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# Unleashed

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## Kids, cow manure and llama kisses

By SANNE SPECHT | Published: MAY 3, 2011 | 0 Comments

I'd been trying to get out to Sanctuary One at Double Oak Farm to do a story about Ashland Middle School students' experiences at the care farm for a solid week. But inclement weather and breaking stories on my "real" beats - courts and social services - kept getting in the way.

Finally, on Monday, the sun shone brightly and the courts' cases eased. By mid-morning I was on my way, driving down winding roads, enjoying the sights, sounds and smells of the beautiful Applegate Valley.

Life is pretty good when I get to go on a critter assignment, especially when it takes me to Sanctuary One. There is something healing about even being at the farm. I also love the fact the last-chance rescue takes in "unadoptable" animals not from the public, but from other facilities.

Sanctuary One affords these creatures comfort and care for the duration of their lives, unless or until a proper adoptive home comes available. Many of the animals are aged. Most have suffered some form of abuse and/or neglect. Some still bear the scars - and worse.

Stevie, one of their several goats, mostly walks on his knees due to deformities and injuries caused by a neglectful owner who didn't bother to trim his hooves. Lisa the 700-pound Yorkshire swine was rescued from a farmer who'd beat her because this not-so-little piggy used to break out of her lonely enclosure and seek companionship down the road.

The students were clearly happy to be there and seemed eager to learn about everything from composting cow manure to what makes a llama tick. But I was most curious to see how they would interact with the animals. It was heartening to see their compassion. The 'tweens were well-mannered, respectful and kind.

Best of all, I was thrilled to see the changes wrought in the critters. By the end of the middle-schoolers visits, some of the animals, previously fearful of human contact, were now letting these curious kids approach them. One anxious llama actually turned amorous, giving a bashful boy a kiss. Another aged sheep, notorious for her stand-offishness, actually let 13-year-old Madison Crook, who'd been initially leery of the llamas, crouch by her side. The woolly one even accepted a friendly stroke or two from the gentle girl.

Like I said, Sanctuary One is a place of healing. Even if you're just watching it happen.

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Sanne Specht is the Mail Tribune's courts and social services reporter by day, and companion to her five mutant goldfish, two rowdy parrots and a pushy cat by night. And sometimes vice versa. Read about the finned, feathered and furred in the Rogue ... [Read Full](#)

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