

From The Ashes Of Destruction...

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NEW WINDSOR, Md. — Just a few weeks after losing his barn and his livestock to a fire, all Joel and Maura Jo Nupp can talk about is the generosity of the community around them. They are overwhelmed by the giving nature of their Carroll County neighbors and they want people to know that there are still a lot of good folks in the world.

It is said that tragedy breeds hope, and maybe that is so, but the heartbreak that comes with destruction can be the worst kind, especially when that destruction is a farmer's barn. For the family of Joel and Maura Jo Nupp of New Windsor, Maryland, the big old bank barn on their farm signified everything they had dreamed of for years. They had moved to the Carroll County farm to fulfill a dream of raising their children in a farm environment as Joel had been raised.

After purchasing the place in

January, they began to fill the barn with young livestock. 4-H projects for their children, Justin, 8; Michelle, 6; and Matthew, 3 years old. The livestock was a sign of a bright future ahead. Then on March 9, their dreams went up in smoke.

"Maura Jo was going out to bottle feed the baby lambs," said Joel. "At first she thought it was snow, and then she saw it was smoke." After dialing 911 and calling Joel at work, Maura Jo dashed to the barn to try to save the animals, but it was too late for most of them. Five piglets, a calf, two lambs, two cats, and a goat perished in the fire, despite the efforts of over forty firefighters from surrounding communities. The only animals to survive were two horses and the children's pony. The Nupp family credits their dog Jasper with saving them.

"When my wife opened the door, the dog just made a beeline for the barn. My wife unlatched the gate and my old gelding came

barreling through. But then they (the horses) kept circling the barn and trying to run back in," Mr Nupp says. It was Jasper who stopped them. Over and over the dog herded the horses away from the fire, until they gave up and headed down the hill. Since then, the Nupps have taken to calling Jasper, "The Wonder Dog."

By the time Mr. Nupp got home his neighbors were already at the farm. Beating the firetrucks in, it was the neighbors who supported a sobbing Mrs. Nupp. But that support was only the beginning.

"After the fire, we were numb," Mr. Nupp recalls. "I sat on the ground and bawled like a baby. For days, we didn't sleep, or take calls." Then, the Nupp family found out that neighbor Laurel Hummel had been taking their calls.. many calls.

Donations began to pour in. The Gunpower 4-H Club called and wanted to give the Nupp family a cash donation. Mr. Nupp, a proud man, politely refused. But that



Justin, Michelle, and Matthew, play with Big Mama, a 250-pound donated pig and some of their new piglets. The burned out foundation of the barn can be seen in the background.



The Nupp family poses with their new Jersey calf, Lucky, the Border Collie, Jasper, and a new baby kitten. Parents, Joel and Maura Jo are proud of their children's interest in the animals.



Eight-year-old Justin Nupp poses with a pot bellied pig donated to them by Robert Heaton.

didn't stop the 4-Hers. Instead, they bought 82 bales of hay to replace the hay the Nupp family had lost. They delivered it to the house, unloaded it and stacked it neatly before covering it with a tarp. How could Mr. Nupp say "no?"

I've learned that in Carroll County, you have to learn to take help. I'm not used to taking from others," Mr. Nupp added.

Tim and Candy Cole donated two lambs to Justin and Michelle. Dr. Kay Wagner and the Carroll County Livestock Club donated two \$100 gift certificates, one to Tractor and Supply Company and one to Southern States. Bob, Shirley from the Carroll County Extension Center called to ask what they could do. When Mr.

Nupp's reply was "I don't know," fencing arrived. Robin Kessling donated a piglet. Then Nicki Ratliff, director of the Carroll County Humane Society called. They had a pig at the Humane Society that had been found wandering Route 140 in December. No one had claimed the pig, and the board had voted unanimously to give the pig to Justin. How do you say "no" to a 250-pound pig named Petunia? "The pig is so big," Justin says. Now, the Nupp family has taken to calling Peunia, Bib Mama.

"A man I didn't even know, Bill Franz from Linwood kept calling. He was persistent that I have some hay," Mr. Nupp said. "I told him I didn't have any place to keep it. So he brought a stock trailer,

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Homestead Notes



Joel and Justin play with some of the animals that friends and neighbors donated after the fire.