

At Joplin's Sanctuary one of our missions is to provide educational opportunities to the younger generations regarding animal care. Our education opportunities include private group tours, educational materials on our website as well as personal involvement via volunteering or working alongside our staff.

As an example, about a month ago we had the privilege of working with and teaching a five year boy (Ben) about the various animals' daily needs. His mother accompanied us around the sanctuary as she took photographs as a part of her own college photography project. Ben was a very attentive young boy and eager to learn about the various animals and their specific needs.



Our first introduction was to one of our goat herds. The goats were eager to meet Ben and at first Ben wasn't sure what to make of them and their obvious curiosity.



But Ben watched as we carried five gallon buckets of water and replenished the goats' drinking water and soon realized the goats were extremely friendly.



After we separated the goats' hay into different portions for their feeders Ben jumped right in and helped carry the feed from the hay storage area and placed it in the feeders within the goats' shed.

Then it was off to the second goat area and Ben obviously felt more comfortable with the goats in general. He offered Mary our oldest goat a leaf as initial treat and a friendship was made.





Then it was on to the chores. Ben learned that the stall areas needed to be raked and cleaned each day and he had an opportunity to help. Then he assisted by putting fresh hay into the feeders for his friend Mary and the other goats.

Next it was time to brush and clean the goats' coats. Ben was given a brush and after watching for a minute Ben again jumped right in and brushed Patrick and his brother Shamus, two of our younger goats.



Keeping both the animals and their environment clean was an important lesson that was reiterated throughout the day and Ben was an eager to learn.

After the goats' areas were clean, their food and water replenished and they had been brushed it was off to the fowl area.



Ben's first job was to dump all the dirty water out of the duck swimming ponds and then to help fill the ponds up with fresh water. Ben worked diligently and the Muscovies definitely appreciated Ben's efforts.



Then we checked all of their feed bowls, removing those that needed to be filled up and took them down to the supply shed for refilling which Ben did expertly.



After the full food bowls were returned to the sheds the duck areas had fresh food and water for both swimming and drinking. So off to the chicken area we went.



At the larger chicken coop Ben tossed out corn on the cob for the chickens to peck at while we checked on their inside drinking water and food supplies. Seeing that everything was in good shape we moved on to Quasi's Quarters.



Quasi (a victim of abuse earlier in his life) was walking in his yard when we arrived but he got very excited when he saw Ben and us coming. He stood up and flapped his wings in a form of a greeting.

After Ben spent some time with Quasi it was time for Quasi to go in for the evening. We picked him up after checking his food and water and put him inside his house. Ben was able to watch and learn about Quasi's disabilities but was also able to see how happy he was living here.



After we put Quasi inside we were able to watch him eat some of his corn and then Ben was able to say good night to Quasi before we shut his front door for the evening.

At the end of the session Ben had helped us attend to over thirty five animals' daily needs. Now a month and a half later, his mother has told us that he still talks about his experiences here and wants to come back and help again. Ben is definitely welcome here and we hope he shares his experiences and lessons learned with his friends as he continues through his life.

Note: If interested please go to our website (www.joplinssanctuary.com) and look under the Educational Materials section for articles regarding animal behavior and care and other related topics).