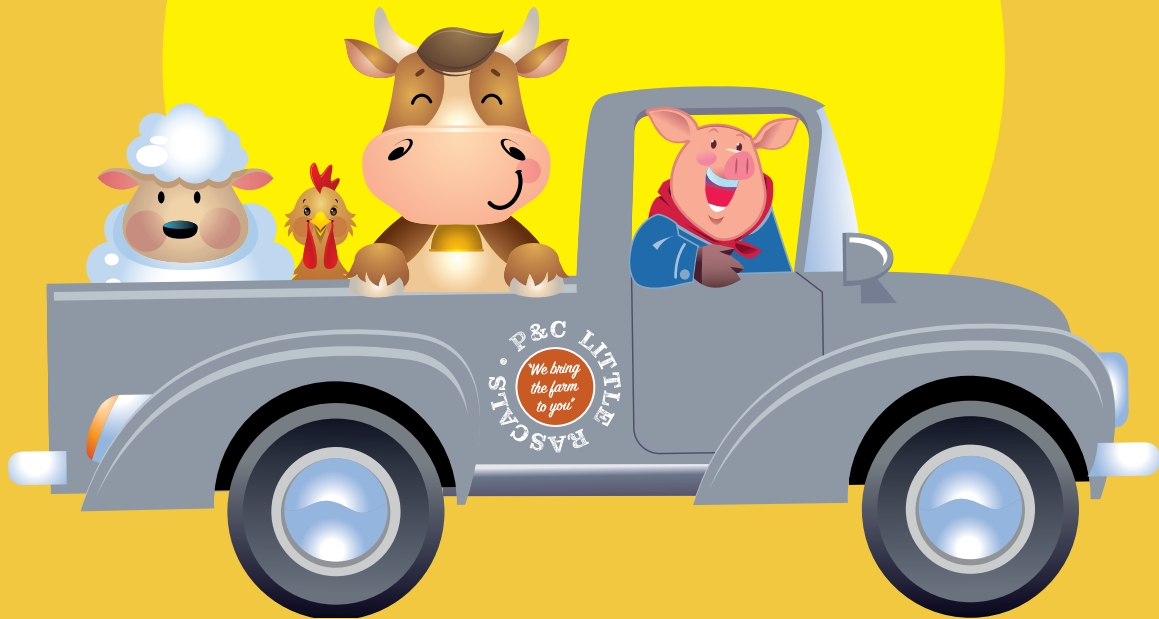


# A Little knowledge



*goes a*  
**LONG  
WAY**

A Chadwick couple who take their show on the road have become homegrown educators at a traveling zoo where the teachers' pets are giving people some hands-on lessons in life on the farm

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By Cody Cutter | Sauk Valley Media

**W**hen partners in life and partners in business Chris McCauley and Paula Adams first met, it was almost like an episode of “Green Acres” come to life – with a slight twist.

Farm livin’ was the life for her, but not so much for him. These days, though, no one gets allergic smelling hay or adores

a penthouse view – but a henhouse view? Well, that’s a different story.

The couple are the proud parents of a business that takes its show on the road and teaches people about country critters through their traveling petting zoo, P&C Little Rascals.

Guests were all smiles April 24 at P&C Little Rascals Farm during an open house at the Chadwick farm where the traveling zoo’s animals live.

ALEX T. PASCHAL/  
APASCHAL@SHAWMEDIA.COM

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Chris McCauley and Paula Adams of Chadwick own P&C Little Rascals, a traveling petting zoo that brings the farm to those who may not get to experience what life is like out in the country. Among the animals people get to meet is Hooligan the llama.  
**CODY CUTTER/CCUTTER@SAUKVALLEY.COM**

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But at first, it was Chris who had to get up to speed before he could get out on the road. When the two met, Adams brought McCauley to the family farm where he learned a lot about the many animals that called it home. Today, that learning experience is paying off when they take their zoo out on weekends to crowds who greet their extended farm family with plenty of "oohs" and "awws."

You won't see the kinds of exotic animals from faraway lands you'd find at a regular zoo — P&C is a down-home kind of zoo stocked with typical farm animals such as pigs, goats, chickens, rabbits; and you might just see some other critters that you may not necessarily think of as being a farm animal, like a llama and alpaca.

