

## Folk Fest takes residents to a simpler time



Donovan Greene (red shirt) and Ruby Greene (white shirt) examine flowers at The Grove's 39th annual Folk Fest on Oct. 1.

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The Grove National Historic Landmark continued to pay it forward this year with its 39th annual Folk Fest on Oct. 1.

The event featured a live-animal presentation, historical reenactments, musical performances and hay rides, among more than a dozen other forms of educational and entertaining presentations.

Folk Fest became a tradition at the historic landmark in the late 1970s after Glenview rallied together to save the area from development. Thirty-nine years later, the event drew more than 2,000 people to the government-protected landmark.

"We are still in debt to the community for saving The Grove when they did and for continuing to support what we do," The Grove Director Lorin Ottlinger said. "People love The Grove. It's a gem in the community. Glenview is very lucky to have The Grove, and we are in debt to the community for supporting us and coming out to our events."

The Grove employees spent the entire week prior to the event preparing the grounds to provide the best setting for their thank-you event. On the day of the fest, employees arrived at the landmark as early as 5 a.m. to set up and begin making food, including the traditional cauldron-cooked stew that requires 150 pounds of pork. Although each employee puts in a tremendous amount of work each year to pull off the event, the first-year director called it "a labor of love."

"It's important that we remember where we came from in this community," Ottlinger said. "We are celebrating the Kenicott family and their legacy, and so this is a great way to do it because it's a fun time to come out, listen to some good music and have some good food. It brings the message to a new generation."

Children at the event received a first-hand look into the past lives led at The Grove, making crafts with wild flowers, hand-drilling holes into wood and cooking from scratch while being surrounded by nature and entertainment reminiscent of the early years at the location. Volunteer Coordinator Elizabeth Cline and more than 30 event volunteers worked together to provide educational experiences.

"It's so exciting for kids to get a perspective on how things were done," Cline said. "They get a little sense of what it was like to live 150 years ago. It's really exciting. This is a fun community event that gets people out here."

A crowd-favorite event at the festival brought out The Grove's wild side. Scott Henrichs, director of the Flying Fox Conservation Fund, and Christine Gomoll presented several exotic animals, including a sloth, an armadillo, a bat and a python. The pair taught families about the wildlife while bringing awareness to the foundation's conservation cause. Presentation attendees were even allowed to pet the exotic animals as they walked around the room.

"We love this opportunity," Gomoll said. "We love any opportunity to talk about animals, both these animals and [animals out] in the world. They all need a lot of help and a lot of awareness, so this is a great place to come."

The Grove and its festivals get bigger and better every year, according to Ottlinger.

“It’s a little different every year,” she said. “We don’t have the same vendors, we don’t have the same musicians, but we always have music [and] we always have cooking in the cauldrons and we always offer different activities. We mix it up a little every year, but it’s generally the same party [with] dining, good music and good times for families.”