

All things that creep and bark: The Petting/Non-Petting Zoo comes to SUNY Broome **updated with video**

September 8, 2015

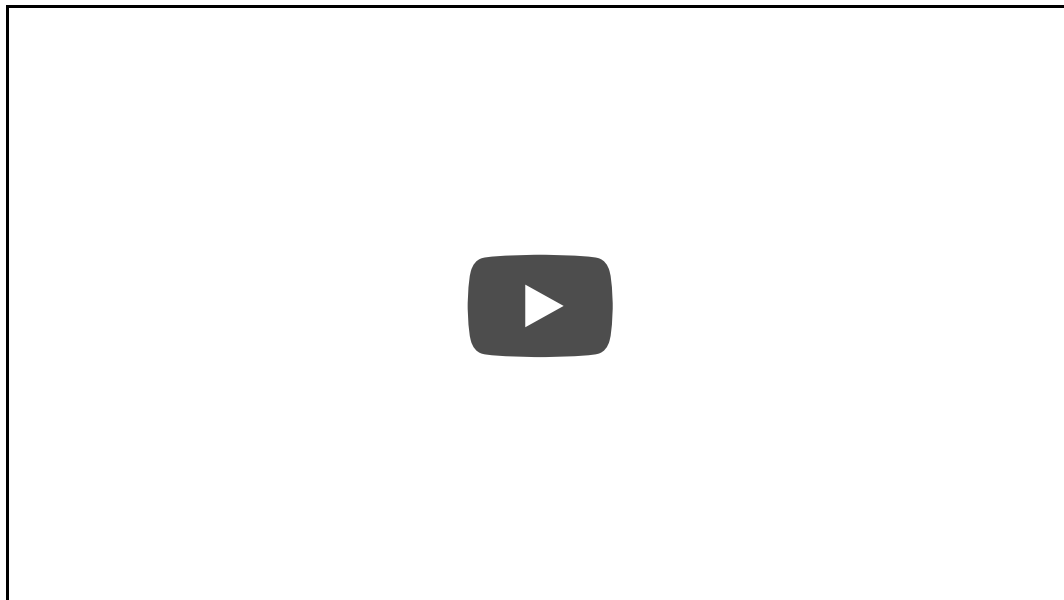
Dan Chase extended his arm, introducing his friend to the crowd of students — many of whom skittered back with a gasp.

Delicately, her eight shapely legs walked down his arm with deliberation. While the students were eager to hold [Dan the Snakeman's](#) more reptilian friends — including a brilliant yellow Burmese python, an assortment of other snakes, a skink and a tortoise — few were ready for a hands-on experience with a tarantula.

“Pretend it’s a kitten!” Dan told the crowd, as Arla McFarland shrank back.

“I am terrified of spiders,” the Human Services major confessed. “That thing right there is not okay!”

“This is the stuff of our nightmares,” the Snakeman responded with a smile.



At the Petting Zoo/Non-Petting Zoo on Thursday, SUNY Broome students had a chance to meet some cuddly critters — or conquer their fears, as the case may be. In addition to Dan the Snakeman, the event included information — and visits — by therapy dogs and working animals, as well as information about when it’s okay to pet such animals and when it’s not.

On the other side of the Baldwin Gym — far from the snakes — Ota charmed visitors with her soulful dark eyes. She's available for adoption through Every Dog's Dream Rescue, Inc., a volunteer rescue group that fosters animals in people's homes, rehabilitates them and also offers them for adoption at the Johnson City Petco.

Students who love dogs may want to check out the SUNY Broome PAW Program, run in concert with Every Dog's Dream Rescue. The program meets at an off-campus location from 6 to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays to socialize with rescue puppies, as well as lead them in basic obedience activities supervised by a certified trainer. There is no cost involved. [Click here to learn more and sign up.](#)

The group just started last year with a core group of six students, said Mary Hubschmitt, Adoption Captain with Every Dog's Dream Rescue, adding that she hopes the program will expand this year.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the gym, business administration major Jessica Farahane reached her hand tentatively to a massive python. The snakes — which have become a problem in Florida after being released by unprepared owners — can grow to the length of a school bus in their natural environment, Dan the Snakeman said. While they're capable of biting, they kill their victims through constriction.

"Will I die?" Jessica joked, with just a touch of nervousness as she approached the snake.

"You'll never be the same," the Snakeman said.

**SUNY Broome's Petting Zoo/Non-
Petting Zoo on September 3**

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