

Westmoore Elementary's Pet Advocates Shine!



Students signing the Promise Poster

On February 14, the fourth graders at Westmoore Elementary School gathered to celebrate what they had learned during their 6 session Pet Responsibility program. The Pet Responsibility Committee (PRC) team that presented the program was led by volunteers Liz Surface and Paige Adams, along with Therapy Dogs Elmer & Casper.

The students learned about the "sad problem" in Moore County of too many abandoned, neglected pets found at the Moore County shelter and not enough adoptive homes for all of them. They learned that the best way to control animal overpopulation is by spaying & neutering our pets. They learned how to take good care of their pets and to make good choices when selecting a pet.

During the celebration, they were visited by Speuter, the PRC kitty mascot. Speuter read a poem about her humble beginnings as a stray cat on the street. The students learned that Speuter was lucky to have found someone to love and care for her and went on to live a happy healthy life. Speuter encouraged the students to think about how much better the world would be if we all took it upon ourselves to save just one pet in some way.

As part of the program, the students were asked to write a "Speuter" story about how their pets would benefit from being spayed or neutered. All the stories were wonderful, showing how much they had learned. Nine students were selected to be winners, receiving a framed certificate and a voucher for a free spay or neuter for a dog or cat. Winners were Emma G., Samantha K., Paitynn C., Davis R., Brandon W., Isabella K., Aalayah S., Lincy M., and Owen J.! Ladybug, Tink and Misty are among the pets who will be fixed and not add to the pet overpopulation situation in Moore County. Owen J. generously donated his voucher to Lending Paws A Hand, a rescue in Sanford, NC. Handsome Godfrey was neutered and



Trainer Neil Copeland with Elmer

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will be ready for adoption!

During the program, the students carefully decorated paper lunch bags to be donated to the Sandhills Spay Neuter Veterinary Clinic in Vass. Each bag carries an advocacy message and will be used to dispense medications for pets after their surgery. There were some wonderful bags. Eight students were awarded

Star Artist Award Winners with Speuter

certificates for their artwork and messages. Those receiving awards were Allie G., Amelia B., Elijah B., Ella D., Ethan D., Mariella M., Skylar M., and Thomas N.

There were two very special guests at the Assembly. Neil Copeland of Seven Lakes Kennels talked to the students about how he trains dogs. He trains dogs who work with the military, law enforcement, and private security companies or dogs who are pets and need some training to thrive. He took a lot of questions from interested students and parents. His training "partner" was Liz Surface's Elmer. Elmer was adopted out of a bad situation which Liz described to the students. Neil trained Elmer who is now a certified therapy dog, joining the PRC team in the classroom.

Throughout the program, the students had followed the story of Snowball and Barney, two pets who had ended up at the county shelter.

Snowball was a white Pit Bull who proceeded to give birth to 12 puppies or "flakes"! Barney was a black cat who ended up scared and alone at the shelter after his owner died. They represent all the pets who are hard to place in good homes.

Snowball and Barney's stories had happy endings.

All the students recited a Promise together, carefully taking to heart the words they were saying and then signed the Promise Poster, sealing their intent to do their best for all animals going forward.

Each student received an Animal Advocate sticker which they can proudly wear and use to start a conversation with friends and family about caring for pets. They also received a bookmark with important information that all pet advocates should know.

Congratulations to all the Westmoore fourth graders for being part of the team that makes life better for all pets!

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Speuter Story Contest Winners with Speuter