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Cindy's Pets held strawberry festival In debut, event raised funds for charitable group

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NEW PORT RICHEY — If you mix sweet fruit, cute animals and family fun, you will end up with the newest Cindy's Pets fundraiser.

On Saturday, Feb. 17, Cindy's Pets held a strawberry festival behind the Community Congregational Church, on Circle Boulevard, across from Orange Lake.

The event featured strawberries, from Plant City, strawberry shortcake, snow cones, vendors, a bounce house, face painting, dogs for adoption, prize drawings and a bounce house. Dogs also strutted their stuff in a dog show and showed off their skills in a dog agility race. The dog show featured eight categories including best tail-wagger, best kisser, best costume and best barker.



Gracie zoomed onstage to show off her outfit in the "Most Adorable" category in the popular Dog Show.

Cindy's Pets, founded in 2010, provides food to pets of seniors enrolled in Pasco County's Meals on Wheels program. They provide more than 2,000 pounds of food every month to 400 cats, dogs and birds in East and West Pasco. The organization was created in memory of the late pet-lover Cindy Allgood. Melissa Nurrenbrock, one of Allgood's sisters and founder of the private Genesis Schools, which started the nonprofit Cindy's Pets, wanted to bring a new type of fundraiser to the community.

"There are so many races in the area this time of the year that we thought we would try something different," she said. "It is proving to be very popular."

Nurrenbrock said they will continue to hold the strawberry festival in the upcoming years after seeing the great turnout.

Vendors included Opti-Mart, Skunk Rescue, Ierna's Heating and Cooling, Orange Theory Fitness, Rock Mountain Chocolate Factory and Jackie's Wag N' Train.

Sharon and Robert Lichter have been the title sponsors for Cindy's Pets fundraisers for the past five years.

"To help other people is what I want to do," said Robert Lichter. "There are so much bad things going on in the country, I want to see something good. I want to see people, children and doggies and cats together."

Other sponsors included Rotary Club of New Port Richey, Trinity Regional Rehab Center, Naturecoaster.com, Dex Imaging, The May Wealth Management Group of Wells Fargo Advisors, Genesis Preparatory School, Longleaf Learning School and The Genesis School.

Nina Gronemeyer has been a volunteer since 2010, and enjoys how well she has gotten to know the seniors they deliver to.

"A lot of them don't have any other visitors," Gronemeyer said. "It's like an extended family."

Cindy's Pets is currently looking for volunteers to help with packing and delivery. For more information on volunteering or donations, visit www.cindypets.org.