

A SciWomen Origin Story

KRISTEN LEAR

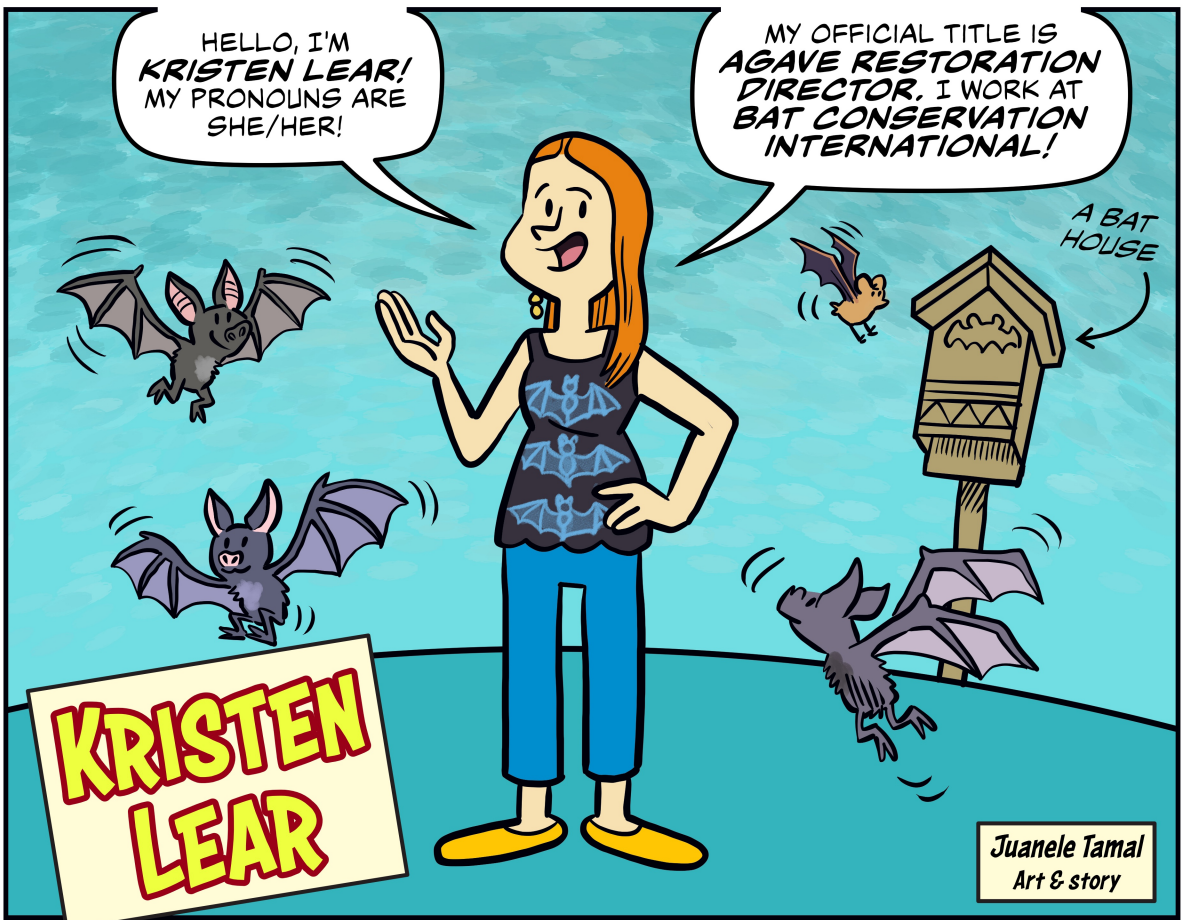


Juanele 2024

SCI _ ALL

 AAAS
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

IF/THEN[®]
Ambassador



HELLO, I'M **KRISTEN LEAR!** MY PRONOUNS ARE SHE/HER!

MY OFFICIAL TITLE IS **AGAVE RESTORATION DIRECTOR.** I WORK AT **BAT CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL!**

A BAT HOUSE

KRISTEN LEAR

Juanele Tamal
Art & story



BAT CONSERVATION HAS BEEN MY PASSION SINCE I WAS GROWING UP. IT'S A BIG PART OF WHO I AM AND WHAT I DO!



