Youngsters enjoyed dance teacher Janet Reddy's creative movement activities with an animal focus. Janet had students doing everything from prancing like a horse, and jumping like an elephant(!) to tiptoeing like a cat.

**BIDE-A-WEE’S PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN**

by Susan Brooks

On October 1 and 2 this past year, the Bide-A-Wee Home Association of New York presented a unique program for youngsters in the Commack School District. For the past three years, Bide-A-Wee has presented special yearly symposia for teachers on humane education and the human/companion-animal bond. Animal Kind '84 took a new approach, focusing on entertainment for children, while at the same time providing a special humane education experience.

More than 1,400 first, second, and third graders from schools throughout the Commack district attended the program, which was coordinated by Jeanette Cuzzi, a first-grade teacher at Commack's Cedar Road School. Ms. Cuzzi is a member of the Bide-A-Wee Educational Advisory Committee, a group formed to assist Bide-A-Wee in developing educational material and to advise on humane education issues. Jeanette presented the Bide-A-Wee program proposal to the Cultural Arts Committee of the Commack PTA, which frequently sponsors enrichment activities for schoolchildren in the area. The Bide-A-Wee proposal was overwhelmingly endorsed by the PTA.

Students took two days out from their regular classroom routine to attend the different presentations and demonstrations offered as part of the program. Guest speakers included pet expert Warren Eckstein; Dr. Krafft and Mrs. Judy Rothchild with their Seeing Eye dogs from the Second Sight Guide Dog Foundation; folk singer/storyteller John Porcino; wildlife lecturer Bill Robinson; Bob Szita, Traveling Zoo coordinator of the Staten Island Zoo; The Environmental Center of Smithtown, Long Island; and the Suffolk County Police Canine Unit. A vast assortment of animals accompanied the presentations, ranging from puppies from Bide-A-Wee pet adoption homes to a hawk, an eagle, and an albino raccoon. In addition, a workshop on making animal masks was conducted by art teacher Liz Perrini, and a demonstration by dance teacher Janet Reddy invited the youngsters’ participation—showing how animals can inspire creative body movement.

Bide-A-Wee sponsored the event to expose youngsters to the importance of positive interaction between humans and animals. "We kept a number of goals in mind as we organized the program," observed Jeanette Cuzzi. "We wanted to awaken in children an awareness of animals as sentient beings that are entitled to humane treatment; to introduce children to wild animals and endangered species; to help children explore the role of humans in helping to preserve animal life; and to enable them to experience the influence animals have had upon our folklore, music, dance, and art."

You can obtain more information about the Animal Kind '84 program by contacting Susan Brooks, Director of Public Relations, The Bide-A-Wee Home Association, 410 East 38th Street, New York, NY 10016.

*What does the world look like from a small puppy's point of view? Students got an idea for themselves at Bide-A-Wee's Animal Kind '84 program with a little encouragement from pet expert and television personality Warren Eckstein.*

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