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DR. RITCHIE MEETING WRAP-UP **PREVENT PDD: PICNIC IN THE PARK**

I am so overwhelmed with the generosity of our club and the members. I have been a member of bird clubs for over 15 years and I must say, our club ROCKS!!!!!! We have always been very proud of our group and uniqueness we share. We are proud not to have the pettiness and strife that most organizations always seem to have. We have been brought together because of our beloved pet parrots and have now found wonderful friendship and camaraderie together. Our dedication to our birds and the bird world was very evident on Saturday, September 9, for the PREVENT PDD: PICNIC IN THE PARK event we hosted.

I was honored when Valerie Schuster of Avian Health Network came to me last fall and asked if The Bird Heard would host the Quilt Drawing for the 2006 Birds of Feather Quilt. The quilt is made by volunteers in honor of those birds that have been lost to PDD. I proudly brought the request to our club-planning meeting and it was voted on unanimously to again host it. We went as far as canceling our own annual summer picnic to put all of our effort and funds into this worthy cause.

We started planning this event last fall with meetings held every 4-6 weeks to allow ourselves plenty of time for organizing the Picnic. We always had great attendance with great ideas. We did everything from forming committees, brainstorming, stuffing envelopes, marketing, filling baskets, making bows and making first-aid kits. It was due to everyone's dedication and enthusiasm that we were able to plan such an event.

Saturday, September 9, 2006, dawned with a bright and sunny start. Whew ... all the months of planning ... we needed a bright, sunny day. A picnic in the rain would not have been any fun at all; and this was one thing we could not control. Ken set out first thing to put out the signs to direct people to the event. There were plenty of people that came to my house to fill cars with all the donated items, decorations, and miscellaneous items we needed. We had so many members show up in the morning we were set-up and ready by 11:30 a.m. and the event did not start until 1:00 p.m.

The decorations made the pavilion look festive and inviting. The showcase was the 2006 Birds of Feather

Quilt. The quilt was just amazing and took your breath away. To know that volunteers had worked so hard to make this fundraiser a success in honor of all the birds that have been lost to PDD is overwhelming. Dr. Ritchie just stood and gazed at in amazement, taking in all the detail and fine work that gone into the making of the quilt.

We had over 60 people between bird club members and attendees. Everyone agreed the food was WONDERFUL and we had plenty. The first-aid kits were a big hit and we sold over 15 of them. I think everyone left with a charm bracelet or key chain. There were 11 baskets on the raffle table filled with goodies; there was a special raffle table with huge toys, a perch and an Ott light. The auction was an overwhelming success with over 24 items including cages, afghans, stained glass and baskets. I started to cry when the first basket went for \$240.00. We all enjoyed seeing the enthusiasm over the auction.

Dr. Ritchie drew the winning ticket for the quilt and announced that Patti Best of Leesburg, VA was the winner. Unfortunately, she was not there, but we were happy for her. Kathy Bangle from The University of Georgia made the announcement that the supporters of AHN have given a total of \$55,000.00 to PDD research in just under 3 years! This did not include the \$4,000.00 check presented to Dr. Ritchie during the event on September 9, 2006 by AHN! This year alone AHN Supporters have given \$21,400.00 to PDD research!

We were amazed when the final numbers came in from our event and we raised \$5,260.18 for Avian Health Network Stop PDD Campaign. This event would not have been possible if it were not for everyone's help, support, creativity and spreading the word! We had people travel from as far away as Arizona and Kansas to attend!

Clean up was a breeze with so many hands on deck. Those that were able to came back to our house and enjoyed being together to celebrate a yearlong project that ended with a huge success.

Once again, I would like to thank the planning committee for all of your dedication, enthusiasm and long hours. Together, we can make a difference! Hugs and Kudos to all! I hope you all know how much I appreciated your help.

Written by Becky McKirahan, President, The BirdHeard - September 2006.