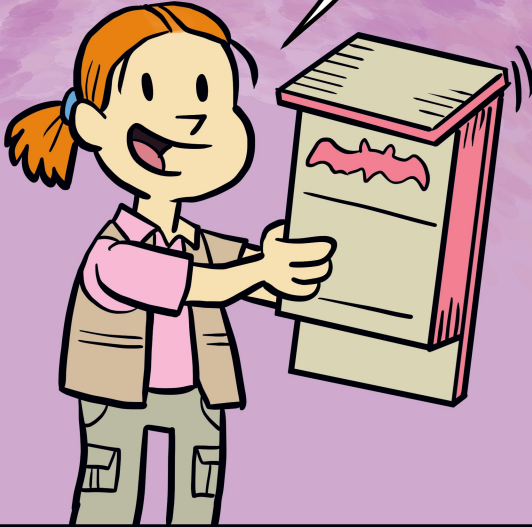
I'M A **GIRL SCOUT.** I GOT MY UNOFFICIAL START IN **BAT CONSERVATION THROUGH GIRL SCOUTS!**

MY MOM WAS MY **GIRL SCOUT TROOP LEADER!**

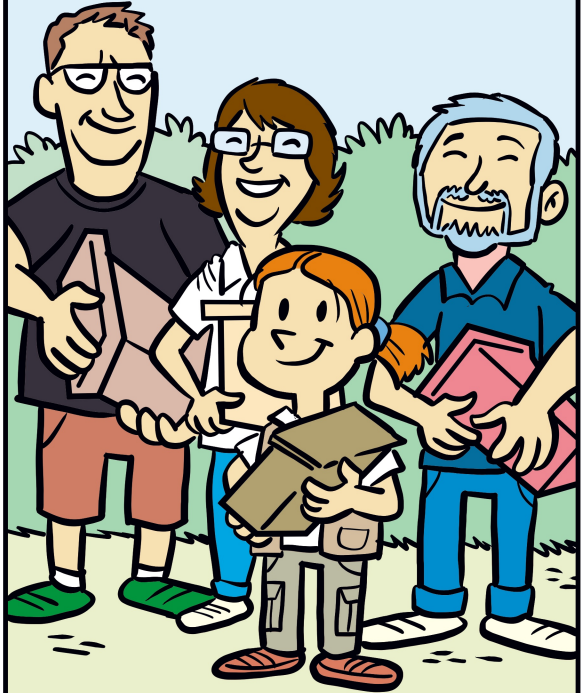
IN SIXTH GRADE, I DID A **SILVER AWARD PROJECT** ABOUT **BATS**. I READ A LOT ABOUT THEM!

I LEARNED THEY WERE **UNDER THREAT** FROM A LOT OF DIFFERENT THINGS!

I BUILT **FOUR** BAT HOUSES AS PART OF THAT PROJECT!



MY DAD, MY MOM, AND MY GRANDPA HELPED ME BUILD THOSE HOUSES! **GRANDPA** WAS A VERY HANDS-ON, MECHANICAL TYPE OF PERSON!



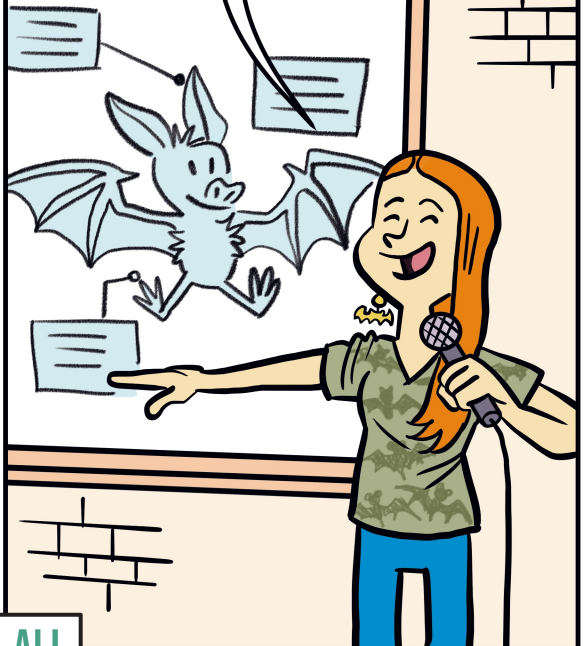
I DECIDED TO STUDY **ZOOLOGY** IN COLLEGE.

I WANTED TO BE A **WILDLIFE VETERINARIAN** AND HELP ANIMALS!



DURING COLLEGE, I DID A **PRESENTATION** ON BATS FOR A SEMINAR AND AT A **SCIENCE FAIR** FOR LOCAL SCHOOLS!

IN CONCLUSION: BATS ARE **AWESOME!**



I APPLIED FOR SUMMER JOBS,
BUT DIDN'T GET THE JOB THAT
I REALLY WANTED AT THE
CINCINNATI ZOO --

THE MAIL
LOST MY
APPLICATION?!
OH NO!

-- BUT EVERYTHING
HAPPENS FOR A REASON...

I THEN FOUND AN AD FROM A PHD
STUDENT IN TEXAS. SHE NEEDED
FIELD ASSISTANCE!

