receive a discount on fees, an additional month of membership and a second card for a family member. Additionally, $5 from each membership will be donated to Natchaug.

Checks should be payable to BJs Wholesale Club. Applications (which are on the intranet) and payments are due by Wednesday, Nov. 8. To learn more, e-mail sherry.smardon@hhchealth.org.

Help Natchaug through Amazon Smile donations

Help raise money for Natchaug Hospital through Amazon Smile. Just shop through https://smile.amazon.com and select Natchaug as your charitable organization.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

Tens of millions of products are eligible for donation. You’ll see them marked “Eligible for AmazonSmile donation” on the product detail page.

Powered up

Joshua Center Northeast staff got into the Halloween spirit Tuesday by dressing as Power Rangers for the day. They include, from left, Bill Dahm, mental health specialist; Jocelyn Nadeau, lead therapist; Zach Miller, mental health specialist; Nicole Reeves, mental health specialist; Chet Samok, mental health specialist; and Madison McNally, primary therapist.

SAT. NOVEMBER 11, 2017

OCD BASICS & BEYOND

This free educational program will review the basics of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in both adults and children. A review of symptoms, treatment and strategies to support a loved one with OCD will be presented. Real life experiences will be shared and there will be a Q & A session at the end. This program is an OCD Awareness Week Event!

Sponsored by

OCD Connecticut
860-435-6233
ct.ocdf@gmail.com
www.ocdct.org
Clients showcased their skills in a wide array of performances including poetry, storytelling and music during the second annual Rushford Client Talent Show on Wednesday, Oct. 25, in the Rushford cafeteria in Meriden. In all, 14 Rushford clients receiving care in departments across the organization took part in the event, which was meant to give them an outlet to show off their creative skills in an encouraging environment. Performances and performers included:

- “The Star-Spangled Banner” by Valerie L.
- “The Landlady” (self-penned poem) by Shaun M.
- “What’s the Use of Feeling” (from Steven Universe by Rebecca Sugar) by Sabrina F. and Sage
- “More Than Life’s Worth and School of Hard Knocks” (self-penned poems) by Eric S.
- “Growing Up and Believing In Yourself” (self-penned poem) by Jenny R.
- “Somewhere Out There” (from An American Tail) by Penelope P.
- Quote by Sarah Young and “Let It Be Let It Be” (self-penned poem) by Janice W.
- “The Bag Lady” and “This Little Light of Mine,” performance by Lis F.; narration and singing by Ray S.
- Rakim’s “My Melody” by Jesse J.
- Adele’s “All That I Ask” by Kathleen A.
- The Firm’s “Satisfaction Guaranteed” by Stephen G.
- “You Asked” (self-penned song accompanied by harmonica) by Tim F
- “God Bless America” by everyone.

A talented group of performers showcased their skills at the 2nd annual Rushford Client Talent Show on Wednesday, Oct. 25, in the cafeteria at Rushford’s Meriden campus. The acts included a number of different pieces including musical presentations, songs and self-penned poems. Above: All the participants joined in the sing “God Bless America” for the finale of the program. Left: Stephen plays “Satisfaction Guaranteed” by The Firm on his eight-string guitar.

Signs of fall

The clients of the Acute Care and Evaluation (ACE) detox unit at Rushford along with their counselor assistant, Dainette Lynch, created this painting using paper and paint donated by ACE clinician Christina McCoy. The idea stemmed from feedback received through Press Ganey surveys, which indicated that clients on the ACE unit would like more activities as they begin to feel better. Through an engagement opportunity submitted in ACE’s daily huddle, Lynch owned this chance to engage her clients by creating this fall-themed bulletin board. Lynch led her clients through the process of creating leaves, and each client left a positive phrase or affirmation on their leaf. Each client that passes through the doors of the ACE unit has a chance to now add their leaf and words of encouragement to their peers throughout the autumn season.
Recovery takes on many forms thanks to employee fund

Thanks to the Rushford Employee Fund, clients at Silver Street in Middletown were able to express their artistic talent and holiday spirit by painting pumpkins for Halloween on Oct. 20. The pumpkins were purchased from Stew Leonard’s in Newington and a Stew Leonard’s employee also donated a $25 gift card in support of Rushford clients in order to help offset the cost.

Also in October, the Employee Fund championed four clients by purchasing their entry fees to run in the “Be Part of the Solution second annual 5K Road Race” in Rockville. One of the sponsored runners said that, “Here at Stonehaven there are a few of us who find great reward in overcoming physical challenges, as a means of building strengths that can help to overcome emotional, mental and spiritual obstacles in recovery.” The client also commented that he had found, “…in many instances, the tools I use in achieving motivation, self-respect, personal growth, focus, patience and perseverance on the physical level can also be the same ones used in recovery and its many challenges.”

Employee Fund campaign donations are up 42 percent for 2018, according to Kate McNulty, Regional Director of Development & Philanthropy who also said that, “Staff really did an amazing job jumping in to support our clients. It’s amazing what $2 or $3 from employee donor’s paychecks ends up doing for clients. It’s really heartening to be part of that.”

Middletown students get involved in Red Ribbon Week

The Red Ribbon Campaign is the oldest and largest drug prevention program in the nation reaching millions of young people during Red Ribbon Week from Oct. 23-31. It is an ideal way for people and communities to unite and take a visible stand against drugs.

Students participating in peer leadership programs including Rams In Action at Woodrow Wilson Middle School and Middletown High SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) led activities throughout the week to remind their peers to make healthy choices and avoid the influence of drugs and alcohol. Both peer leadership programs are advised by Felicia Goodwine-Vaughters, coordinator of Prevention and Wellness. Middletown Mayor Dan Drew stopped by the middle school last week with a proclamation stating that it was Red Ribbon Day on Tuesday, Oct. 24, in Middletown.
Health and Wellness Fair

Medications returned for safe disposal

The Middletown Police Department, in partnership with Rushford and the Middletown Substance Abuse Prevention Council, collected unused or expired medication for safe disposal on Saturday, Oct. 28, in honor of National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

More than four boxes — a little more than 100 pounds of prescription pills — were safely collected and disposed of.

Painting party produces plenty of pumpkins

Art teacher Julie French and staff engaged clients from Rushford Academy in pumpkin painting on Monday, Oct. 30. The pumpkins, which were donated by Lyman Orchards, allowed clients to show their creative and spooky sides. All the pumpkins are now on display at the Rushford unit, so be sure to check them out!

Staying busy at Rushford Academy

On Monday, Oct. 30, Rushford Academy and Haddam Killingworth’s Healthy Kids Healthy Communities Youth Coalition had a fun “teen night” together. This is the second time both groups have collaborated and the relationship continues to grow. Activities included basketball, pumpkin painting, rock painting, eating Halloween candy and simply “hanging out.” We look forward to planning next month’s event.

On Tuesday, Oct. 31, Rushford Academy had its first field trip of the year to the Beardsley Zoo. The clients (and staff) had a blast. They had a special meet and greet with a tortoise and legless lizard. During this special session the Beardsley Zoo staff members taught the group about animal adaptations. Rushford spent the rest of the day walking around seeing and learning about all of the zoo animals — tigers, condors, lynx, wolves, red pandas, leopards, tamarins and much more.