

From *The Mansfield News*

Mansfield —

When the Mansfield Animal Shelter finally opens its doors this winter, they will do so thanks to the assistance of hundreds of residents, a number of businesses, craftsmen who have donated time, and a squad of positive and effervescent young people who have dedicated countless hours to the cause.

Representatives of Haunted Hollows, that phenomenon in the woods of the north end that creeps out all of its visitors for successive weekends around Halloween, presented Animal Shelter volunteer Mary Andrews with a check for a whopping \$10,000 at the last selectmen's meeting, Nov. 17. The donation provides a large chunk of the money needed to complete the final details at the new shelter and start moving the furry guests into their now roomy quarters.

Haunted Hollows committee member and adult volunteer Janine Rose told selectmen, "We had a wonderful year ... we had every age group, many middle school kids, and there were no incidents at all. All of us would love to come back and do it again next year."

At the end of last year's season, the future of the event was in doubt, because founders Tom and Ben Yeransian were moving on after their two years at the helm, and others who were high school seniors were graduating. But the Yeransians came back to support the new committee which had taken over, and the show went on for its third year.

"What you've done is amazing, your hard work and generosity," said Andrews, addressing the dozen or so young members of the Hollows committee.

Accepting a giant-sized check, she said, "Without your help, the shelter would not be where it is. Our goal is to open in January. You are making a huge difference in the lives of animals."

Andrews added later the date of the opening of the shelter will depend on how much more donated help and funds the group receives from this point on. Only \$20,000 more is needed, however, a far cry from the initial price tag of more than \$300,000.

Rose said the young volunteers in the room were only a fraction of the 50 high school students who staffed and ran the actual event on six evenings in October.

She said 1,303 customers paid \$10 apiece to take the scary treks through the woods, view the seven live action scenes, and wind their way through the maze. Besides the ticket prices and concession proceeds, the committee received donations of \$1,000 from the I.B.E.W., and \$100 from Eagle Elevator for a grand total of \$14,877.34. Expenses were \$3,013, and \$1,863 was reserved as seed money for next year.

The end of the year report presented to selectmen by the committee credited numerous local businesses and town departments for donations of food for the crew, cardboard, fire extinguishers, metal storage containers, advertising, trash receptacles and pickup, T-shirt design and production, public safety assistance, and numerous other items and services.

Copyright 2010 Mansfield News. Some rights reserved