...HERE I HAD MY FIRST
**BAT RESEARCH
EXPERIENCE!**

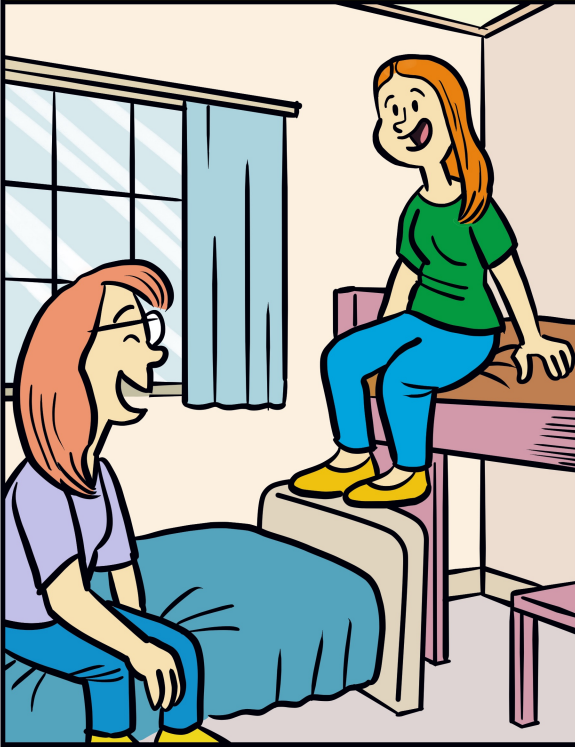
WE WOULD CATCH BATS
AND RADIO TRACK THEM
ALL NIGHT!

THIS IS
AMAZING!
I WANT TO DO
CONSERVATION
AS A CAREER!

THIS TIME I GOT TO BUILD **18 BAT
HOUSES** FROM SCRATCH! I USED
A POWER SAW, AND I'D GO TO THE
LUMBER YARD IN TOWN AND GET
BIG POLES TO MOUNT THEM!

SEVERAL OF THE
HOUSES WERE
FULL OF BATS
SOON AFTER!

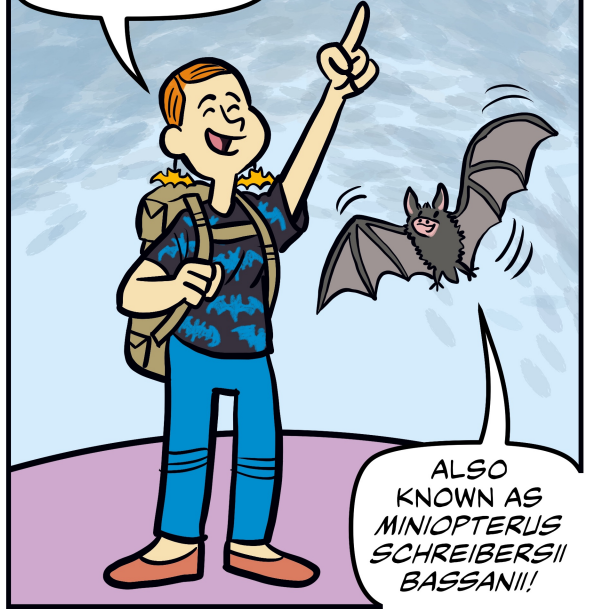
IN COLLEGE, I **LOVED** BEING AROUND PEOPLE MY OWN AGE, WITH SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT INTERESTS, ALL LIVING **TOGETHER** IN THE DORMS!



AFTER UNDERGRAD, I GOT A FULBRIGHT SCHOLARSHIP...

I'LL GO TO **SOUTH AUSTRALIA** FOR A YEAR TO STUDY THE SOUTHERN BENT-WING BAT --

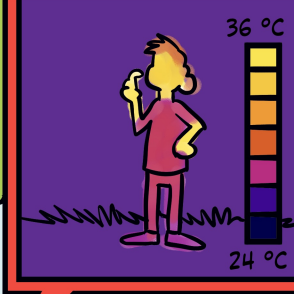
-- A **CRITICALLY ENDANGERED** BAT SPECIES!



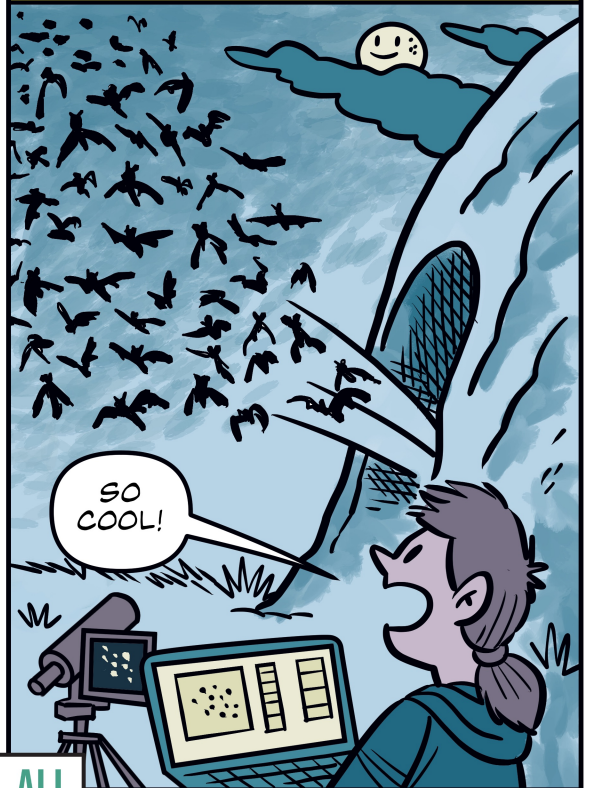
ALSO KNOWN AS **MINIOPTERUS SCHREIBERSII BASSANII!**

I GOT TO DO **HANDS-ON** WORK WITH TECHNOLOGY THAT I WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH!

