

# the BUZZ

BY HANNAH SCHARDT



## Polly Want a Crack-Up?

You're hanging out with a group of friends when one of you gets the giggles. Suddenly everyone else starts laughing and being silly, as well. Sound familiar? Well, it happens to parrots, too!

Scientists who study a New Zealand parrot called the *kea* (KEE-uh) knew that the bird is very smart and social. And they knew it has a special call that it uses when it's playing, either alone or with other birds. So the scientists wondered whether just hearing that call might put keas in a playful mood—the way sounds of laughter can affect people. So they played recordings of the “play” call to wild keas. Right on cue, the parrots started playing, bird-style: performing fancy flight patterns and chasing each other in fun.



ANDREW WALMSLEY/ALAMY



COURTESY OF MICHELE CARDAMONE

**Keeping elephants from going extinct is a BIG job.** But 11-year-old twins Isabella and Willow Poschman (**above**) are helping protect the giant animals, one homemade card at a time.

A few years ago, the sisters watched a documentary that showed African elephants being killed for their tusks. They were horrified. “The African elephant could become extinct before we are out of high school if the elephant poachers are not

## Kids Saving Elephants

stopped,” says Isabella. So she and her sister started a group called Kids Saving Elephants. They make one-of-a-kind greeting cards (**below**), lemonade, and cookies and sell them at a local farmer’s market. Those sales have earned thousands of dollars, which the sisters have donated to groups that protect elephants.

Earlier this year, Isabella and Willow were named runners-up for the Gloria Barron Prize for

Young Heroes, which honors kids who help people and the environment. The girls encourage other kids to stand up for wildlife, too. “We think a child’s voice for a good cause can be louder and more powerful than an adult’s,” says Willow. “And how sad would we all be in a world without elephants?”



ELEPHANT CARDS BY ISABELLA AND WILLOW POSCHMAN