

FARM FRIENDS NFP OFFERS A RURAL SETTING FOR CHANGING LIVES

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In a continuing effort to let the Fox Valley community know about not for profit organizations that provide meaningful programs, we have discovered Farm Friends NFP, a 501(C)3 organization, that is a center for family and the community to come together in a rural setting for recreational and therapeutic programs for people with unique needs with learning, communication, behavioral, social or emotional challenges. The stated goal is to “educate and involve families and community in the natural environment in order to accomplish the mission (of the organization) and to enable people with special needs to achieve their highest levels of independence.”

There are many activities to accomplish these purposes. Animal Encounters have proven to be beneficial therapy for many. Presently, the farm, located at 45 W 134 Raymond Road in Big Rock (630/556-3100) is home to chickens and other animals



will visit weekly so that all guests will be able to have a fun encounter with animals. Workshops, led by volunteers, can include planting gardens or making bird feeders, for example, and provide opportunity for creative expression.

Those affiliated with a support group or professional organization that serves people with unique needs are encouraged to conduct educational seminars and retreats at the farm.

Plans for the future include creating an Equestrian Therapy Center because riding is beneficial to children and adults with a wide range of cognitive, physical and emotional conditions. Respite Care (retreats held at the

farm) can provide a much needed break for families to spend time together away from the daily grind of providing the specialized care that is often required.

The farm provides a lovely, peaceful setting for weddings; those interested in scheduling a special event at the farm should call to arrange a visit.

There are many ways to support Farm Friends NFP through donations of tax-deductible gifts (ask about buying a brick), providing assistance to upgrade or repair the property or to serve as volunteer resource leaders for various programs.

Founded by Ted & Susan McCannon, the organization is overseen by a Board of Directors including Frank McCannon III, President, Lisa Jacino, Secretary, James MacIntosh, Treasurer and Directors Ron D'Avena, Kimberly Willman and Ellen Beaulieu.