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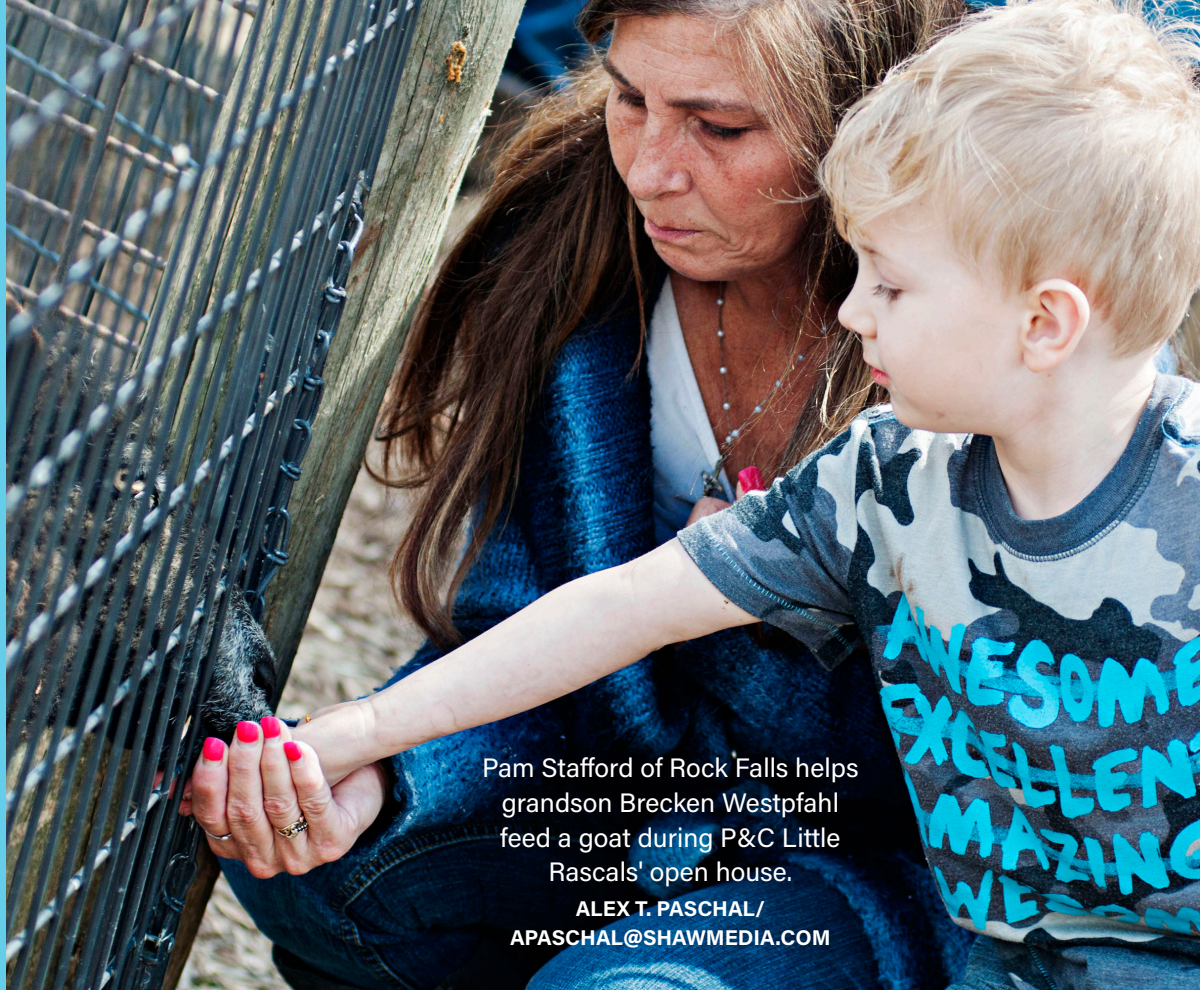


Another difference? People can see the animals up close at this zoo, and even feel their fur and feathers.

At each show, signs attached to pens and cages contain information about the animals, and the couple shares their knowledge, too. People can learn all about animals: their lifecycles, their DNA — or that llamas are good at keeping an eye on things.

“Llamas are a good guard animal,” Adams said. “They’re a good animal to have if you have livestock running out. Llamas will keep coyotes away, they’ll keep wild dogs and stray dogs away. One of the llamas that I had here before saw some guard dogs, and it tackled the dogs if they came near the pen.”

