

THE AMAZING NEWSPAPER



October 1, 2010 - Issue 7

Foundation Board Members: Leah Bennett - Craig Bennett - Jim Bartel - Bud Bennett - Ryan Spencer - Rob Fisher - Beth Ardisana

If this is your first issue of The Amazing Newspaper, this was created to help spread the mission of the Spirit of Alexandria Foundation, founded in January of 2006. The Spirit of Alexandria Foundation was created to carry on the legacy of Alexandria Bennett, a little girl whose passion for nature and generosity was evident to everyone around her. Through this foundation it is her family and friends mission to help children experience nature and all its wonderment. The Spirit of Alexandria Foundation will work in cooperation with partners in the places close to home and across the country in order to achieve our mission.

In 2003, Alexandria (6 at the time), decided she wanted to write a newspaper. Her first report was on our neighbors swing set that a tree fell on. Also in the same issue was a report on "weeds". Alexandria took her own pictures and wrote her own stories. Her newspaper ran for one year, an issue a month.

The Amazing Newspaper will become a source for contributors, big and small, to learn about the Foundation's latest accomplishments and our future plans. Though she is missed more than words can express, her legacy will continue as long as there are people like you who believe in our Foundation.

THANK YOU . . . from the bottom of our hearts! The third year in a row, the golf outing far exceeded the previous years amount raised; this year \$52,000 was raised after paying for all fund-raising expenses. This December will be the 5 year anniversary of Alexandria's passing, while missing Alexandria is an every day process for us, we will be celebrating how much the foundation has accomplished in those five long years. We now have 3 Alexandria's Nature Buses in operation, reaching thousands of children. None of this would have been possible if weren't for our parents, friends and family. Gratefully it didn't stop there, we have our board members, company sponsors, corporate & individual donors to thank as well. Alexandria's legacy would never have taken flight if it weren't for the open-mindedness and belief in our goals of the staff at the Teton Science Schools and especially The Howell Conference and Nature Center. We are truly thankful to all and can't wait to see where we are in another five years.

4th Annual Golf Outing - Beyond Wildest Expectations. Story by Leah Bennett

On July 13, 2010 the 4th Annual Spirit of Alexandria Open was held at the Wyndgate in Rochester Hills. Because of all the generous people and companies we are excited to announce that the foundation raised \$52,000. The Foundation is truly blessed with so many wonderful people that believe in our mission, from the volunteers to the Angel and Butterfly sponsors. Thank you all!!

This year we had three Nature Buses, the third one was donated by ARBOC Technologies prior to the golf outing. In addition, we were excited to have several special guest speakers. The first two were our 2010 MSFEP scholarship winners Kate Smith and Cody Green with PowerPoint presentations. Next was Benj Sinclair from the Teton Science Schools speaking about the use of the Nature Bus being used in Wyoming. Lastly, were Dana DeBenham and Dick Grant from The Howell Nature Center with an opossum, Peregrine Falcon and Kili the Bald Eagle.

We look forward to seeing everyone at next years 5th Annual Spirit of Alexandria Golf Outing.

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Above right: Dana DeBenham with Peregrine Falcon. Above left: Kili the Bald Eagle.



Volunteers: Jim Bartel, Clara Christenson, Corrine Bartel, Deb Nolan, Danielle Nolan, Janice Bennett, Vicki Denkhous, Debby Roberts, Biz Bennett, Steve Locke, Brandon Locke, Leah Bennett, Britt Smart & Chelsea Nolan.

Trophies went to:

Competitive Team Winners

Ted Christenson, Kurtis Valdez, Chris Ford & Mark Sarno

Team Winners - Non-Competitive

Don Roberts, John Dykstra, Mike Schultz & Dennis Mitchell

Last Place Team

Rod Nappier, Rick Thompson, Andy James & Neil Tamppari

Alexandria's Nature Buses Connect to Nature.

Story by Leah Bennett

In October of 2009, the Mobile Classroom that the Teton Science Schools had been using, returned home to Michigan. Larry Smith and his son Colin (age 17) offered their time to fly to Jackson to drive the bus back to Michigan. This was a trip of a life time, especially for Colin, who had never visited the Yellowstone area.

Larry and Colin flew into the Jackson Hole airport witnessing the grandeur of The Tetons. Kevin Taylor and Nick Delmolino at the Teton Science Schools gave Larry and Colin a grand tour of the area where they were able to see the local wildlife and learn about the history of the area.

As the Red Bus made its return home Larry and Colin shared the story of Alexandria and the foundation with the people they met at such places as Old Faithful and Mount Rushmore.