WITH THIS **THERMAL IMAGING** CAMERA, WE'LL TRY TO TRACK AND COUNT BATS...



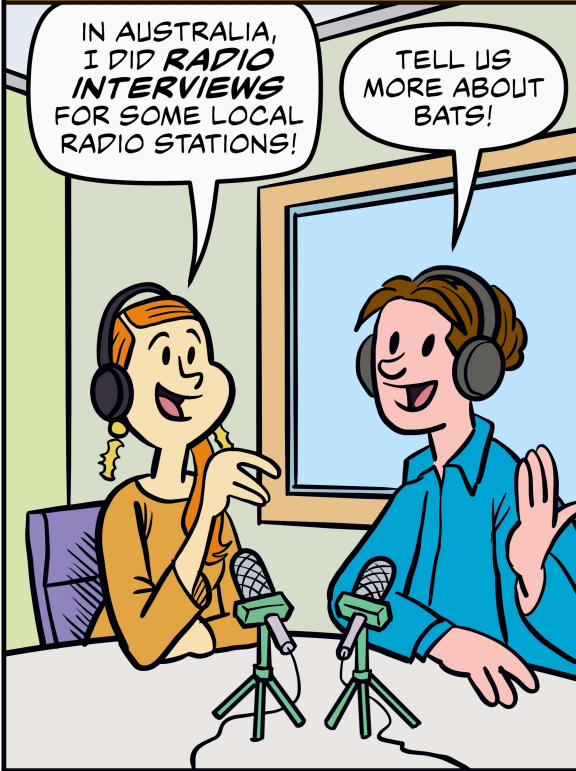
WE WOULD COUNT **FORTY TO FIFTY THOUSAND** BATS EMERGING FROM A CAVE IN A NIGHT!



I KNEW I WANTED TO DO A PHD, AND THE FULBRIGHT **SOLIDIFIED** MY DECISION TO CONTINUE WITH THAT CONSERVATION WORK!

IN AUSTRALIA, I DID **RADIO INTERVIEWS** FOR SOME LOCAL RADIO STATIONS!

TELL US MORE ABOUT BATS!



I DID A COUPLE OF **SCHOOL TALKS** AND **BAT WALKS**. I ALSO VOLUNTEERED AS A GIRL SCOUT!

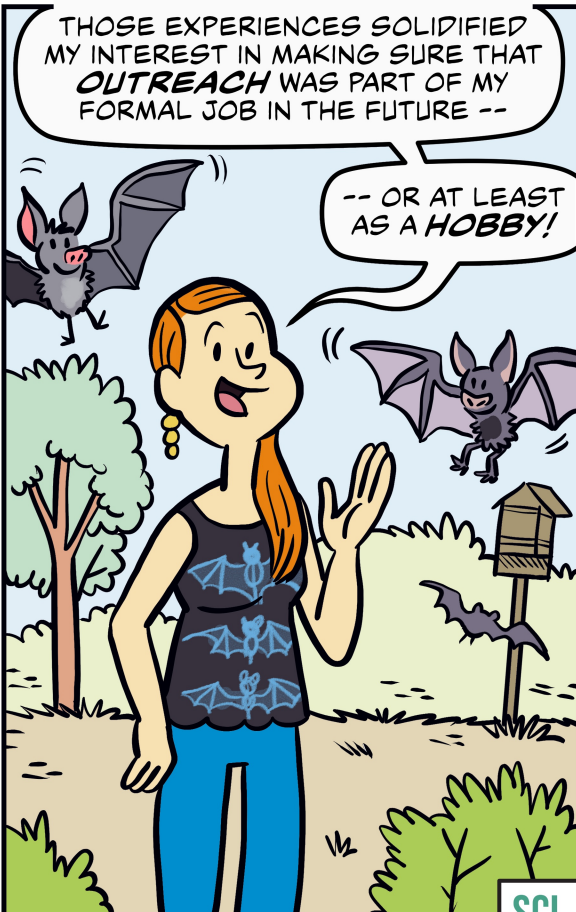
HERE, WE CALL OURSELVES **GIRL GUIDES!**

WONDERFUL!

