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BLUE HILL

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A visit from Peace Ridge Sanctuary

Animal rescue 'superhero' shares with young audience

by Anne Berleant

Danielle Tessier, founder and director of Peace Ridge Sanctuary in Penobscot, shared her experience, knowledge and stories as an animal rescue "superhero" at the Blue Hill Library on July 25 as part of its Superhero Saturday series.

Peace Ridge Sanctuary opened in 2001, with a mission to provide a safe environment for neglected or abused farm animals and dogs and cats.

"We want everyone to consider that all animals deserve to live free from harm," Tessier told an audience of about 25, mostly under the age of 11. "Not just cats and dogs, but chickens and goats, too."



Tessier demonstrates how she feeds a two-week old rabbit.

Photo by Anne Berleant

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And don't forget the baby rabbits. Tessier showed one to her young audience that had been brought to the sanctuary from the wild after being injured by a cat. It was just two weeks old, and Tessier fed it milk drop by drop.

Most farm animals come to the sanctuary after being removed from owners by the state animal welfare office, or through donations. Peace Ridge is their last stop, where "we try to give them a peaceful place," Tessier said. "We're focused on giving animals the best lives possible."

That includes daily barn cleanings, providing over two acres for each cow to graze on, and regular visits from the vet. Tessier called it the "CCV": cleaning, consistent care and veterinary care.

But it's not always easy to give Missy, an 800-pound pig and resident of Peace Ridge, a shot, or provide veterinary care to other farm animals.

"How do you get a cow to take a pill? How do you get a horse to stand to get their feet trimmed?" asked Tessier, who is a licensed vet tech. "The trick is to figure out ways to get animals to trust you, even if just for the moment...food is a great way to get across to an animal."

Missy is particularly fond of watermelon, she said.

"It takes 400 hours a week to run the sanctuary, the way we do it," said Tessier, who volunteers over 90 hours a week of her own time.

Peace Ridge is run by volunteers, plus two part-time staff members, on an annual budget of \$160,000, with over 75 percent of its funding provided by donations. Currently, there is a waiting list for donkeys. Dogs and cats are available for adoption, within the sanctuary's guidelines. For more information, visit peaceridgesanctuary.org.

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GALLERY — Peace Ridge Sanctuary visits Blue Hill

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Tessier discusses the philosophy behind the sanctuary and daily life on the animal habitat.
Photo by Anne Berleant



Tessier demonstrates how she feeds a two-week old rabbit.
Photo by Anne Berleant

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