

Pinecrest

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Positive PEOPLE in Pinecrest



BRANDI APPLEBAUM

Palmetto High School senior Brandi Applebaum's junior year was jam-packed. It started with the putting together a daylong PAwareness Fair to raise awareness about animals. The project was for Applebaum's Girl Scout Gold Award. She worked on the project with Carley Schleien and Lauren Gutlohn, all members of Troop 317.

"Carley, Lauren and I love animals and we wanted to do something that would raise awareness about the number of animals that are abused and abandoned," Applebaum says.

The girls contacted Jen Ford of Paws4You Rescue. Ford became the

girls' advisor on the project.

"She kept us on track and very kindly gave us some contacts," Applebaum says.

The girls worked on the Gold Award project for more than six months. When it was completed, they had each put in more than the 65 hours required for the award.

"We got vendors from dog companies and we contacted rescue services and Miami Dade County to educate the public," Applebaum says.

The Pet Fair was held last October at Bet Shira. The site was significant because there was a large field, it was close to Palmetto High and the girls hoped it would generate interest in opening a dog park within the Village, especially since Mayor Cindy Lerner was the master of ceremonies.

"We had cat networks come and one lady showed up with her bird," Applebaum says. "We had a dog trainer and we also had someone talk about the importance of learning CPR for your pet."

Since it was the first time such an event was held, Applebaum says they were hoping to attract 500 people. They were thrilled when 500-700 attended.

"They enjoyed being able to go somewhere and just hang with their dogs and other pet owners," she says. "There are not a lot of places you can take your dog."

The girls have put together a book on how to organize another PAwareness Fair. They hope another Girl Scout troop will take on the program for its Gold Award project.

Along with being a Girl Scout, Applebaum is involved with her youth group, USY, based at Bet Shira. She has also volunteered to help younger children at the temple. Applebaum is a regular at the Bet Shira Mitzvah Days. Her other community volunteer work includes Habitat for Humanity. She has also grown her hair long several times and cut off at least 10 inches for Locks of Love.

At Palmetto High, she is a member of the French Honor Society, the English Honor Society, the Science National Honor Society, the Photo Club, Key Club and the Literary Society. She recently received an award from the Community Partnership Foundation for her community service.

"I was the first winner of the award," she says. "It was given to me at my temple. The education center there nominated me. It was for leadership and community service and giving back to the community."

For fun, Applebaum is a trapeze artist. She uses the trapeze at Bayside.

"I've been doing it there for three years now," she says.

She enjoys the practice and learning new tricks on the trapeze.

"For us, it's to practice and learn how to do tricks; there are no shows," she says. "I'd love to keep it as a hobby, but if there was an opportunity to tour with Cirque du Soleil, I'd jump at it. But ultimately I'd like to go into the world of fashion."

By Linda Rodriguez Bernfeld