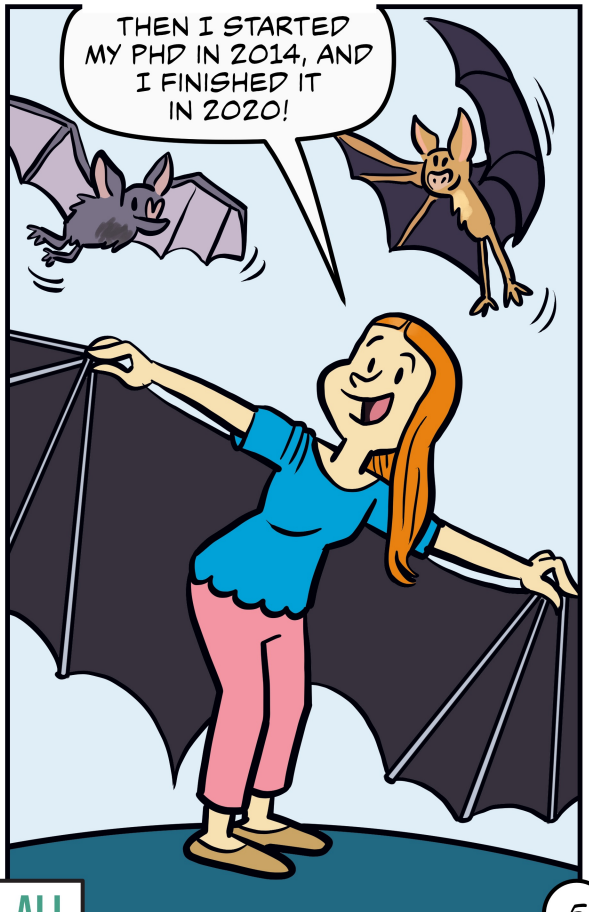


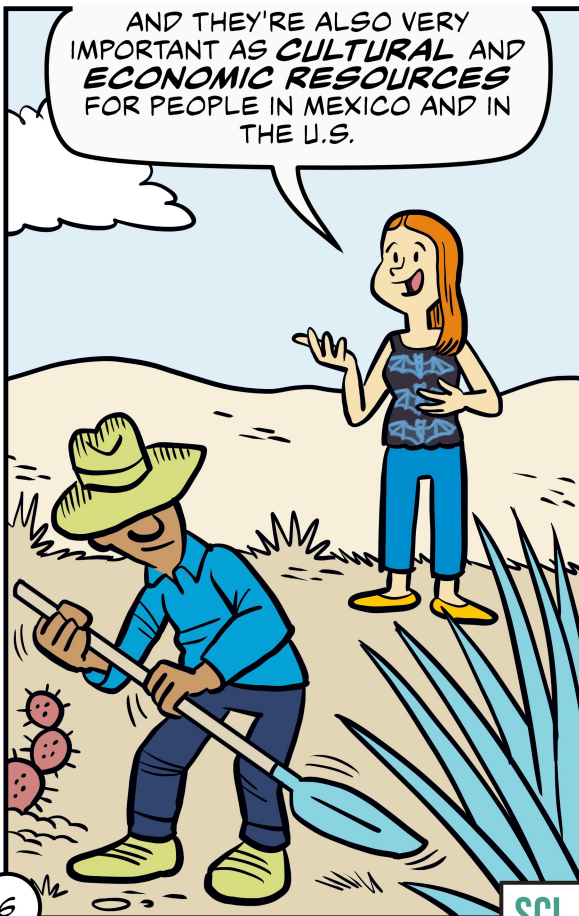
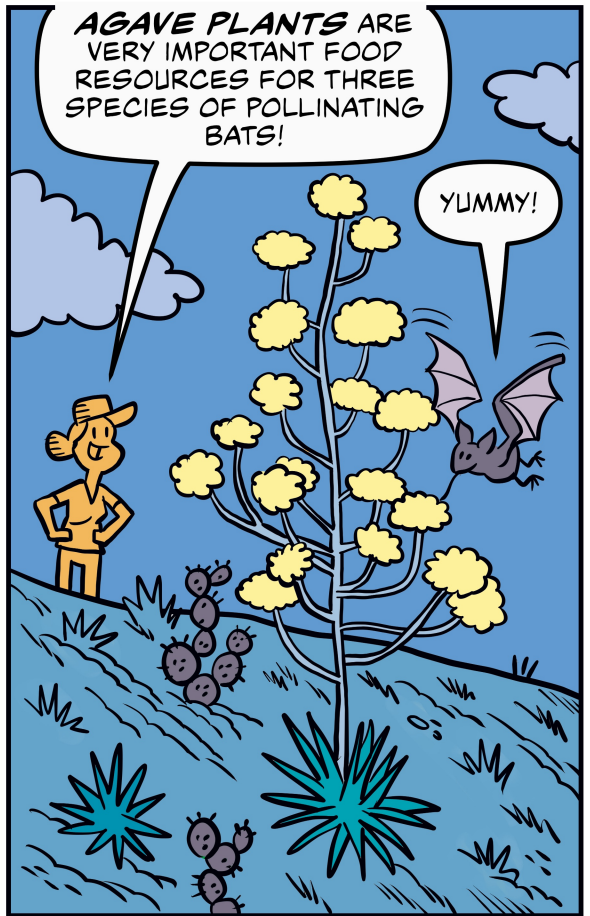
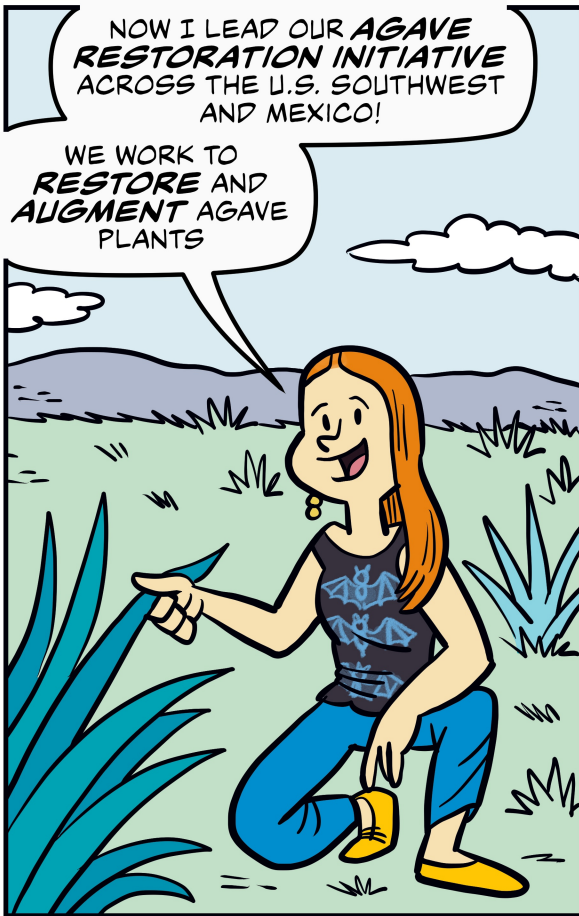
THOSE EXPERIENCES SOLIDIFIED MY INTEREST IN MAKING SURE THAT **OUTREACH** WAS PART OF MY FORMAL JOB IN THE FUTURE --

