51 enjoy YWCA 'Grandparents & Grandchildren' trip

Written by Information submitted Sunday, July 07, 2013 10:42 PM - Last Updated Sunday, July 07, 2013 11:00 PM

Information submitted



A total of 24 eager grandchildren and 27 good natured grandparents went on the very popular Van Wert YWCA annual "Grandparents & Grandchildren" trip recently. Ages for the children ranged from 4-12 years but there was something for everyone to enjoy.

The first place of interest was the Buffalo Ranch in Hanover, Mich. At the beginning, it was a very small operation with only two buffalo on a 25-acre farm. The Daniels family bought the property in 2007 and it has grown to 240 acres with approximately 45 head of buffalo. Everyone rode on wagons right out into the herd. Ears of dried corn were provided to feed the buffalo. It was a little intimidating as the buffalo have very long and black tongues and the mouths are very large. However, the children found it to be fun and exciting.

A stop was made at a monument to a very rare albino baby buffalo that was born in 1999. It only lived a few weeks but Native Americans came from many states to see it as it is considered a very important omen.

The children learned that the Indians used every part of the buffalo to sustain their life. Some of the uses included medicine bags, blankets, bowstring, quivers, drinking cups, shields, boats, bridles, cooking pots, fuel, clothing, dolls, rattles, baby carriers, diaper powder, drums, meat, horse hobbles, tepees, moccasins and mittens.

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Experts say that there were about 60 million buffalo in America when Europeans first arrived. By the 1880's the settlers had killed all but about 500. Today there are about 350,000 with 2,500 in Yellowstone Park.

Following a buffet lunch where they could choose anything they wanted to eat, including desserts and ice cream, the group visited Indian Brook Farm to see how they grow rainbow trout from tiny eggs to beautiful full size fish. Because of natural springs, this farm has an ample supply of very clean water which is ideal for the fish. They lose about 20 percent of the fish each year as herons and other birds swoop down and catch a tasty meal out of the ponds. The farm also has a large pumpkin patch and the children learned how important bees are to the pollination.

A highlight was a presentation about Native Americans that used to live in the area by "Bigfish" who was dressed in authentic clothes. He explained how each piece was made and the purpose of the garments, baskets and weapons. The early tribes were Potawatomi, Adawa and Ojibwa. He really impressed the children when he started a fire with a piece of flint and stone. He explained that fire was vital to cook and keep warm and also for decisions made at council meetings so the firekeeper had a very important job. Each child got to hunt for an arrowhead for a souvenir.

Lots of games with prizes, movies and treats on the motorcoach kept everyone entertained while traveling and all ages reported having a good time.

Those who went on the trip: Margaret Hipsley, Ashley Brown, Nila Swander, Kyle Kissinger, Diane Arn, Abby Dietrich, Lily Dietrich, Mary Kay Stagaman, Levi Stegaman, Lorene Jettinghoff, Lisa Barlage, Joseph Barlage, Earl Gerdeman, Madeline Gerdeman, Karen Bockey, Cheyenne Pohlman, Isabella Pohlman, Diane Owens, Carter Owens, Terry Owens, Luke Bollenbacher, Kim Owens, Kendall Bollenbacher, Donald Baldhuf, Sarah Baldhuf, Noah Baldhuf, Samuel Balduf, Dan Kill, Robin Kill, Bennett Kill, Kathryn Herman, Haley Miller, Shirley Patterson, George Collins, Preston Collins, Emmy Collins, Clay Ellerbrock, Dani Herron, Ann Miller, Jackson Reynolds, Brezlyn Owens, Cheryl Hoover and Holden Thornell.

Tour escort was Jean Owens and driver was Tim Ford.