

Haws in the Community

Haws and the Boy Scouts of America are valuable agencies in southeast Wisconsin. Their goals both seek to improve community life and promote high ethical ideals. When the paths of these two agencies cross, magic happens in our community.

So it was last fall when Lynn Olenik, the director at Haws, asked my son, Ben if he was thinking of an eagle project. Scouts work through various ranks by demonstrating skill and understanding at each rank along the way. For scouts seeking the highest rank of eagle, they must carry out a project that demonstrates their leadership skills, and benefits a not-for-profit organization. Ben, who was 15 years old at the time, responded with interest when Ms. Olenik expressed a desire for the volunteer dog walking trail to get a face-lift. Ben wanted to do more than just re-mulch the trail. He wanted to notably improve it and bring out the best in the adoptable dogs. I knew Ben was onto an idea that could really impact the shelter dogs' lives. As a humane officer, I know as fact that dogs schooled in obedience generate fewer problems with excessive barking, running at large and especially bite cases.

Along the lines of human fitness trails, Ben planned to create a dog obedience trail. The volunteers, while walking the shelter dogs, could stop at obedience stations and work on one simple obedience command at a time. In thanks and tribute to the dog walkers, Ben expanded his plan to include benches, doggy waste bins, and perennial plantings. He wanted to make the trail a nice retreat for the devoted dog walkers. The dogs love getting out of the kennel setting for exercise, human attention and a little sniffing around, no matter what Mother Nature has in mind!

Many months of preparation, planning and phone calls later, Ben had the plaque, bench and bin plans drawn out. Talk about a community coming together! This listing will give you an idea of the amount of community support Ben and Haws received. Kurt Berger, of Home Lumber Company in Whitewater helped Ben with drawings, estimating costs and obtaining the building materials at below retail costs. Sponsors like Bay View Veterinary, the Raasch family in Mukwonago, and Grandma Miorana from Arizona helped with the funding. Melissa at Geiger Awards in Waukesha helped with the plaque details and the company gave the project a generous discount on the lettering. Troop 152's adult committee had great suggestions for the project. Assistant Scout Master Steve Buccanero of the troop spent many hours working with Ben cutting lumber. He also donated aluminum, anodized plaques for the trail. Rick Peterson, of Mukwonago, did some routing on the boards behind the plaques and really dressed them up! Many scouts and scout leaders helped assemble the benches and bins. Family friend, Chris Halverson helped dig plants donated from community member JoAnne Zeilhofer's gardens. Chris also volunteered to photograph the installation day in late May. Waukesha County parks donated the huge mound of mulch, and Mr. Fred Hilton, a board member at Haws, volunteered his time and skid steer to get the mulch to the trail. Mark Hess and Lynn Olenik of the shelter provided guidance, materials and some tools. Troop 152 scout families spread the mulch and did all the improvements on the trail. The Burant family donated baked treats for the workers. Friends of Haws, a fund raising group, donated water, chips and soda for the workers on the May 31st installation day. Maria Ragen, of that group, was a great helper the whole day! Sentry Foods in Fox Run discounted the cost of the deli lunch platter. Something about the goals of Haws and scouts bring out the best in people!

Therein lies the magic of our Waukesha community. Countless hours of work by wonderful, selfless people feeds back into the very community that supports them. Ben, you

didn't do this on your own, but this project is truly a tribute to your emerging leadership skills. This obedience trail exists because of your hard work and incredible support by community members. Thanks to Haws, all the sponsors, donors and to Boy Scouts of America for creating this meaningful opportunity for my son. The biggest lesson we can all learn is that there is value in giving back to others. That is what "community" means to me, and it demonstrates why Haws has such a prominent position in our community.

Sincerely,
Jill Posanski
Humane Officer and Proud Mom!