-- OR AT LEAST AS A **HOBBY!**



THEN I STARTED MY PHD IN 2014, AND I FINISHED IT IN 2020!







I OCCASIONALLY DO FIELD WORK BUT A LOT IS COMPUTER WORK, AND A LOT OF **TRAVELING** FOR PARTNER MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES...

...AND **FUNDRAISING** TOO!



ONE VERY LOGISTICAL THING IS **SPANISH**. A LOT OF OUR PARTNERS ARE FROM **MEXICO** --

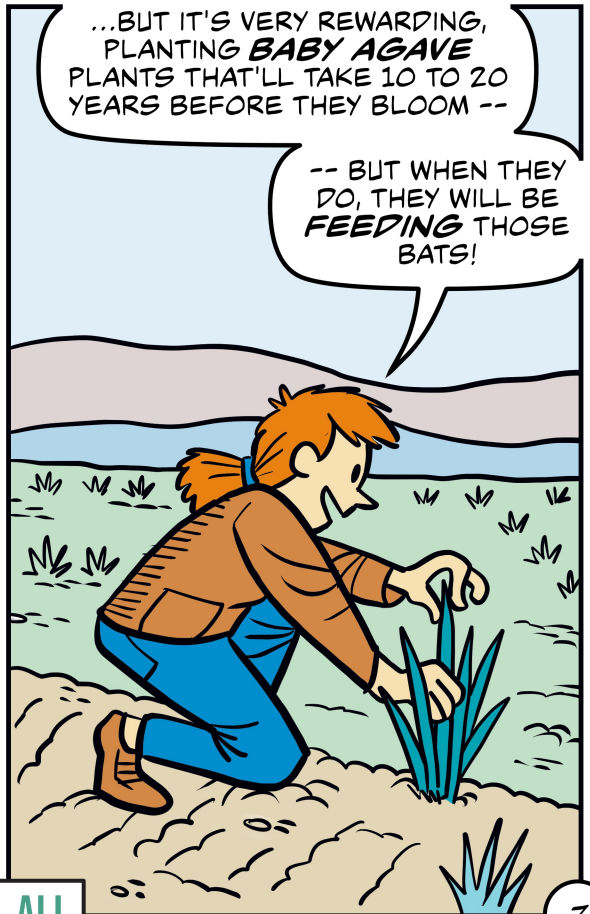
I KNOW SPANISH WELL, BUT IT'S BEEN A **CHALLENGE** GETTING BETTER AT IT...

¡CREO QUE HE MEJORADO MI ESPAÑOL!

¡ASÍ ES!



ALSO, IT'S A **VERY LARGE** INITIATIVE, YOU HAVE TO MAKE SURE ALL PIECES ARE WORKING **TOGETHER** AS A WHOLE INSTEAD OF JUST ISOLATED PROJECTS HERE AND THERE!



