



PALOS VERDES PENINSULA NEWS



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Thursday, December 16, 2010

 **52°F**
forecast...

Local News

Oh-so cute corral

By Carrie Yamato, Special to the News
Thursday, December 16, 2010 11:35 AM PST



Tom Underhill/Peninsula News

Lily the pig and friends steal the show at Broadacres Preschool.

Farmer Hoggett had Babe, Charlotte had Wilbur, and now Broadacres Preschool has Lily.

For the 58 years that Broadacres Preschool has served Peninsula preschoolers with its special blend of animals and nature, the school has never housed a pig on its 3-acre site.

Students visit with Broadacres Preschool's new resident, Lily the pig. The preschool incorporates animals and nature into its curriculum.

But now it has Lily. Lily, who came to Broadacres via art teacher Cat Spydell, has brought a whole new energy to the school.

"Before all the kids liked Sophie, the miniature horse," said

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Spydell, who brought Lily to Broadacres after an unsuccessful attempt at keeping her at her home. “But now, everyone runs down to see Lily. “It’s amazing. Everyone knows about this pig,” continued Spydell. “Forget the goats; they’re darling, but the Lily is the star. One day I counted 30 people who came by to see Lily. Everyone just adores her.”



AmericanCareer.com

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Spydell says it’s Lily’s unique and bossy personality that gets the attention. But, by the way she is eating and growing, it may soon be her size that will capture everyone’s interest.

“She’s only 3-months old and already 20 pounds,” said Spydell’s teenage daughter Cassidy, who purchased Lily at Rolling Hills Estates’ city celebration petting zoo. “We’re not sure if she’s a miniature pig or a pot belly, so she could get as big as 300 pounds.”

The staff and the preschoolers aren’t too worried about Lily packing on the pounds. They just want to have fun with her.

“We had pig day where we talked about the letter P, and we did pig art,” said Spydell.

Experiential learning

Incorporating animals and nature firsthand into the curriculum is a big part of Broadacres’ program. With Lily’s corral mates, Cappuccino the pony, Buttercup and Daisy the pygmy goats, and their horse neighbors, Ticket, Dale, Bogart, Sophie, Chip and Riley, the children have many opportunities to learn through the animals.

“When we talk about a farm, we go and see the animals,” said Gayle Walti, director of Broadacres and stepdaughter of founder William Brown. “The children get to know firsthand how to feed and care for animals, as well as learn about their purpose and the part they play in a farm.

“They’re learning in 3D, not just from a book,” Walti continued. “Whether we’re walking in the canyon and learning about the differences between evergreen and deciduous trees with our senses or feeding the horses carrots and crackers, it all makes for a deeper, more permanent learning.”

The animals also provide important social skills lessons. Whether Lily screams at her corral mates or nuzzles up to them, the children can see that, like people, animals have different temperaments — and not everyone has a good day.

“The animals help [the children] be more sensitive to animals as well as to people,” said Walti.

Nurture through nature

Ever since Broadacres was founded in 1952, its focus has been to nurture children in a natural, peaceful setting and to encourage interaction between the families.

Walti and her mother, Bettie Brown, still maintain that vision. The two classes remain intimate in size, are only two hours long and the school families are close.

“We are one big family,” said Walti. “We have some families where the children are in their 30s and are still friends. We also have third-generation families attending the school because they loved it so much.”

“I’m so appreciative that we have this environment [at our school],” Walti said. “We’ve heard from so many people that this was the most special time in their children’s life.”

If you’d like to see the animals, call Walti at Broadacres Preschool at (310) 375-7301.

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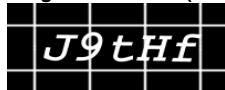
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