

The Nature Institute's “Enchanted Forest” Event Blended Fun and Education

by Leanne Guthrie, Reporter
October 21 2019 7:00 PM





GODFREY - The Nature Institute's "Enchanted Forest" event Friday blended fun and education for an evening of hiking, live animals, and much more.

The 'Enchanted Forest' has been going on for 18 years now. The night-time event offered an evening jam-packed with family-friendly fun. There was so much to do during the three-hour event. Kids enjoyed the hikes offered through the Olin Nature Preserve. On the hikes, they got to learn about nocturnal animals and even meet some costumed creatures along the way.

While there was great weather out at the event, a bonfire was also set up. It gave guests a chance to warm up after their hikes and enjoy roasting some 's'mores on the fire. Kids also enjoyed the chance to wear their Halloween costumes out to the event, and of course, get some candy on the way out.

"We enjoy nature and teaching the kids is a blast. It's always a lot of fun here at The Nature Institute. Tonight has been a great time, showing off the bones. Learning about nature with the kids is what the institute is all about," said Jeanie Thompson who alongside her husband Roy, showed animal skulls to attendees of the 'Enchanted Forest'.

It was the passionate volunteers that added to the magic of the enchanted forest. The enthusiasm of the volunteers was contagious, and it was with their knowledge of nature and animals that helped to make the event so much fun.

Inside The Nature Institute's Talahi Lodge, face painting and other activities were offered. On the porch, kids could check out animal furs and bones. While the event was themed for kids, it truly was a night everyone could enjoy from the volunteers to the parents.

"Tonight has been fun! I enjoyed being able to teach all of the kids tonight. It's my first time volunteering at The Nature Institute and I've really enjoyed it. I wanted to try something new and getting the chance to help teach a little bit about nature has been a really fun opportunity," said volunteer Elizabeth Hagenlocher, who showed kids animal furs during the Enchanted Forest.

The Nature Institute also welcomed out other local organizations to the event. Treehouse Wildlife Center brought out three different owls for attendees to meet and learn about. The center rescues, rehabilitates and releases wildlife. The Audubon Center at Riverlands hosted a table with fun activities where kids could learn more about owls and other birds. Audubon Center at Riverlands offers 140-degree large windows for wildlife viewing at their center, they support conservation and education of nature and wildlife.

The Nature Institute is a non-profit organization that focuses on land conservation and environmental education located in Godfrey, Illinois:

<https://www.thenatureinstitute.org> and Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/NatureInstitute/>