...BUT IT'S VERY REWARDING, PLANTING **BABY AGAVE** PLANTS THAT'LL TAKE 10 TO 20 YEARS BEFORE THEY BLOOM --

-- BUT WHEN THEY DO, THEY WILL BE **FEEDING** THOSE BATS!



I DO A LOT OF PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS. IN 2019 I WAS AT THE EXPLORERS FESTIVAL FOR NATGEO AND GAVE A LIGHTNING TALK!

-- IN ONLY SIXTY SECONDS!

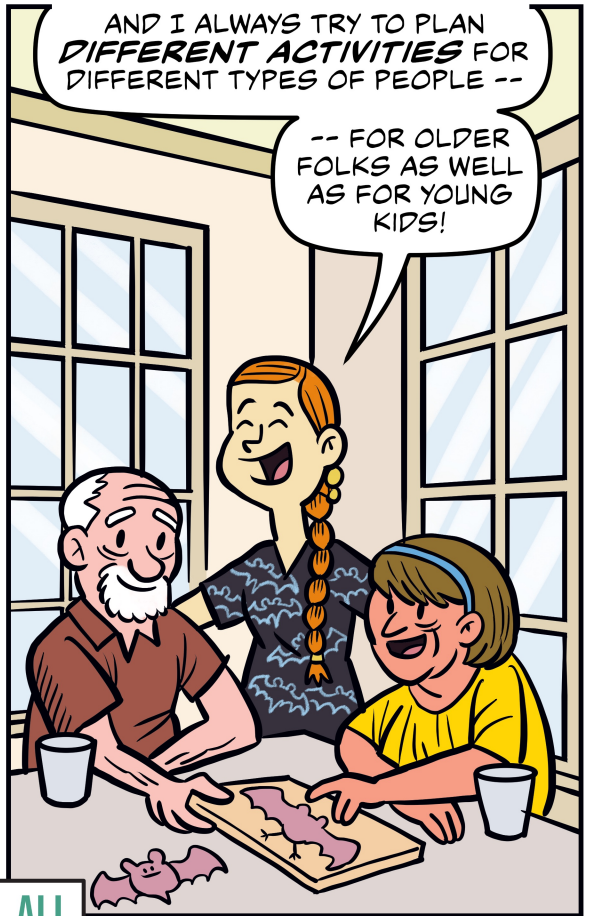


I'VE ALSO STAYED INVOLVED IN GIRL SCOUTS AS A **SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR** AND DOING ACTIVITIES WITH THEM!



I TRY TO ENCOURAGE **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY** BY GIVING TALKS IN SPANISH IN THE U.S. AND IN MEXICO!

LOS MURCIÉLAGOS SE ALIMENTAN DEL NÉCTAR DEL AGAVE...



AND I ALWAYS TRY TO PLAN **DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES** FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE --

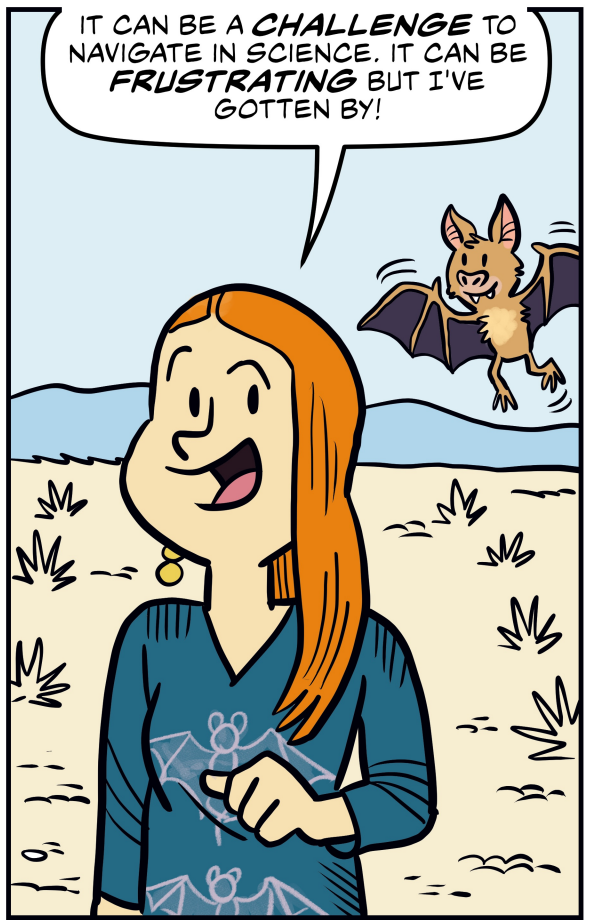
-- FOR OLDER FOLKS AS WELL AS FOR YOUNG KIDS!



