

Howl-O-Ween scares up some four-legged fun (photo gallery)

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Many Halloween parties Friday will feature bobbing for apples as a party game, but who ever hears of dunkin' for dogs?

Well, that's what a lot of canines did Thursday night at the Ruffin' It Resort's first-ever Howl-O-Ween party for dogs and humans alike. Both species were urged to wear costumes, with prizes, food, a silent auction and free portraits for costumed attendees.

The event was a fundraiser for the Wisconsin Academy for Graduate Service dogs, said Ruffin' It Resort owner Renee Brantner. "We are just thrilled to be able to help them," Brantner said of WAGs, an organization which provides highly skilled and socialized dogs to help those with disabilities.

But this night before Halloween was also a play night for a bunch of canines who got to see their buddies unexpectedly for awhile, even if they were dressed strangely.

Being Wisconsin there was of course a dog dressed as a Holstein cow, and another dressed with a No. 4 Green Bay Packer jersey. There were dog lizards, ballet dancers and even a dog lobster accompanied by the chef who promised to cook it.

There were all kinds of other Fidos present, and about 80 percent of them were regulars at the Ruffin' It Resort, which manager Mandy Penisten described as a "premier doggie day care and hotel," located on the west side just off of Seybold Road on Struck Street. Penisten also pointed out she was the "alpha dog" of the event.

The dogs got to frolic with each other in an outdoor play area, pose with their humans for photos, and engage in games, such as dunkin' for dogs, where pieces of hot dogs were put in tubs of water so dogs could mimic humans bobbing for apples. Dogs being dogs, most of them drank the water before discovering the hot dog pieces.

The unique event cost \$5 a family, and a team from WAGs was on hand to talk about their program. Sharkey Animal Portraits provided free portraits of dogs and their families.

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