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New Release
April 28, 2010

Austin second grader claims her name to fame at Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch

Baby giraffe blooming with new name: Marigold

Garden Ridge, Texas When Laurie, Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch's (NBWR) longest resident giraffe, gave birth to a 6-foot-tall, 125-pound baby on January 16, the folks at the ranch needed help naming her. They initiated a naming contest and tapped the creativity of children. Entries poured in from children of all ages from around the country, including Maine and Oregon.

Austin second grader Madeline Stevens claimed her name to fame with her entry Marigold. She knew Spring had sprung when she saw the baby giraffe at a recent visit to NBWR and yelled out, "Mom, she looks like a Marigold!" Her creativity earned her family a NBWR season pass and her class a field trip to NBWR.

From March 1-31, children ages 5-18 entered their prized name for the baby giraffe along with their explanation on why they chose the name. Entrants provided a 50-word description, drawing, photo, art project, Powerpoint or other form of creative expression for their explanation/description. The judges selected three finalists; 1 from elementary grade level; 1 student from middle school grade level; and 1 student from the high school grade level. The judge's selections were placed on NBWR's Facebook page for the general public to vote.

New Braunfels seventh grader James Yonker's name Duncan and New Braunfels sophomore Emilia Hovestadt's name Jenga were first place winners in their age category. Both students earned a class field trip.

Pflugerville kindergartener Matthew Kelly's name Stretch and San Antonio first grader Chrystopher Sloan's name Gizmo were runners up. Both students earned a season pass.

"Our judges had a hard time choosing," said Tiffany Soechting, Marketing and Public Relations Director for NBWR. "With names like Miss Cutie Patootie, Cupcake, Gobstopper, Star and Calliope—it certainly made it difficult. We are proud of all of our students who entered. Their creativity was the tops."

Judges included New Braunfels Herald Zeitung Publisher and Editor Doug Toney, WOAI-4 San Antonio Living Host and Traffic Anchor Shelly Miles and New Braunfels Independent School District Superintendent Randy Moczygemba.

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Opened in 1984, Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch has become one of Texas' most recognized entertainment attractions. The ranch covers 400 acres of Texas hill country terrain and provides 4 miles of paved roads where guests drive through and witness the natural animal behaviors of over 500 animals from 40 exotic, native and endangered animal species worldwide. The natural, free-roaming environment is home to many unique animals, including Southern White Rhinoceros', North American Buffalo, Reticulated Giraffes, as well as many zebras, emus, ostriches, elk, gazelle and Wildebeests. For more information, visit www.WildlifeRanchTexas.com.

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