The reason for the Mobile Classroom coming back to Michigan was so that we could have it painted and decorated like Alexandria's Nature Bus - #1. By mid April, the Red Bus was renamed Alexandria's Nature Bus - #2. By July, the 2nd nature bus was painted and decals added to make it look similar the first nature bus. This bus will remain in Michigan where it will be used by The Howell Nature Center to transport students to their facility.

The recently donated bus to the foundation in July by ARBOC Technologies, is now Alexandria's Nature Bus #3. With fresh paint and foundation decals, it debuted at the annual golf outing. This bus will be returning to the Teton Science Schools to continue connecting children to nature in the Greater Yellowstone area..

Alexandria's Nature Bus (#1) has been busy since it started visiting schools and various area events. Dick Grant, director at The Howell Nature Center, believes that approximately 15,000 people have walked through the nature bus. That's a lot of people connected to nature because of one little girl.



All 3 Alexandria Nature Buses on display at 4th Annual Golf Outing.



Colin Smith and the Spirit of Alexandria Mobile Classroom in front of The Tetons / Photo by Larry Smith



Kevin Taylor and Colin Smith watching wildlife / Photo by Larry Smith



Larry & Colin Smith with the Tetons in the background



Jim Bartel hands over the keys to the foundation's new addition at annual golf outing.

Thank You Spirit of Alexandria.

Story by Colin Smith

"My name is Colin Smith and I went on a trip the Teton Science Schools in Jackson, Wyoming. I am the first kid to go to the school and see what they do. The school is a great place for people who are interested in learning about nature and animals. Without the support of Craig and Leah Bennett and the foundation, I would have never been able to do this.

We also got to go on a tour, a wildlife tour. The our guides name was Kevin Taylor. He's the man you want to talk to if you want to learn about animals. All the animals I saw he told us about them, what they eat, how they breed; it was amazing.

My favorite thing I did on the trip was seeing the big beautiful mountains. I can't than the foundation enough. if it wasn't for Alexandria, lots of kids, including me, would never be able to do this."

Alexandria's Nature Bus Visiting Local Schools.

Story by Leah Bennett

Alexandria's Nature Bus started visiting local Michigan schools in April. They started with St. Joe's in Howell, Webster in Livonia and Blanche Sims in Lake Orion. The Howell Nature Center has the Birds of Prey Program geared towards grades 3-7, though any age child or adult would enjoy the entire program. The age range of children who experienced the Nature Bus Program in April were third graders and fifth through eighth grade children. Each student completed the hands-on activities aboard the bus, participated in birds of prey simulation games and watched a live raptor presentation inside their school.



Above: Students pretend to be prey for raptors.

Foundation board members attended all three programs, witnessing the enthusiasm for the live birds and the students interaction with the hands-on educational activities. Each child is given a sheet with questions that can be answered by completing the activities and reading the fun facts placed through out the bus. The ages of the children didn't seem to make a difference with their interest in learning.

The raptors that were shared with the students varied from program to program. Howell Nature Centers bird handlers are



Howell Nature Center handler with Great Horned Owl (above left) and Turkey vulture (above right).

professional, funny, speak age appropriately and extremely knowledgeable about each bird. The Turkey Vulture was a big hit on all three days, Egor was a show off, keeping his wings open the entire time. The other birds visiting were a Peregrine Falcon, Merlin, Red-tailed Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk and a Great-horned Owl. The Howell Nature Center will bring Kili the Bald Eagle, on request, at an additional charge.

If you are interested in booking a visit to your child's school or donating a program to a deserving classroom please contact Sally Grant at The Howell Nature & Conference Center: 517-546-3026.



Above: Blanche Sims students with Nature Bus. Below: Ryan Spencer measuring his wingspan.



Sixth graders work on dissecting owl pellets, learning the difference between birds of prey & song birds, and other educational activities.



Alexandria's Nature Bus Travels Full Circle. Story by Leah & Craig Bennett

It was 7 years ago that Alexandria shared The Yellow Bus with her friends at Charyl Stockwell Academy. It was used for transportation in Yellowstone during the winter season. After she explained all about the bus and Yellowstone National Park her grandfather took the Narwhal class for a ride through the field next to the school.

The reason Alexandria chose to share this unique bus with her classmates was simple - she wanted to tell them about her adventure

riding through Yellowstone National Park in the Yellow Bus. So it is only fitting that the conversion of the Yellow Bus to Alexandria's Nature Bus went back to her school to once again share the wonders she was so passionate for.

