

Shelburne Fall Fair provides important agri-education to local elementary students

Written By MARNI WALSH

Last Wednesday, two days prior to the opening of the 152nd Shelburne Fall Fair, local fair board members and volunteers took the time to uphold the annual tradition of bringing a special morning of agricultural education to Shelburne's youth.

Grade three students from Glenbrook, Primrose, Centennial Hylands, and Hyland Heights elementary schools made early pilgrimages to one of the barns on the fair grounds, off William Street in Shelburne, to look and learn.

The big clean barns, with doors open on both ends, let in the morning sunshine and a light breeze - creating a welcoming and stimulating classroom for the excited little students. With a variety of furry and feathered farm animals, supported by knowledgeable farmers eager to impart information to the young locals - it was the perfect learning place.

The first stop was a visit to the Ontario Egg Farmers learning station setup in a trailer just outside the barn. There the grade three students learned all about hens, white eggs and brown eggs, and how many eggs a hen could lay in a day.

Inside, hands were up with questions about the fainting goats on display for the students to see and pet, courtesy of Kristin Prentice of Melancthon. Also on display for learning and petting were sheep provided by Brandy Currie of Shelburne.

Next door to the goats, stood a pen with two beautiful miniature horses. Their owner, Katherine Finley of Hockley, told the students that her animals fulfilled the very important job of service horses. The animals visit various institutions and retirement homes, throughout the year, to bring comfort and calm to those in need.

Across the way, students visited a dairy cow and her beautiful new calf. They learned all about how their milk is produced and the daily routines of the mother Jersey and her baby. Close by were two steers, owned by Earl Smith of Primrose, for more lessons about farming.

Inspector Carrie Weatherup from Fire Safety in Barrie was on hand with a learning station and instructions to teach kids how to keep safe. Shelburne Agricultural President Larry Braiden and several board members and other volunteers, including Junior Fair Ambassador Sarah Bannon, were on hand all morning watching over proceedings as students arrived for the experience.

Little hands were reaching to touch and study the farm animals throughout the morning as groups of approximately 50 young students from each of the four Shelburne area schools took their turn at the different stations. It was truly a 'hands on' learning experience that no desk and text book could ever replace.

The Shelburne Agricultural Society is to be congratulated on their 152 years of dedication to the celebration of our rural traditions with the Shelburne and District Fair, as well as the agri-education of so many generations of local school children. What could be a more important lesson to learn than understanding where your food comes from?