

Contest Highlights Creative Kids Carvings



Les Cheneaux Elementary School wrapped its Halloween festivities for 2005 with a Great Pumpkin Contest. The contest allowed all the students to decorate, carve, or paint pumpkins, each representing the students' individual style and interests. School officials deemed all the pumpkins winners, so they awarded certificates and free ice cream coupons to everyone. A sampling of some of the entries include (back row, from left) Jesse Malkowski's "Jack Pot," Kelly Plank's witch cat; (front row) Colton Bucht's University of Iowa football (representing his grandfather, who coaches at University of Iowa), Karley Shattuck's "Vegenstein," and Ashley Sherlund's Cinderella Carriage, pulled by a pony. The pumpkins were donated by the Les Cheneaux Youth Advisory Committee, which supplied about 100 pumpkins to the school.

U.P. Team Rescues Pets From Hurricane Area

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where a given animal was found, what condition it was in, and where it was sent.

UPKARE had one of the largest operations in the Winn-Dixie staging area. The group brought a 30-foot-long gooseneck stock trailer and three pop-up canopies.

"We kept somebody in the camp 24 hours per day," Ms. Erickson said. "It was stressful. We had good days, and we had bad days, but every day was hot."

The hardest part, she said, was seeing the sick animals and watching people filter back into New Orleans with nothing but what they carried on their backs.

At one point, the group was approached by a woman who had only her vehicle and \$10. When she read the side of the U.P. rescue truck, she cried, and insisted the group take her \$10.

"It broke her heart," Ms. Erickson said, "to see us down there rescuing animals."

Although animals were the main focus of UPKARE, the group also brought supplies for people in need.

Lt. ReVord of the Iron Mountain Police Department, who started the U.P. Northeastern Wisconsin Law Enforcement America United Campaign, donated \$2,000 to the group. They used the money for supplies.

"The supplies we got were an enormous help," said Ms. Erickson. "We brought trash bags, bleach, buckets, all equipment necessary for people coming back to contaminated homes."

"While down there we were so tired we didn't want to eat," she said. "And fluid retention was hard

because we were constantly sweating."

Their trip was fraught with hardship. Their truck broke down three times during the course of the rescue operation.

While at the Winn-Dixie staging area, UPKARE workers were approached by other animal relief workers who told them about an illegal mass euthanization effort. They were told that animals were brought into a school and shot.

Although Ms. Erickson and her team had intended to pick up animals who already had been housed at existing shelters, the animals they brought back to Michigan are actually animals displaced from their homes by Katrina.

Before bringing them back, the 13 dogs under UPKARE workers' protection were given basic check-ups by a veterinarian in New Orleans, and as they passed through Alabama, the animals were given a more thorough screening.

"We did this because we would never jeopardize the U.P. animals these victims would come into contact with," Ms. Erickson said.

In Albertville, Alabama, a second veterinarian gave the dogs physicals, fecal exams, rabies checks, and heartworm checks. They were treated for fleas, received rabies booster shots, and reports on the animals were sent to the Department of Agriculture in Lansing.

They had planned to bring back about 30 animals, however, despite what Ms. Erickson said was a tremendous discount provided by the veterinarian in Alabama, by re-focusing on Katrina refugee animals, the group had to pay for vac-

cinations, allowing only 13 to be brought back to Michigan.

While in Alabama, the group picked up two hitchhikers, a set of abandoned puppies. The puppies are now in the St. Ignace Animal Shelter. They also picked up a beagle they named Flight, because he kept running away.

Now that they're in Michigan, the animals will stay in foster care for three months.

Ms. Erickson's team and the Animal Aid Association of St. Ignace will put the animals' information on petfinders.com, so that people in the south looking for their pets can find them.

After three months, those providing foster care for these dogs can keep them, or put them up for adoption.

Ms. Erickson has taken personal responsibility for a female beagle name Rita. Rita has a broken leg that must be amputated, and Ms. Erickson is seeking donations for the operation.

"Quite a few veterinarians in the U.P. have offered to spay and neuter the rescued dogs," she said.

Reflecting on the event, Ms. Erickson said what she saw in New Orleans made her realize that people should drop their grudges, and not concern themselves over material things.

According to her, nothing on television comes close to the conditions she encountered in New Orleans.

Even so, "I would do it all over again," she said.

In three months, qualified animal lovers interested in adopting dogs brought back by UPKARE workers can contact Ms. Erickson at (906) 293-4827.



A group of volunteer builders gather in front of the almost finished barn addition that nearly doubled the size of the Leach family's barn in Hessel. The addition provides more room for Suzie Leach to board horses. (Photograph courtesy of Debbie Swaffield)

Friends, Neighbors Gather To Raise Leach Family Barn

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too."

The resulting steel pole building is large enough to include five horse stalls, a storage area, and a tack area. Mrs. Leach boards horses at their 20-acre home in Hessel, and the additional stalls will allow her to board more.

"The extra income will help Suzie now be able to rent out more stalls to people and bring in more income," Mr. LaForest said. "Now she can take in four to five more horses if she wants to."

The addition comes just in time for the birth of a new foal, Mrs. Leach said.

"One of the reasons Jesse was trying to get this done now was because we have a horse in foal who's due any day now," Mrs. Leach said. "They did a great job, and it was great to have all of Jesse's friends get together and finish something he started, and just for all of us to get together."

Mrs. Leach is a riding enthusiast and she particularly enjoys spending time around the horses. She has given some riding lessons, and she has enjoyed the times children come to their place to see and ride the horses.

"Jess would be very appreciative and proud of all his friends for pulling together to finish our project," she said. "I sincerely thank everyone who came out and

helped."

Mrs. Leach said she was overwhelmed by the number of people who brought food to the event and donated materials and time.

Mr. LaForest said a lot of people "loved Jess," and there were people working on the construction project "who didn't even know him."

"They just heard about it and wanted to help out someone in need," Mr. LaForest said.

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