

Wildlife to Play Host at Annual Open House

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Lucy, Mocha, Owlbert and Cappuccino will be among the guests of honor at the 28th Annual Open House of TreeHouse Wildlife Center this weekend at their new facility in Dow.

TreeHouse was founded in 1979 as a rehabilitation center for injured and orphaned wildlife. It is the only facility of its kind in southwestern Illinois. Wildlife are rescued after encounters with power lines, cars on highways, shotguns and poisons and other traumatic injuries. A trip to TreeHouse is just like a trip to the emergency room for these animals. They experience patient intake assessments and critical care treatment in the clinic, followed by weeks and months of physical therapy and rehabilitation. The end goal is always to release them back into the wild at a location that is as near as possible to the place from which they were rescued. Those animals that cannot be released – due to irreparable injuries or human imprinting – remain as permanent residents at TreeHouse, where they serve as education ambassadors.

The Center's open house will run this Saturday and Sunday, October 23-24, from noon until 5 pm daily. It is a rain-or-shine event. The new facility is located at 23956 Green Acres Road in Dow, and is 4 miles from the Great River Road at Elsah. Throughout the

weekend event, visitors will have an opportunity to meet and greet, up close and personally, with Lucy and her friends, along with several other TreeHouse permanent residents. Since the wildlife center is currently in a transition phase – relocating from their original home in Brighton to Dow – not all of the permanent residents will be at the Dow site for viewing, particularly the large mammals. Those animals will each be moved to the new facility as their individual cage construction is completed. However, there will be a variety of owls, hawks and falcons for the public to view and photograph.

In addition, the festivities will include children's games, wildlife arts and crafts, a drawing contest and the ever-popular Teddy Bear Clinic, which will be open from 1 to 3 each day. Visitors are invited to bring their favorite stuffed animal friend, which will receive an official wellness exam conducted by a local veterinarian.

Another annual highlight of the open house is the raffle. This year's raffle prizes include a crane chainsaw sculpture, donated by the Itchy Brothers in Grafton; an original, framed oil painting of a soaring eagle; a pecan wood vase by woodturning artist, John DiSanti; a large hand-painted rock with the image of a tiny fawn; and a beautiful, round, pedestal table and 6 chairs. New this year will be a basket raffle. Friends of TreeHouse have donated an assortment of approximately 20 baskets, with themes ranging from car care, bath and body products, a pizza "cake," Barbie dolls, Thanksgiving décor, kid's nature fun and much more.

Visitors will have an opportunity to tour the new facility, enjoy homemade chili and brats and visit our new nature-themed gift shop. We will have TreeHouse t-shirts, handmade owl friends, field guides, matted wildlife prints and kid-friendly items such as spider balls and bug boxes. On Saturday afternoon, at 3 pm, the Centennial Road Band will be performing, also.

Admission to the open house is free. Tickets will be sold for the purchase of food, kids' games and the basket raffle. Handicapped parking is also available. All proceeds from the weekend event are used to support TreeHouse's annual operating costs and the 500+ wildlife patients, for whom they provide care each year.

For additional information, call the Dow facility at 466.2990, or check online at www.treehousewildlifecenter.com or on Facebook.

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