

# Pet Responsibility Committee Wraps 2021 on a Hopeful Note

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Fourth-graders at Carthage Elementary School gathered in the cafeteria on Dec. 15, for an assembly to celebrate everything they had learned during their five-session Pet Responsibility Program.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, this would have been a highly anticipated rite of passage for the fourth-graders. However, since March of 2020, nothing was a guaranteed event.

The students showed their appreciation through heightened attentiveness and participation. The school principal, Mrs. Warren, was also eager to hear about all the students had learned.

Special speakers Dr. Tony Ioppolo, DVM, and Jessica McDaniel from Pinehurst Animal Hospital talked with students about life in a vet's office and the different jobs people do there.

"Beanie" Wall was a compliant participant for Ioppolo, as he demonstrated how he examines dogs. Beanie was a little confused at first. "Am I at the vet?" she seemed to be thinking!

During the program, all the students were given the opportunity to enter the Speuter Story Contest. Participants enter a story about being responsible pet owners and advocates, and explain why they want their pet, or a pet of a relative or friend, spayed or neutered.

The Pet Responsibility team had never had so many high-caliber stories submitted by one school. "It was almost impossible to choose the winners!" said team leader Barbara Ross.

Eleven stories were selected as contest winners. Eight of the students were awarded a free spay or neuter surgery for their pets. The three remaining contest winners chose to donate their awards to friends. Each winner received a framed certificate from the Pet Responsibility Committee mascot, Speuter. Congratulations to Aiden, Alaina, Ava, Eli, Elijah, Emily, Jason, Katlynn, Riley, Shelby and Za'Niya.

Several other students were recognized for their excellent artwork and pet responsibility "advocacy messages" they wrote on white paper bags. The bags are used by the Sandhills Spay Neuter Veterinary Clinic to hold information and medication that goes home with the owner after a pet has been spayed or neutered.

The Pet Responsibility Committee now considers the Carthage Elementary fourth-graders part of the team that makes the world a better place for pets.

"They are now prepared and very eager to share the message of being responsible pet owners with their family, friends and neighbors," said Ross.

In 2020, in the early days of the pandemic, committee volunteers moved quickly to develop an online version of the Pet Responsibility program, complete with videos, that can be delivered to any



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"Beanie" Wall is examined by veterinarian Dr. Tony Ioppolo and Jessica McDaniel, of Pinehurst Animal Hospital and Dental Clinic.

participating school. The online version remains as a valuable backup and addition to the in-person program. Students who miss a class can view the videos and work through the activities online.

For more information on volunteering with the Pet Responsibility Committee or to learn more about the Home Learning Plan, go to [www.mcprc.org](http://www.mcprc.org).