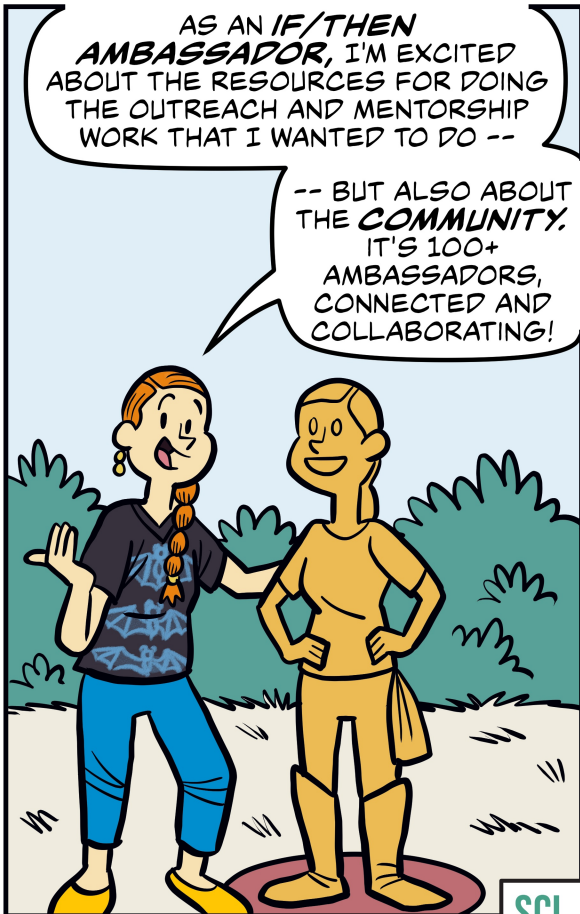
ONCE AN OLDER MALE COLLEAGUE SAID I WAS "ANNOYINGLY UPBEAT". CERTAINLY **NOT** A VERY GOOD COMPLIMENT!

COMMENTS LIKE THOSE MAKE ME WONDER, DO PEOPLE TAKE ME **SERIOUSLY**, WITH MY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE?

DO THEY REALLY **LISTEN** TO ME?



IT CAN BE A **CHALLENGE** TO NAVIGATE IN SCIENCE. IT CAN BE **FRUSTRATING** BUT I'VE GOTTEN BY!



AS AN **IF/THEN** **AMBASSADOR**, I'M EXCITED ABOUT THE RESOURCES FOR DOING THE OUTREACH AND MENTORSHIP WORK THAT I WANTED TO DO --

-- BUT ALSO ABOUT THE **COMMUNITY**. IT'S 100+ AMBASSADORS, CONNECTED AND COLLABORATING!



THE GENERAL POPULATION CAN **ALSO** HELP BAT CONSERVATION EFFORTS! THE FIRST STEP IS TO **LISTEN** TO THE PEOPLE!

WHAT ARE YOUR **NEEDS**?

WELL, I'VE HAD **ISSUES** WITH BATS TOO!

YOU CAN PLANT AGAVE PLANTS **NATIVE** TO THE AREA!

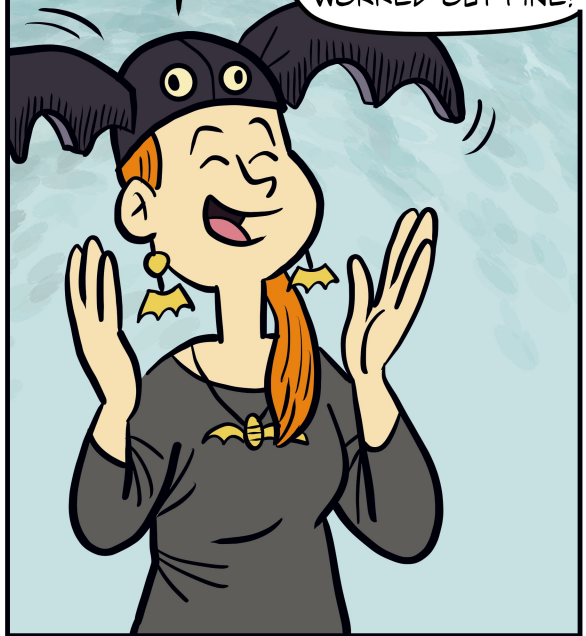
EVEN *OUTSIDE* THE U.S. SOUTHWEST AND MEXICO, YOU CAN *SUPPORT* BATS BY PLANTING A BAT GARDEN!

PLANT *NIGHT BLOOMING FLOWERS* THAT ATTRACT NOCTURNAL INSECTS AND THEN BATS!



FOR PEOPLE INTERESTED IN PURSUING A *CAREER* IN BAT CONSERVATION, DON'T LET SETBACKS DERAIL YOU!

LIKE MYSELF AND THE CINCINNATI ZOO! IN THE END, EVERYTHING WORKED OUT FINE!



THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG PATH IN LIFE. IF THAT *SPECIFIC* PATH THAT YOU HAD IN MIND DOESN'T WORK RIGHT AWAY, IT'S STILL GONNA BE *GOOD*!



KEEP MOVING FORWARD!