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Facility home to animals saved from slaughter

BY LAURA LEGERE (STAFF WRITER)

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Image Gallery for tales and tails star at Indraloka Sanctuary storytelling day



Image Gallery for tales and tails star at Indraloka Sanctuary storytelling day

MEHOOPANY TWP. - Indra Lahiri told one strain of a story to a group seated on bales in the windblown hayloft at Indraloka Animal Sanctuary on Sunday afternoon.

The subjects of her tales provided the chorus: horses murmured on a hillside, a rooster called out from a far barn and a St. Bernard snuffled through the straw.

Ms. Lahiri, the refuge's founder, shared stories she had learned from an Ojibwe medicine man and original stories she crafted from life at the sanctuary. It was the first family storytelling day held at the 8-year-old safe home for animals otherwise slated for slaughter or euthanasia.



The main characters were what, in one story, she called "four-legged people" - bears, pigs, cows, elk.

"Stories resonate with everybody," she said. "Storytelling is what we do here. I am telling stories to the animals all day long and they tell them to me."

Like meeting the animals, hearing stories about them is a tool to teach people to respect and connect with them. The sanctuary's mission emphasizes joy "for humans and animals" and the principle that "all life is sacred."

Between the five tales, about two dozen visitors were introduced to the array of animals at the bustling Wyoming County farm, including varieties of pigs, goats, cows, hens, sheep, horses and a turkey that yearned to be petted like a house cat but was slightly intimidated by the crowd.

"He was really soft," Savanna Transue, 5, of Monroe Twp., said after a one-on-one petting session in the barn.

"Who wants to meet some really big, really friendly pigs?" Ms. Lahiri said to urge the visitors on to the next part of the tour. The description proved true: the 1,300-pound pigs nuzzled their new friends into the mud.

Later, Ms. Lahiri said the animals' willingness to trust people after experiencing injury or harm is one of the most remarkable aspects of the sanctuary.

"Their faith in us is deep," she said.

Contact the writer: llegere@timeshamrock.com

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