On May 18th and 19th Alexandria's Nature Bus went to Charyl Stockwell Academy, where all Voyager students participated in the 2 hour program (3 separate programs to accommodate 200 students) provided by the Howell Nature Center experienced staff.



The Yellow Bus visits Charyl Stockwell Academy - 2003.



Alexandria's Nature Bus visits Charyl Stockwell Academy - 2010.

2010 Scholarships to MSFEP.

Story by Leah Bennett

Congratulations to Cody Green and Kate Smith, both were awarded a scholarship to the Middle School Field Ecology Program at the Teton Science Schools. Both students submitted excellent applications; making them stand out among the 10 applications.

During the dinner at the 4th Annual Spirit of Alexandria Open in July, guests were treated to stories of Kate and Cody's trip out west. Each student prepared a PowerPoint presentation with photos they took during the ecology program.

It is the first time that students have spoke at the annual fundraiser. Their enthusiasm and excitement was evident and it helped to show why we have sent 17 students to the Teton Science Schools since 2006.



Leah Bennett, Cody Green, Kate Smith and Craig Bennett.



Kate & Cody speaking at golf outing about trip.

Butterfly Encounter & Missing Monarchs.

Story by Leah Bennett

Butterflies are a natural part of our gardens in summer, especially if you plant butterfly specific plants. Once in a while you may see a butterfly cross your path while driving, and you probably don't think twice about it. If you read our last issue you know that Craig and I treasure every butterfly that we experience. Craig and I like to guess which one of us will see the first butterfly in spring. This year was a tie and a bit of inspiration at the same time.

While on a walk with my mom and dog, a Mourning Cloak fluttered across our path, always a joy and a way of Alexandria to say hello. Excited by the sighting I called Craig to tell him, to no avail I couldn't reach him. Later in the day when I finally reached Craig I remembered to tell him of the Mourning Cloak. Just as I was describing my sighting he interrupts me with "you will not believe it". As he is talking to me a Mourning Cloak flies by him and flutters over his car 5 feet away. These are the moments that inspire us and leave us with a hug from Alexandria.

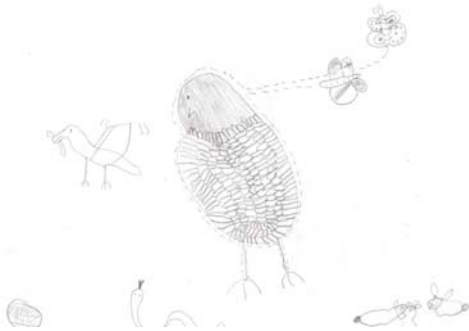
Though Mourning Cloaks, Caggage Moths, and Spring Azures are common in spring, most people tend to search for Monarchs during the summer months. They seem to carry with them a sense of mystery as well as beauty. This summer the sighting of a Monarch may be much harder than in previous years. During their journey through Mexico on the way to the states, 60% of the Monarchs were killed during a hail storm. Keep this in mind if you do see a Monarch this summer, treasure that moment. If you want to find out more about the Monarch migration and how you can help, visit www.monarchwatch.org, a great site dedicated to the preservation of Monarch habitat and future generations.

Journal entry from Alexandria.

May Thursday 18th 2004
 I caught a American
 toad under some bricks
 in the garden, my mum
 found him. I made a garden
 terrarium. These are the
 things I used - dirt, long flat
 rock, half of a small saucer,
 onions, rosemary, parsley, dill

Calling all Naturalists. Do you have a photo, a poem, story or a drawing relating to nature - we would like to include it in a future issue of The Amazing Newspaper. Whether you are 5 or 75, we want you to share the wonders around you with us and everyone who will read The Amazing Newspaper. Submit your nature experiences to the address below.

Thank you to everyone who has submitted artwork, stories or photos for this issue.



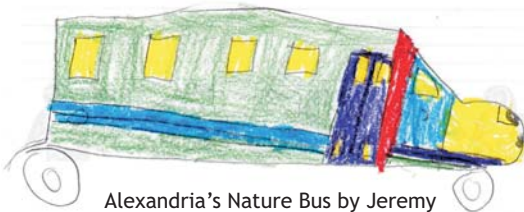
Artwork by Serena



"Hoot Boot" by Luke Gray



Alexandria's Nature Bus by Megan



Alexandria's Nature Bus by Jeremy



Bird of Prey by Holly



Owl by Reagan



"Nature Bus" by Max Glover



"Great Horned Owl" by Nathen Schick



Butterfly by Serena



Bird by Jack