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Girl Scouts give Rudy the rabbit room to stretch

By Sara Gividen

2 hours ago



Photo By State Journal/Kelly Mackey

Elizabeth Watkins, left, Courtney Green, Britney Markey and the rest of Girl Scout Troop 799 put new plants in the courtyard of the Franklin County Senior Citizen Center for its pet rabbit, Rudy, Sunday.



Photo By State Journal/Kelly Mackey

John Sammons holds the Franklin County Senior Citizen Center's pet rabbit, Rudy, as Breanna Sanford pets it in the courtyard. Girl Scout Troop 799 worked on Rudy's habitat Sunday.

State Journal Staff
Writer

With lots of dirt,

shovels and gloves "Extreme Home Makeover: Rabbit Edition" officially took place Sunday at the Franklin County Senior Citizens Center.

Girl Scout Troop 799 spent the afternoon beautifying the garden corridor at the center for the seniors' pet rabbit, Rudy.

Nine girls, two troop leaders and parent volunteers helped create a new habitat that is aesthetically pleasing and rabbit friendly as part of a community service project.

Co-troop leader Beth Metzger said the girls voted on the project last fall and it will help them earn a Bronze Award, the highest honor a junior Girl Scout can achieve.

"Everything we've done since October has been geared to this project," Autumn Chapman, troop leader said.

The girls, in grades four through six, consulted with a veterinarian, a representative from the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and a landscape architect to determine how to best construct a garden for Rudy and those who attend the senior center to enjoy.

Local businesses aided the girls in replacing the 60-foot by 5-foot garden. Wilson Nurseries helped the girls select flowers and plants; Home Depot donated an umbrella for a table; Sam's Club gave a gift card used toward a cigarette outpost for smokers; and Superior Turf-Sod Farm Inc. in Shelbyville kicked in with sod, Chapman said.

One girl researched the proper water bottles for rabbits; another girl's dad constructed a home especially for Rudy, Chapman said.

Troop members were totally involved in the project, from research to pulling old plants and putting in \$200 worth of new ones such as lavender, geraniums and thyme, they said.

Sixth-grader Lauren Hogan said planting was a challenge, but she focused on the troop's goal of making life better for Rudy and those who visit the

center.

"It (the project) will help the rabbit more because it won't be eating stuff that will endanger it," Lauren said. "It will make it more enjoyable for the senior citizens to come out and watch the rabbit."

Center Director John Sammons said he purchased Rudy, a Dutch rabbit who weighs around five pounds, from a pet store in March 2007.

He said since that time the seniors and staff at the center have come to love Rudy.

Sammons said he's thrilled with the girls' work.

"They intend to make it a more friendly environment for Rudy," he said. "I think it's just fantastic that a group of girls would do this."

While details for maintaining the garden haven't solidified, the girl scouts and Sammons say they want to make sure Rudy's home stays in top shape.

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