All Eyes On: Elijah Mitchell

Kirksville resident Elijah Mitchell is playing the character of St. Nicholas this holiday season. Every Saturday afternoon in December he will listen to children’s Christmas wishes.

BY ANNA MEIER
Staff Reporter

Whispers of Christmas wishes drift through the air as soft-shoed and traditional children band in scarves, mittens and other winter finery line the bandstand at the Adair County Courthouse. Two decades of tradition, they stand tall, looking to the future as they recall the past. Mitchell is a Wyoming native who originally moved to Kirksville for school in 1998. He said that after a short stint back in his hometown of Newark, Mo., he really just moved back for the relationships I had.

Mitchell said, “It’s really interesting to try and play a historical figure.” Mitchell’s character this season is a 30-year-old Elijah Mitchell, who will be playing St. Nicholas every Saturday afternoon in December at the Adair County Courthouse. Providing children of all ages with the opportunity to reveal their Christmas wishes.

“I work with learning opportunities, keeping children and making sure they know of the involvements and agendas of his own ties or who just need supervision in other realms of the community,” Mitchell said.

Because Mitchell does not have a full beard in real life, he said he spends about an hour preparing to play the role, putting on makeup and getting dressed.

“By the time I’ve put it all on and am really St. Nicholas, said she thinks St. Nicholas is an important figure to remember around the holiday season. “I’d say, just like St. Nicholas would say, ‘Merry Christmas’ to everybody and just be jovial and be happy and just saying ‘Santa Clause is real?’ Well, no, but St. Nicholas was.”

Another member of the committee, Beverly Powell, owner of Vintage Books, also said she was inspired by the representation of Santa being St. Nicholas this year. “It just felt like keeping with the theme that we’re working towards in our historic downtown, that it was just a really good fit.”

Mitchell said he isn’t sure how much he resembles St. Nicholas in real life. He said he often feels as though he got wrapped up in the involvements and agenda of his own life instead of being as generous as St. Nick was, but he said he really enjoys playing the role. “It’s really interesting to try and play a historical figure, so we work with youth who have disabilities or who just need supervision in other realms of the community,” Mitchell said.

Mitchell said he got inspired to play St. Nick when his wife heard from a friend that the city was looking for someone to play the part. About a month later, he made an audition and was selected to be the man behind the beard (the historical figure of St. Nicholas). They selected 30-year-old Elijah Mitchell, who will be playing St. Nicholas every Saturday in December at the Adair County Courthouse, providing children of all ages with an opportunity to reveal their Christmas wishes.

Mitchell expressed sentiments close to Sherry Stacey, owner of Hidden Treasures, who also said she was excited about the representation of Santa being St. Nicholas this year. “I really was a St. Nicholas,” Stacey said. “Even during the process of picking the new St. Nicholas, said she was excited about the representation of Santa being St. Nicholas this year. “It’s really interesting to try and play a historical figure,” Mitchell said. “It’s just a really good fit.”

This year, the city of Kirksville has selected a new man to play the role of the historic giver of gifts, Santa Claus. Instead of sticking with the modern-day idea of the rosy-cheeked, white-bearded, crimson-cloaked man, this year the committee in charge of picking the new man to play the role of the jolly Christmas character chose a new man to play the role of the jolly Christmas character. Instead of sticking with the modern-day ideal of the jolly Christmas character, this year the committee in charge of picking the new man to play the role of the jolly Christmas character chose Elijah Mitchell, who will be playing St. Nicholas every Saturday afternoon in December at the Adair County Courthouse, providing children of all ages with an opportunity to reveal their Christmas wishes.

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