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Pam Stafford of Rock Falls helps grandson Brecken Westpfahl feed a goat during P&C Little Rascals' open house.

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Llamas also make a chattering noise that'll send sheep running back to their pen.

"We've been to a few places where people didn't know what a llama was, or what an alpaca was," McCauley said. "They say there's no difference between a llama and an alpaca, but there's a big difference, so we'll explain it to them." Another bit of llama trivia? "A lot of people don't know that llamas are pregnant for 11 to 13 months," he said. "That's a long time."

Chickens are another little rascal that, while many people are familiar with them, not everyone knows there are so many different breeds, or that their eggs can come in different colors, one of which is straight out of a Dr. Seuss book.

Eggs start out white, but the final color is determined by the breed and pigment that's added to the egg when it passes through a chicken's oviduct, and some of those eggs pop out green — just don't ask for any green ham!

Chickens that can lay green eggs include Swedish Ishbars and Favaucanas — a cross between a faverolle and an Ameraucana.

McCauley was one of those people who, when Adams first met him, didn't know about green eggs. She sent him a picture of some and he thought she was pulling his leg, but the yoke was on him.

"He thought I was lying," Adams said. "So he came to the barn to find them, and sure enough he found the green eggs."

ZOO cont'd to page 27



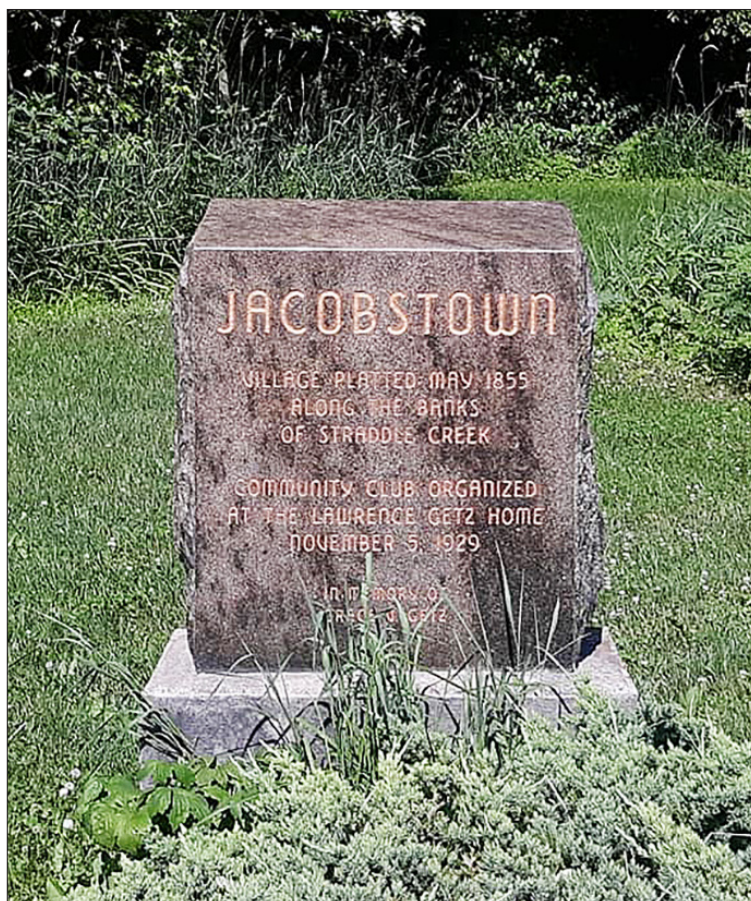
ALEX T. PASCHAL/APASCHAL@SHAWMEDIA.COM

Cherikee Serenil feeds chickens April 24 during an open house at P&C Little Rascals. The event was a first for P&C, and owners Paula Adams and Chris McCauley weren't sure how many people to expect, but the event turned out "awesome," Adams said. "I was hoping we'd have maybe 200 people show up, but we had about 350-some sign the guestbook, and a lot signed 'and family,' so we don't know how many people all came. It was crazy. It was way better than we thought."



Jacobstown was established in May of 1855 along the banks of Straddle Creek by Benjamin and Mariah Jacobs. Without a railroad or highway traffic to aid in the settlement's development, it died out not too long after the turn of the 20th century. The Getz family were among the village's early residents, and descendants still live nearby. As noted on this marker, a community club was organized at the Lawrence Getz home in 1929. The family erected this marker where the settlement used to be to honor the people who called Jacobstown home. The marker is just south of where Jacobstown Road intersects with Scenic Palisades Road west of Mount Carroll. A small cemetery also exists nearby on private property where several former settlers are buried.

