

GATES-CHILI POST

Thursday, March 20, 2014

www.gateschilipost.com

Vol. 14, No. 13 ■ 50 cents

Gates-Chili Post | Thursday, March 20, 2014 **A11**

OWLS ON THE WING

Seniors get a visit from owls

Submitted to The Post

No feathers were ruffled when Black Creek Wildlife Station took roost at Westwood Commons in January. Aurora, a partially-blind red screech owl, and Clacker, an injured horned owl, recently visited the DePaul Senior Living Community in North Chili along with wildlife rehabilitator Gary Zimmerman of Churchville and volunteer Nancy Foote.



Nancy Foote holds an eastern screech owl. SUBMITTED

Zimmerman has been involved in wildlife rehabilitation for 20 years. In the 10-months he operated the Black Creek Wildlife Station last year, Zimmerman said he rescued

130 birds, of which about 49 percent were able to be released back into the wild. He estimates rehabbing 90 mammals with about a 51 percent return rate.

The goal of visiting schools, fairs, organizations and senior living communities like Westwood Commons is to educate the public, Zimmerman said.



Gary Zimmerman, a wildlife rehabilitator, holds a great horn owl. SUBMITTED

“Everybody seems to migrate towards owls,” he said. “They are in this area, all over the place, but no one ever sees them and you can’t get close enough to appreciate them.”

The public can help create habitats for birds of prey in their own yard by avoiding cutting down

dead trees which can serve as nesting areas for birds and a food source for wood peckers and other insectivores. If someone spots an injured animal or bird, Zimmerman said, he advises they stay away from the animal and immediately call a wildlife rehabilitator.

“I always tell people, do not attempt to do the things I’m doing with these birds with a bird found in the wild,” he said.

For more information about Westwood Commons, please contact Administrator Karen Shaffer at (585) 293-2060 or visit us on Facebook.