

# Animal appreciation goal of summer camps

By Selma Haveric

shaveric@thehinsdalean.com

The Hinsdale Humane Society's Adventures in Animal Awareness summer camp gives children a chance to learn about animals beyond their household pets.

"It's a well rounded experience for the kids to see beyond the everyday pets they see in their house," said Kim Iffert, humane education coordinator at the society.

This means the campers will get comfortable with creatures that aren't quite as familiar as the family dog — like insects.

On the second day of camp, the children take a trip to Mayslake Forest Preserve to skim the top of a pond in search of bugs. They also search the prairie grass, trapping and collecting insects and counting up the different species they catch.

"Though they seem icky, they're

really interesting once they get into it," Iffert said. "You hear a couple of screeches and screams at first, but once they start catching interesting things, it all turns around for them."

During the field trip, the children learn there is more to bugs than most people might think. For example, they learn that earwigs protect their young and that stink bugs emit a scent in self-protection. As a craft, the students make a mason beehive to attract pollinators while learning that bees are not aggressive.

The camp, which is held in five-day sessions, is a series of field trips. In addition to Mayslake, the campers visit the Shedd Aquarium, Willowbrook Wildlife Center and Brookfield Zoo.

Iffert said the camp gets the students interested in the animal world while they are still young.

On the first day of the camp, following introductions, the children watch

a police officer's presentation about his police dog. They learn how the animals are trained and what dangers are involved.

On Wednesday, the campers tour the Shedd Aquarium with their chaperones. In a previous session this summer, the students watched a dolphin show and learned why dolphin training is important for the health of the animal.

Thursday's trip is to the Willowbrook Wildlife Center. There, the children can see animals in rehabilitation and learn about people's roles in animals' well being.

"We talk about what we do in society and how we can maybe have a more conservative way of living," Iffert said.

On the last day of the camp, the children visit Brookfield Zoo. There, they learn the ways in which the zoo can enrich the animals' lives.

For example, they learn how impor-

tant it is for zookeepers to provide the animals with games and activities to keep them as busy as they would be in the wild.

Following a Powerpoint presentation, the campers explore the zoom looking for examples of what they have just learned, scanning the cages for items that might have been placed there for enrichment.

The camp is geared toward generating empathy and respect toward animals and insects.

"I hope what they take away from it is that we need to be respectful of not just our dogs and cats, but we need to be respectful of how all species benefit one another," Iffert said.

The third and final session of the summer will take place from Monday to Friday, Aug. 6 to 10. Campers should be going into grades four through six. For more information, visit [hinsdalehumanesociety.org/programs/summer-camp](http://hinsdalehumanesociety.org/programs/summer-camp).