

## **Birds of prey descend on Picadome**

A team from Raptor Rehabilitation of Kentucky brought a half-dozen live animals to Picadome Elementary to teach kids about wildlife and compassion.

“We take in sick, injured and orphaned birds of prey,” explained Sally Seyal, a volunteer with the Louisville-based nonprofit rescue organization.

Some birds were hit by cars or flew into windows; others got caught in soccer nets or were poisoned. Whatever their ailment, the rehab center is equipped to provide veterinarian care and support. The goal is to return the birds to the wild, but if they are too severely hurt, they can become part of the center’s educational outreach program.

Seyal and her colleagues drove up to Picadome on May 27 in a brightly painted van packed with individual animal carriers and supplies. Fourth-graders Shelby Grow and Ashley Romero brought out a roll cart to help unload and lead them to the gym, where their excited classmates waited.

The raptor experts presented the birds separately and shared details about the pair of American kestrels, a red-tailed hawk, a great horned owl, a turkey vulture and a barn owl. Seyal, for instance, talked about how birds of prey hunt for food using their powerful talons, keen eyesight and sharp beaks.

Students tossed out plenty of good questions, too, wanting to know the birds’ lifespan, how they got their names, if they would bite and how they could flap their injured wings at all.

It was the second time last week that Picadome might have been mistaken for a zoo. The day before, local officers showed up with police horses on Science Fun Day. “There also was a watchdog that came with a police officer,” Shelby added. That event also spotlighted aviation, including a visit by a World War II B24 tail gunner and B29 navigator.