



Sophie Wells, 6, of Hebron, shows some cherry tomatoes and a strawberry from her garden. PROVIDED

Share your 'Homegrown Harvest' photos

Community Recorder

Home gardening is growing bountifully in Northern Kentucky, but before you take a bite out of that huge homegrown tomato, take a photo for the Recorder.

We would love to see the colorful vegetables and fruits from your home gardens, and the creative ways you are making even the smallest spaces into productive patches. Gardeners tending their crops would also make great photos.

We'll run a selection of "Homegrown Harvest" photos in the Recorder through August. Email your photo to ndaly@nky.com. Please include your name, who is in the photo, community, a sentence or two about your garden and your phone number in case we have questions.

Stuffed animals bring calm to Campbell

The scene of a crime, automobile accident or emergency of any kind is a scary place to be, especially if you are just a little kid.

Campbell County Sheriff Jeff Kidwell



Marsie Hall Newbold
MARSIE'S MENAGERIE

found his heart going out to the little ones he came into contact with on the job. There they would be, standing quietly, sometimes crying while their moms and dads were caught up in the middle of all sorts of incidents. What, he wondered, could he and his road deputies do to console them?

Then it came to him: give them a stuffed animal to hold onto. That way they would have a friend to cuddle and not



Nosey the Basset Hound is surrounded by Campbell County Sheriff Jeff Kidwell, his deputies and a few of the donated stuffed animals. THANKS TO MARSIE NEWBOLD

feel so alone. He had heard of programs sponsored by police and fire departments that gave children stuffed animal or quilts in these situations, so he decided to implement one in Campbell County as one of his first orders of business as sheriff. As a father himself, Kidwell understood the magical properties of stuffed toys.

"Kids love their stuffed animals," he said. "They form a special bond with them. Sometimes they tell the toy things that they might not feel comfortable or be able to articulate to grown-ups."

Kidwell's line of thought is right on target, according to former Fort Thomas resident, Ann McElhinney Kirlin, Psy.D. "Animals represent an unconditional source of love, security, and acceptance," she said. "These are critical

components in calming a traumatized individual."

There is a scientific aspect of this as well, hugging a stuffed animal releases "feel-good" hormones in the brain that trigger feelings of calm.

So, in late January, the sheriff implemented the "Campbell County Sheriff's Office Stuffed Animal Program." It stipulates that all road deputies are required to carry a plastic container in their cruisers filled with stuffed animals to be given to children they come into contact with in traumatizing situations.

Not wanting to burden taxpayers with the cost of the program, Kidwell initially funded it himself, purchasing plastic storage bins and a supply of stuffed animals. He then went online and announced the program on the newly developed Campbell County Sheriff's Facebook page, asking for donations of new, stuffed animals from individuals, businesses and civic organizations. His simple idea turned out to be a winner, because within days the notice went "viral," with "Likes" and "Shares" from more than 23,000 other compassionate people.

"The program has been a great success so far," Kidwell said. "We've received hundreds of stuffed toys. People stop by the office

several times a week and drop off donations. A grade-school class and several businesses have held drives and the Kroger in Cold Spring allowed us to put up a sign and collection barrel.

"It is extremely gratifying to see the community's positive response to this program. When you think about it, a whole lot of good is coming out of something very small. One of my goals is for kids to grow up seeing law enforcement officers as 'the good guys,' figures they can look up to and count on for help.

"Too often nowadays, kids don't get that positive message at home or from their peers. Through this program they learn from experience. We don't have to be heavy handed and tell them that we are the good guys. This way, we get to show them and hopefully, the positive impression we make with this small act of kindness will last a lifetime."

To learn more about the program or to make a donation, visit www.campbellsheriffky.org; or call Elizabeth Kendall at 859-292-3833; or email ekendall@campbellcountyky.org.

Pet care expert Marsie Hall Newbold is a resident of Highland Heights. Readers can email her at marsolete@insightbb.com.

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Community Foundation golf classic July 29

Community Recorder

The Community Foundation of Northern Kentucky's 15th annual golf classic is Monday, July 29, at the Triple Crown Country Club.

Proceeds from the outing will support two social service organizations — the Northern Kentucky Children's Advocacy Center and Community Services of Northern Kentucky Adult Day Care and Respite.

A shotgun start will begin the day at 12:35 p.m. and will include lunch and a post-outing social, complete with food, drink, prizes and raffles. Individual golfers may participate for \$150; foursomes \$600.

The outing has a limited number of spaces still available and interested persons should contact Lisa West at Community Services or visit www.cfnky.org.