

**LONG ISLAND / SUFFOLK**

# Ferdie the goat cheats death, eats up Westhampton Beach St. Patrick's Day Parade



Ferdie the goat enjoyed all the attention he got at the Westhampton Beach St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 11, 2017. Photo Credit: Marlo Jappen

**By Marlo Jappen**

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Ferdie the goat trotted across Main Street on Saturday wearing all green — bowler hat, sequin bowtie, suspenders and trousers from the ladies' section of Marshalls.

It was the first time he and his companions from Steppin' Out Ponies and Petting Zoo participated in the Westhampton Beach St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Ferdie — short for Ferdinand — was rescued by Steppin' Out Ponies and Petting Zoo along with two sheep. Owner Karen Bayha says she received the phone call right before Christmas.

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“If we didn't find a home for them by 8 a.m. the next day, they would be sent to a slaughterhouse,” she said. “We were able to tell them I was taking them and we brought them to our family the next day.”

Bayha describes Ferdie as having a fun-loving and playful personality.

“The first job he went on was in January and he fit in perfectly,” she said. “He kept wanting

kids to pet him.”

Bayha and her team dressed all of the animals in diapers. They pushed around hay carts with food and drinks in case the goats grew tired or hungry.

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“We give our animals a good life and treat them like family,” she said.

A goat named Pippi Longstocking wore a green tutu and a tiny hat.

Before she was rescued by Steppin’ Out Ponies and Petting Zoo, she spent the first three weeks of her life in a crate and was rejected by her mother.

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Located on Montauk Avenue in North Great River, Steppin’ Out Ponies and Petting Zoo has been around for 30 years. The business visits F&W Schmitt’s Family Farm in Melville every October and has shown up at everything from birthday parties, church Nativity plays and even proposals.

For Bayha, the parties are not just about entertainment. She educates children on how to properly pet and care for the animals.

Her favorite part of the job is when a scared child warms up to the animals.

Despite the frigid weather during the parade, Bayha maintained a positive spirit.

— “We’re having a blast,” she said.

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