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Adams has always had a fondness for animals. She even had a job working around them, at the River Ridge Animal Hospital, where she was an accountant. Through the years, she kept adding more to her menagerie, and as time went on, she decided to make one of her childhood dreams come true: having a petting zoo. With a full-time job, though, her zoos started out small.

As the number of animals grew, and the petting zoos started becoming more popular, Adams left her job at the animal hospital last year to tend to her expanding compliment of two- and four-legged friends. McCauley works full-time with Orkin Pest Control and helps out on the farm when he comes home.

Though things were galloping along at first, they slowed down last year when the pandemic put many business' future in question, including P&C's. Prospects of an expanded schedule were dashed by Covid, leaving the couple wondering how their operation was going to continue. They decided that if they couldn't bring the zoo to people, they'd bring people to the zoo, and opened up the farm on April 24, for a free, 1-day tour.

The timing was perfect. With so many people suffering from pandemic burnout and wanting to get out and travel more, it made the event a prime destination for many locals – many more than Adams and McCauley expected. The baby goats and baby llamas were among the most popular animals, Adams said. They also had craft vendors and concessions.

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ALEX T. PASCHAL/APASCHAL@SHAWMEDIA.COM

Annalee King of Thomson climbs onto a tractor April 24 during P&C Little Rascals' open house. Along with the animals, the farm had equipment on display, crafts for sale and food.



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## A zoo near you

P&C Little Rascals travels to functions throughout northern Illinois to educate people of all ages about their animals.

Their farm is at 22351 Thomson Road in rural Chadwick, and is open for tours by appointment only. **To schedule a visit** from the traveling zoo, or to learn more, find them on Facebook, call 815-631-7203, or email PCLittleRascals@gmail.com.

ZOO cont'd from page 27

"It turned out awesome," Adams said. "I was hoping we'd have maybe 200 people show up, but we had about 350-some sign the guestbook, and a lot signed 'and family,' so we don't know how many people all came. It was crazy. It was way better than we thought. I think it helped that everyone wanted to get out and do stuff. We try to make it educational."

The overwhelming success has made the couple want to do it again next year. Folks who just can't wait until then to see what life is like at the farm can stop by, as long as they make an appointment with Adams for a visit.

Most of their animals come from animal swaps throughout the Midwest. Regional events are held annu-

ally as close as Freeport and Maquoketa, Iowa, with large-scale events in places such as Kankakee and Waverly, Iowa. The traveling petting zoo doesn't quite go that far, but it makes plenty of weekend stops throughout northern Illinois at public events, business events, county fairs and events tailored to special needs individuals.

One of their recent stops was June 12 at Lake Carroll, an event that attracted many city folks who perhaps aren't used to seeing such animals up close and in person. It was P&C's first time setting up at the lake.

### A learning experience

McCauley never really anticipated living the farm life a decade ago. Then he met Adams.

"It's been an experience," he said. "I had never really known there were farm auctions and stuff like that. I never really knew about that. When I met her, I'd do chores after I got off of work, and after a week I just never left."

When kids get to the age when they become curious where their meat comes from, they can put a picture to the animal they hear of.

"It's kind of nice to teach people what the animals are used for," Adams said. "I know a lot of people are against butchering and that, but that's what the animals are there for, to butcher and eat. They don't just grow in a grocery store."

ZOO cont'd to page 29



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"I hope that they learn about the animals and learn about what animals are used for," Adams said.

Adams and McCauley have seen people from all walks of life, and all ages, who have never seen many of their animals in person, and they're glad to help them learn about all the subjects in their animal kingdom – and as long as the animals have a story to tell, Adams and McCauley will be happy to tell it.

"The kids' eyes get big when they see the animals," she said. "The adults, too; they get a kick out of the animals and feeding them. Even though we're out in farm country, it's amazing how much kids don't see animals in town. Even in big towns like Sterling or Rock Falls, they're still in enough 'country' that they could see that stuff, but they don't." ■

Austin Barkley feeds a llama April 24 at the P&C Little Rascals farm in Chadwick. Visitors could purchase cups of snacks to feed a wide assortment of animals.

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