

THE AMAZING NEWS PAPER



June 1, 2011 - Issue 10

Foundation Board Members: Leah Bennett - Craig Bennett - Jim Bartel - Bud Bennett - Ryan Spencer - Rob Fisher - Don Roberts

If this is your first issue of The Amazing Newspaper, this was created to help spread the mission of the Spirit of Alexandria Foundation, founded in January of 2006. The Spirit of Alexandria Foundation was created to carry on the legacy of Alexandria Bennett, a little girl whose passion for nature and generosity was evident to everyone around her. Through this foundation it is her family and friends mission to help children experience nature and all its wonderment. The Spirit of Alexandria Foundation will work in cooperation with partners in the places close to home and across the country in order to achieve our mission.

In 2003, Alexandria (6 at the time), decided she wanted to write a newspaper. Her first report was on our neighbors swing set that a tree fell on. Also in the same issue was a report on "weeds". Alexandria took her own pictures and wrote her own stories. Her newspaper ran for one year, an issue a month.

The Amazing Newspaper will become a source for contributors, big and small, to learn about the Foundation's latest accomplishments and our future plans. Though she is missed more than words can express, her legacy will continue as long as there are people like you who believe in our Foundation.

5th Annual Golf Outing

Story by Leah Bennett

We cannot believe that this year brings the 5th Annual Spirit of Alexandria Golf Outing. The idea that so many people have continued to support us year after year is overwhelming. We hope that if you haven't had a chance to attend our fund-raising event that you will choose to do so this year. For more information please visit our website.

JULY 19th, 2011

the Wyndgate Golf Course

Tee-Off is at 10:30

Dinner and Silent Auction start at 4:30

You do not need to be a golfer to help support our mission - come and enjoy dinner and the silent auction after the golfing.

Thank you in advance to all who plan on supporting the foundation's mission of Connecting Children to Nature at this years annual golf outing!

All Artwork in this issue was provided by students from Shepherd of the Lakes Grant Awardee - 2011



Butterfly Interpretive Garden - Breaking Ground.

Story by Leah Bennett

In April, at a brain storming held at The Howell Nature Center, Dick Grant proposed the idea for a Butterfly Garden to be planted somewhere on the conference center's property. Our first reaction was of awe - to have a butterfly garden named for her would be great. The more we talked the more it became something more than that; the garden could be another tool to teach children and connect them to nature.

The garden would be interpretive, teaching children and adults about the stages of a butterfly's metamorphosis as well as other bits of information hopefully leading a child to investigate further once they leave The Howell Nature Center.

At this time, we are hoping to break ground in June. Several trees have already been removed from the site, which is situated near one of the Eagle enclosures in the Wild Wonders Park. The plants that will be at home in the garden will be

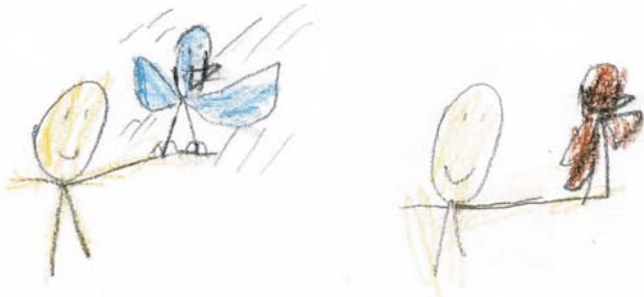
natural to Michigan as well as drought and deer hardy. If you would like to donate any materials, your time or have plants you want to find a new home for please contact Leah Bennett at 810-599-0106.



Garden committee (above) - Future site of the Butterfly Interpretive Garden.



I learned about the great horned owl. The great horned owl has many layers of feathers covering their eyes. I also learned about a red tailed hawk. The red tailed hawk has brown & red or white feathers.



Thank you! for letting us see
Birds of Prey.
and the nature bus.
we liked it.
from,
Sarah



Workshop Presented by Foundation at Annual ANCA Conference.

Story by Leah & Craig Bennett

The Spirit of Alexandria Foundation will be presenting a joint workshop with The Teton Science Schools and The Howell Nature Centers, at the ANCA Summit in August of this year. The Association of Nature Center Administrators is an international network of nature and environmental learning center leaders. This years conference is being held in the Great Smokey Mountains.

To Craig and I, we see the foundation as our life's work so for it to not continue would be another loss. There is lots of interest in our success, and so the workshop we will be presenting is on successful memorials. The description of the workshop is as follows:

"In-Kind and Memorial Gifts - Lessons from the Field"

The memorial gift process can be challenging as centers and benefactors negotiate the emotions of loss and the potential of conflicting interests to create programs, scholarships and facilities that are lasting legacies. Join Craig and Leah Bennett of the Spirit of Alexandria Foundation, Teton Science Schools and Howell Nature as we provide a 360 degree view of the memorial gift process.

During the workshop we will be explaining what happened to inspire us to create this type of memorial. Among the discussion points will be the successes and failures we have had, the steps we took in starting our 6th year, what our mission is and where we want to go from here.

The foundation believes that this will be a great way to spread our mission as well as make contacts throughout the United States that could help us to spread Alexandria's legacy.

The First Alexandria's Nature Camp at HNC in July.

Story by Leah & Craig Bennett

Our partnership with the Howell Conference & Nature Center continues to grow, allowing the foundation to develop existing and future programs to expand our reach to children. In July the first Alexandria's Nature Camp will be held, with 20-30 3rd through 5th graders, at the Nature Center. The camp is a 5 day overnight camp with plenty of fun and learning. We will be announcing the camp and the details at this years golf outing.

The Wonders of Nature.

Story by Leah Bennett

Craig and I recently visited Yellowstone National Park on a Wildlife Expedition. It would be hard to explain the wonders that you view while in the park, whether it be the geothermal activity, the wildlife or the one-of-kind views. I took plenty of photos to prove that we saw a grizzly 25 feet away or eleven big horn sheep 30 ft up a hill. But I have to say that nature can hold wonders just as amazing in our own backyards.

The photos on the right show our dog Kip inspecting a fawn in my parent's yard. The mom had placed it smack dab in the middle of their yard. Kip being the big lover, was hoping it would play, the fawn knew it had to stay still until mom came back. Kip was heartbroken.

Another natural wonder for us started back in November of last year. My mom found 4 Black Swallowtail caterpillars feeding on the last of her dill (Alexandria had taught her what they were). I did a little research and found that they over winter as a chrysalis and emerge in the spring. Seven months later, I was getting the cage ready for this years monarchs. Up until now we didn't have much hope for the butterflies to emerge.

Nature proved us wrong. Two of the four came out on June 3rd and a third emerged on the 6th. All three flew away ready for the world.

We have to remember that nature was around long before people tried to help it out. As much as I would like to wake up to the Grand Tetons every morning, the small wonders in nature I come across daily are just as amazing, even in Michigan. You just need to take the time to stop and let nature come to you.



Kip and his new friend.



Calling all Naturalists. Do you have a photo, a poem, story or a drawing relating to nature - we would like to include it in a future issue of The Amazing Newspaper. Whether you are 5 or 75, we want you to share the wonders around you with us and everyone who will read The Amazing Newspaper. Submit your nature experiences to spiritofalexandria@yahoo.com.

Thank you to everyone who has submitted artwork, stories or photos for this issue.