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Susan Block (right), of Highland Park, shows her grandson, 4-year-old Daniel Posner, around Stupey Cabin in Highland Park on Saturday, June 7, at the Stupey Cabin Picnic and Fundraiser. EVAN THOMAS/22ND CENTURY MEDIA

ews COVER STORY

'Save Stupey' brings history to life

DANIELLE PERLIN, Staff Writer

As more than 300 families navigated their way through the third annual Stupey Cabin Picnic and Fundraiser at Laurel Park on Saturday, June 7, kids learned about rughooking, farming, plants, pioneer life and, of course, Highland Park's oldest standing structure, Stupey Cabin.

Patch 22, a farm located in Wadsworth, gave pony rides and had a petting zoo with donkeys, goats, lambs, a calf and more. The sun shined as families ate burgers, chips and other barbecue food on picnic chairs while period music played in the background.

The event was sponsored by the Highland Park Historical Society in partnership with the city, the park district and the library. Sunset Foods donated half of the food as well. Although the event was free, a \$5 donation was requested in order to "cover the cost of food and hopefully get donations to support the preservation work on [Stupey] Cabin," Rob Rotering, president of the Historical Society, said.

Stupey Cabin is the oldest standing structure in Highland Park.

"[This event] is a community celebration of our pioneer roots," Rotering said. "We have the historical reenactors, [the DuPage Valley Settlers], who are new this year, showing people how people lived [in the 1830s]."

"And then we have some more events with Heller Nature Center and some of the local groups. We think that it's a great way to teach our residents about history through the kids."

Stupey Cabin, according to Rotering, was built in 1847-48 where Exmoor Country Club is now located. On the 100th year of Highland Park in 1969, the cabin was moved

to its current location next to city hall.

Rotering said, in total, he is hoping to raise \$40,000 to fully preserve the cabin, since not much work has been done on the cabin in 40 years. Over \$10,000 has been raised so far.

"We need a new roof, preservation work on the timbers to keep the little bugs from eating away at it over time ... to keep [the cabin] preserved for the next 100 years," Rotering said, noting that over 50 volunteers came to help at the event. "We've seen a great outpouring of support from people who've come to help set up and to cook, both kids and adults."

At the event, Rotering presented a plaque to former Highland Park Mayor Ray Geraci, who was "instrumental in the movement of Stupey Cabin in 1969," when, according to Geraci, Exmoor Country Club used the cabin as a caddy shack.

"[The cabin] wasn't going to last very long if it stayed there," Geraci explained. "[Receiving this plaque] is a total surprise."

Highland Park residents and twins Linda Wallace and Iris Morgan, who are also docents with the Highland Park Historical Society, have come to this event for the past three years.

"I love the location; I love the trees. I love the Stupey Cabin," Wallace said, noting that she and her sister both grew up in Highland Park. "[The venue] captures the feel of Highland Park ... it's a lost kind of event. There's no technology here."

"I like that it's old fashioned, because it brings back the feel of how Highland Park originated, where everyone knew everyone," Morgan said. "I think [this event] is really nice. There aren't



Patric Garcia, 2, the great, great, great, great-grandson of Francis Stupey – original owner of Stupey Cabin – enjoys the petting zoo at the annual Stupey Cabin Picnic and Fundraiser.

that many opportunities for children and adults to socialize together and enjoy themselves, and it's educational for adults and children."

Highland Park resident Sarah Rosen brought her three children, including 7-year-old Gabriel Rosen, to the event for the second time. Sarah Rosen grew up in Highland Park and has pictures of herself as a "very little girl" outside the Stupey Cabin, which she has "always loved."

"We checked out the petting zoo; we bought some T-shirts, we had some popcorn, [and] we're enjoying the music," Rosen said. "My kids really liked spending a lot of time in the cabin asking questions."

Gabriel Rosen went home with two black tomato plants, which he "never knew" existed until the event. Rosen also took home a dragon carrot plant, provided by Growing Healthy People and the Ravinia Neighbors Association. When asked if he is interested in learning about history, Rosen replied, "Yes, definitely."

"My favorite thing [at the event] is the [Stupey] Cabin, because it's the oldest house in Highland Park," Rosen said, who also noted that he

learned a lot from the DuPage Valley Settlers. "One of the guys has a super long knife. It looked about the same size as one of the short samurai swords ... [they lived] very different [in the 1800s]."



Kaitlyn Ball (left), 17, and her brother Brandon, 14, of Arlington Heights, show off their "Frontier Days" utensil-making skills at the annual Stupey Cabin Picnic and Fundraiser in Highland Park on Saturday, June 7. PHOTOS BY EVAN THOMAS/22ND CENTURY MEDIA

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