

Noah's Ark in emergency funding crisis

— By Jason A. Smith
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The head of a Locust Grove shelter for children and animals says she and her staff are relying on faith to see them through a funding shortage.

Jama Hedgecoth, founder and director of Noah's Ark at 712 Locust Grove-Griffin Road, said, although the shelter has no outstanding debt, funds are needed for day-to-day operations.

The facility typically holds an annual "Keep the Boat Afloat" event, which raises as much as \$300,000 to support the Ark's efforts. However, Noah's Ark was unable to hold the event this year.

"The children and animals don't come with checkbooks," she said. "People have a misconception that we're really well off. We have to depend on people's good hearts to come and help us in order to continue our animal-education programs for the children who come in." She said raising money is the most difficult aspect of running the facility.

"That's not what motivates us to do what we do," she said. "We're here for the children and the animals."

Noah's Ark states its mission as an agency that provides rehabilitation and hope for children and animals. Hedgecoth said operating the shelter is an exercise in faith for those associated with it. "People would be shocked if they knew how little money we have and what we do with it," she said. Susan Crane, who works in the facility's accounting department, agreed, saying that obtaining donations for Noah's Ark is often difficult. She said the facility is funded completely by corporate and private donations.

She said the "greatest need" for the facility, as temperatures drop, is for the animals. The cost of feeding the animals, many of which have been abandoned or abused before coming to Noah's Ark, is about \$10,000 per month. Food and hay to feed the animals is not as easily accessible during the winter, she said.

The next fund-raising effort for the shelter is a motorcycle ride scheduled for Oct. 6. Registration for the ride will begin at noon, at Motorheads Bar & Grill at 650 Macon St., in McDonough. The fee to enter is \$20 per rider, and \$25 with a passenger.

— On the Net:
www.noahs-ark.org

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