

# It's for the kids

**Truman organization reaches out to community children through entertainment**

BY BURGUNDY RAMSEY  
Staff Reporter

While the jack o' lanterns are excited to return to the pumpkin patch after Halloween, the other pumpkins aren't so thrilled to have them back. The pumpkins get upset and blame the jack o' lanterns for leaving them behind. After some arguing, apologizing and a big dance number at the end, the pumpkins learn to accept the jack o' lanterns back into the patch despite their differences. The end.

This is the plot of a short play written by sophomore Fallyn Lee that eight children, in third through fifth grade, performed Nov. 6 at the Kirksville Arts Association.

The children were a part of the Play in a Day program sponsored by the Half Full Players, a campus organization that brings theater opportunities to children who may not have another chance to experience the arts. This was the third time the group had put on this program for kids in the area. The children perform a five to 10 minute skit and make their own costumes and props to perform with during the day-long workshop.

Each skit has a strong moral message that the children can take with them after the show.

"The main goal is really to entertain," junior Jennifer Blank said. "But to do it in a way that the children can still get something out of what we are doing for them."

Alumnus Kyle Smith recently started Half Full Players as a way to give something back to the community through theater. Smith graduated last year,



Sophomore Brendan Gregg helps a group of children with crafts during the Play in a Day workshop Saturday at the Kirksville Art Association. *Caroline Stamp/Index*

but the rest of the members continue to build the organization, keeping the main goal alive, Blank said.

"It's all about giving back to the children and making sure that theater stays in [the] school system," Lee said.

This positive idea is at the core of everything. The group's motto is, "It's for the kids," and its name comes from the idea that the glass is always "half full."

Blank admits that the players do get something out

of it for themselves.

"We really like watching the kids laugh," Blank said. "And acting goofy up in front of them and seeing them enjoy everything we do."

That goofiness was evident Saturday. Every child's face had a smile on it during nearly every activity they participated in. The day started out with some getting-to-know-you exercises before work began on the skit. For many of the children, it was the first time they had seen

how a play is put together.

All of the children were excited to use face paint to make themselves look like pumpkins, and to create pieces to make the set look like a pumpkin patch. Several children made pumpkins and other vegetables.

"It's a chance for them to see what theater's like before they get into high school," said Gary Pollie, president of Half Full Players.

Besides the Play in a Day program, Half Full performs

skits two or three times a year for the elementary schools in the area, Pollie said. These educational skits are similar in length to the ones the children perform.

Another play the group will perform this year, written by Blank, will teach the children about the water cycle as they follow Randy the raindrop through all of its stages. They are also performing a Dr. Seuss-esque show, Blank said.

Although Half Full lost many of its upperclassmen to gradu-

ation, its small numbers aren't stopping them from their goal. The 15-member acting group will host a Professors' Day Out on Dec. 5.

Professors' Day Out will be a blend of Play in a Day and the group's performances. They plan on performing for the children and doing some crafts with them, Pollie said.

"We like to do these things around the holidays to give parents a chance to go out and do their shopping," Lee said.

## Hunters gear up for season

**Hunting process continues long after shots are fired**

BY SHAWN SHINNEMAN  
Staff Reporter

Hunters will beat the sun out of bed this Saturday in Kirksville and surrounding areas. They will trade pajamas for camouflage and slippers for boots. They will set up secluded hunting stands and wait for their moment.

Northeast Missouri will experience a flood of visitors as the Missouri firearms deer hunting season begins. Known as one of the best sources

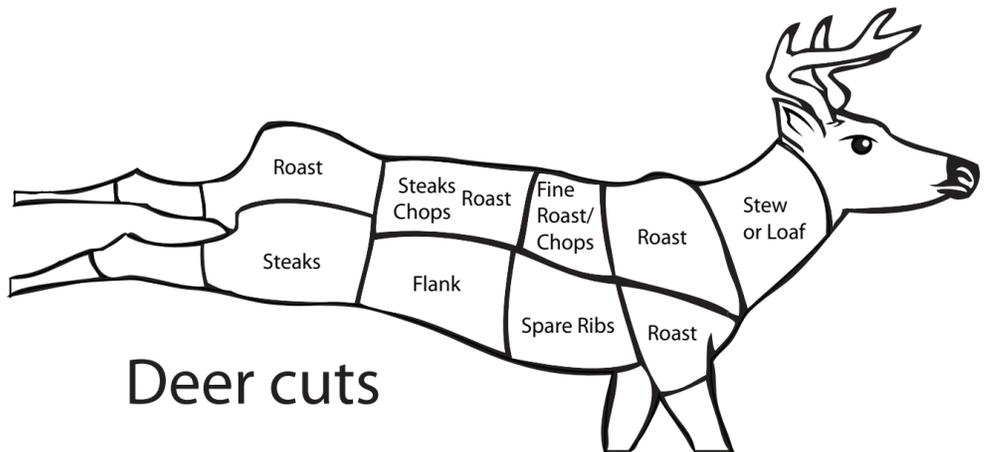
for a great quantity of well-sized whitetail deer in the state, Kirksville's economy receives a boost as hunters

come hoping to land a buck. Junior Ethan Kleecamp has been hunting deer since he was 11 and said the resources available in Northeast Missouri make the area one of the state's best locations to hunt whitetail deer.

"First and foremost for me, I enjoy just getting out there," he said. "There's a great deal of sport in it for me."

But the journey doesn't end once a deer is dropped. Circumstances quickly change from a battle of patience to a race against time as hunters must quickly field dress the deer or face the potential widespread bacteria growth that can spoil

the deer's meat. A specific process must be undertaken that will decide the quality



Deer cuts

**"You have to have an artistic skill also. A lot of people have tried taxidermy, but some are better than others."**

**Rick Riekeberg**  
Rick's Taxidermy owner

and quantity of usable meat that comes from the deer.

**Preserving the venison**  
The first step — field dressing — is when the body of the deer is cut open and its internal organs are removed.

"It helps for removing the animal from the woods — it lightens it up considerably," Kleecamp said. "And you get all of that out because that's going to be the first thing contributing to spoiled meat."

Once the organs are removed, the deer must be allowed to cool — at least overnight — before beginning to cut and package the actual meat.

Some hunters choose to seek assistance from a butch-

er during this part of the process, but Kleecamp said his family has always completed this step without help.

Kleecamp said he gets together in January with some of the other hunters in his family to process all the meat from the November hunts. In all, he said his family kills about five to six deer per season. Once processed, the meat is shared among Kleecamp's extended family of approximately 300 people.

"The venison alone is about a quarter of our meat consumption back home, so it's a pretty sizable chunk," Kleecamp said.

**Special-D Meats**  
Area hunters who do seek

assistance from an outside source after the initial field dress can take their deer to Special-D Meats, a butcher shop in Macon.

Sherwin Dent, owner of the shop since its opening in 1984, said he sees 700 to 800 deer come through his shop each year during the firearm season.

To deal with the high demand, the shop processes seven days a week for 12 hours a day throughout the season.

"This part of the country is some of the largest deer harvest there is," Dent said. "It does help us push more poundage through than we do the rest of the year."

**Stuffing a deer**

To commemorate a memorable hunt, some hunters decide to have their deer heads stuffed and mounted.

Rick Riekeberg, owner of Rick's Taxidermy in Kirksville, has been in the business for 20 years and said handling the raw, fatty animal hide is not something all people can do. But his own experiences with hunting have made the job easier.

"You have to have an artistic skill also," Riekeberg said. "A lot of people have tried taxidermy, but some are better than others because some have more of an artistic skill for it."

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