

Apocalypse Haunted Attraction Brings Thrills and Scares to Alton YWCA

by Brittany Kohler, Content Manager
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Alton has a new rising captivation of terror! The Apocalypse Haunted Attraction, located at the YWCA on E. 3rd St., has brought in an average of 100 guests per night so far this year.

The haunted house is financed mostly by personal funds and all the actors are local volunteers from a large variety of ages starting at 16 years old. During operating hours, roughly 5 volunteers run operations while 25-30 actors perform for guests in roughly 35 different themed rooms.

“We have had a lot of help from a lot of different people and thousands of hours have been put in by volunteers wanting to contribute to the YWCA,” said Michael McCann, Apocalypse Haunted Attraction Manager. “Our volunteers are not only providing good entertainment and a good scare, but are also helping the YWCA to grow in our community.”

Many of the volunteers are re-occurring participants from the years past.

“We are always looking for new blood to join our twisted family,” added Erin Murphy, an attraction designer.

Apocalypse was created by a group of creative local artists, which makes the structure different from a generic haunted house walk-through. This attraction has a creative story line with interactive actors and performers that draw you in to their domain and out of your skin.

“Our actors move around you, between you, and talk with you, drawing you out of your comfort zone and into the world we have created,” said Murphy.

Tommy Riddle, Michael McCann and Erin Murphy have had a love for performing since they were younger. Their talents and abilities are beyond that of your average artist. Riddle and McCann both perform in bands, Riddle breathes fire, McCann is a stilt walker and Murphy adds the detail with makeup design and costume creation.

“One year, Tommy approached Mike and myself about starting a haunted house for the fun of it and our passion took over, making the haunt more than we ever thought it would be,” said Murphy.

One of the greatest advantages of the haunted attraction is that it is located right here in Alton, known for being one of the most haunted small towns in America. The YWCA itself is historically identified as a structure of high levels of paranormal activity. The haunt appears quite real and guests aren't the only ones being spooked, staff members themselves have said to experience paranormal activity in the building.

During the Halloween season, many pay top dollar and travel to St. Louis and the surrounding areas to get their fright from large haunted houses. Admission is only \$15

for ages 14 and up, and \$10 for kids up to 13 years old. A large portion of the proceeds go back to the YWCA and the added attraction brings about a reminder of what they offer the community.

“This is our best year yet, and every night we’re open keeps getting better and better as word gets around,” said Murphy. “Everyone leaving our haunt is either screaming and running for their car, or grinning from ear to ear.”

Making their mark, the Apocalypse staff has been frightening the public for 3 years now and is gaining attention well beyond our county limits.

“We have had customers driving in from 2 hours away, saying that they heard about us from a friend,” said Murphy. “It has grown a little each year and it shows that people are really starting to talk about Apocalypse.”

The interactive experience takes guests through 35 rooms sharing a shilling story of the aftermath of final destruction.

“The Apocalypse draws you into the last ‘Safe Haven’ of a post-Apocalyptic world,” said McCann. “Our visitors will experience the remains of the Safe Haven as well as the cannibals, creeps and creatures this world has created.”

Upon opening the doors, the nightmare begins instantaneously. Guests are immediately engaged by performers as you pay admission and enter the Safe Haven. Each section throughout the attraction has a particular theme that the actors make you believe is very real.

“Expect to forget where you are, forget the normal outside world, and lose yourself in the absolute terror we provide,” said Murphy. “Leave your sanity at home, you won’t need it here.”

Apocalypse appeals to all ages, not just adults. Apocalypse is open every Friday and Saturday from 6:30-midnight but there are early hours for the youth crowd, called “Fear-Less.” Fear-Less is a family friendly walkthrough on Saturday evenings from 4:30-6:30. The admission fee for Fear-Less hours is only \$10 per person. During these hours, the rooms are well lit and instead of the actors scaring the guests, they hand out candy to the kids, trick-or-treat style.

“Fear-Less has been a lot of fun this year, we enjoy our Fear-Less customers who come in costume,” said McCann. “We had batman and Elsa, from Frozen, come though already last Saturday. We have a lot more candy and hope to see a lot more brave young souls visit Apocalypse.”

For a safe, indoor trick-or-treating experience, on October 30th, Fear-Less hours will be from 6pm-10pm.

For tickets or any additional information, visit <http://www.apocalypsehaunt.com/> or call (618) 567-1053.

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