

JAKES gets youth outdoors

BY MARY CARABALLO

To get the youth interested in the outdoors The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) chapters started the JAKES programs — Juniors Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics, and Sportsmanship.

JAKES, Xtreme JAKES, and JAKES Take Aim events are held across the United States and Canada each year.

Getting started

The Pike County Lenni Lenape Chapter was started in 2000 where young people were involved in turkey calling and archery at the time.

"It was a small group, but we had a ball," Kerry Welsh, president of this chapter said.

Kerry's daughters, Megan and Sarah were five and seven years old at the time. Megan has since graduated college

and Sarah is in the sophomore year of college. The young ladies now help with the Hunting Heritage Banquet and are a great asset to the organization.

Bill Edwards, another member also had his two daughters Brook and Danielle involved. The families became close and the girls have turkey hunted with their dads faithfully. As a result of a turkey hunt in Kansas, Megan and Danielle were on the Outdoor Channel demonstrating archery hunts.

"It has been a wonderful experience seeing the smiles on the faces of the youth who attend the events and seeing the interest that the parents actually share with their children at the events," Kerry Welsh said.

Education for all ages

NWTf chapters give youth ages 12 and younger chances to explore the outdoors through fun events that help pass

on the traditions of responsible hunting, hunting safety and ethics, and principles of habitat management.

Xtreme JAKES gives youth ages 13 to 17 challenges and opportunities fit for their abilities — they learn to be responsible outdoors people through fishing and camping and other activities. They also learn plant and animal identification.

JAKES Take Aim is for 17 and younger to try target shooting, clay target shooting, and shotgunning in a fun, safe environment.

NWTf, in partnership with local shooting ranges and gun clubs can host sporting clay shooting events. JAKES Take Aim will provide clay targets and ammunition for registered and approved events.

For more information contact the NWTf at heritage@nwtf.net or call 803-637-7545.

