

Lucy Haskell Playhouse to Dedicate New Gazebo on Sept. 9

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - Community members are invited to the Lucy Haskell Playhouse on Saturday, Sept. 9, to celebrate the dedication of their new gazebo.

The Haskell Playhouse Association is excited to unveil its newest addition to the Alton community. From 10 a.m. to noon, guests can also enjoy pony rides, music by the Muny Band and two special guests.

“Not only is the building being upheld, but so is the spirit of community,” Haskell Playhouse Association member Debbie Schuneman said. “We feel we actually owe it to the community, because they help us in so many ways. It’s our way of saying thank you.”

In April, the Association started talking about adding to the area around the playhouse. With their fundraising efforts and several local donors, they were able to fund and construct a gazebo with four benches inside. The dedication and ribbon cutting will start at 10 a.m. on Sept. 9, followed by free activities until noon.

“And by George, we have a special guest. Aren’t you curious?” member Margaret Hopkins teased. “It’s Curious George. Him and the Man in the Yellow Hat will be making an appearance.”

When Curious George found out about the event, “he wouldn’t miss it,” Schuneman noted. Kids can take pictures with Curious George and the Man in the Yellow Hat. Curious George will also be standing beside Miss Bailey, the actress who portrayed Lucy Haskell during the playhouse’s 2022 birthday party for Lucy; she will perform the gazebo’s ribbon cutting.

The Lucy Haskell Playhouse was built in 1885 as a gift from Dr. William Abraham Haskell to his 5-year-old daughter Lucy. After Lucy’s death a few years later, her family tore down their house but left the playhouse standing as a tribute to her. They eventually donated it to Alton, along with a few acres of land.

Today, the playhouse is preserved in memory of Lucy. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

There are several events at the playhouse planned through the end of the year, including regular storytimes sponsored by [Hayner Public Library](#). You can also visit with Santa on Dec. 2. But if you want to get in the Christmas spirit a little early, they’re selling Christmas cards with a photo of the playhouse until Sept. 9. Call 618-433-1991 to ask questions or purchase ten cards for \$15.

Hopkins and Schuneman look forward to the next few months, but they’re especially excited for the gazebo dedication on Sept. 9. They encourage people to visit their [official website](#) or [Facebook page](#) for more information, and they thank the community for their support over the years.

“We had an idea, and we ran with it, and it worked. And that’s amazing,” Schuneman said. “So we feel great about it now, and we feel great about our community. When I tell people what little Alton does, they are amazed. And it’s because of the people that are here.”