

Potbelly Manor a safe haven for neglected animals



PHOTO BY EVAN DUNPHY

Potbelly Manor caretaker Audrey Agli (left) and volunteer Michael Vecchio pose with Arial, a potbelly pig who has been taken in after being neglected by her previous owners. Potbelly Manor, which is home for llamas and cows as well as pigs, is always welcome to donations, either monetary or in-kind.

By EVAN DUNPHY

NORTH KINGSTOWN—Driving East on Ten Rod Road, North Kingstown, just past the Wickford junction train station, stands Potbelly Manor. Decorated with hanging buoys from old up-and-down lines at the entrance, this light purple colonial style home holds three families volunteering most of their free time and about one acre of land to saving mistreated or abused animals.

The two main caretakers of Potbelly Manor, Audrey Agli and Liz Smith, are responsible for housing, feeding, and cleaning the animals, as well as providing medical care and organizing adoptions. Smith and Agli have been saving animals for more than 15 years.

Potbelly Manor has been a non-profit organization for more than five years now, and they are well informed about the appropriate ways to feed, shelter and protect animals. Turkeys, rabbits, ducks, bulls, cats, dogs, llamas and seven potbelly pigs are all taken care of at their animal safe house.

Smith and Agli's one acre piece of land, however, is quickly becoming too small for their animals' safety and is now threatened by a pack of coyotes. The two llamas at Potbelly Manor, Coal and Malachite, originally joined the farm to protect the other animals from looming predators.

Llamas are great for protection," explains Agli. "They can stand on their hind legs and use their sharp front hooves to attack the coyotes if they come too close," he said. "I wouldn't want to be a predator around Coal or Malachite."

Agli also strongly suggests that people intending to raise a potbelly pig should go and find an animal rescue shelter because a shelter will not be looking for monetary compensation and will be more concerned with the well-being of the animal

instead of making a profit.

Owning a potbelly pig means knowing how to feed him or her balanced portions, zoning the property accordingly and understanding that the animal values time, attention, love and dedication.

When properly treated, potbelly pigs will grow up to be around 30 to 40 pounds. When fed excessively they can become much larger, and could grow up to be around 200 to 300 pounds. According to Smith and Agli, many people have a misconception that a 300-pound pig is a normal size, which is why they are now taking care of so many mistreated or abused pigs. They have found homes for potbellies in the past, but Arial, Rachel, JD, Amelia, Benjamin, Ziggy and Buddha will be living there for the rest of their lives.

The time and money spent on taking care of any animal adds up quickly. Unfortunately, Potbelly Manor is in need of some supplies that are necessary for the animals to stay comfortable and safe. Smith and Agli are currently seeking donations, and will welcome any little bit of support. They accept hay, carrots, apples, saltine crackers, lumber, fencing and used sneakers, but not ripped or torn sneakers because Potbelly Manor sends the footwear to ShoeBox Recycling.

The shoes are repaired and supplied to less fortunate people. A small portion of those funds helps the manor, but it will also accept monetary donations, such as Home Depot, Stop and Shop, and Walmart gift cards.

Upcoming events at Potbelly Manor include "Kiss the Pig" contests at local schools which sign up, or therapy visits from Arial at local nursing homes or private residences.

To learn more about how to get involved with Potbelly Manor, visit their website at www.potbellymanor.org, or call 295-4241 to spend time with the animals.

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