Legacy of Loving Children Behind Benefit Concert

By Rachel Swartzendruber

In a benefit concert featuring two local folk and bluegrass groups, Roberta Webb Childcare Center hopes to raise enough money to cover costs for the upcoming year.

The concert, on Friday Nov. 7, will be held at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church, with a good-will offering to benefit the center. Roberta Webb Childcare Center, located in the basement of Immanuel Mennonite Church, started out as a "vision of Immanuel Mennonite Church," said director Shari Kurtz.

Opened in November of 1994, its name, Roberta Webb, comes from the lady herself, an African-American woman who was well-loved and respected in the community. "She had a great love for children and for God," said Kurtz. Webb started a nursery in her home and constantly over the years. "The center operates off of fees that they charge parents for childcare, which are decided on a sliding scale according to the parents' income. Most parents do not pay for the complete cost of childcare. Additionally, the center receives some monies from United Way.

These monies, however, are not sufficient to meet all the needs of the center. As the center caters to a lower-income population, it often happens that a familial crisis will occur and a family will not be able to make their weekly payment to the center. Thereby, the debt is filled through nest egg funds brought in through fundraising.

"The board takes responsibility for fundraising," said Hertzler. The money raised during fundraisers goes towards the costs of simply operating the center, as well as helping defray costs when a family goes through a financial crisis and cannot pay their fees.

The benefit concert begins at 7:30 p.m. and will feature two local groups; Daphna Creek from Broadway and Blue Mountain Sunrise from Waynesboro.

Shameless Entertainment at Blackfriars

By Amy Stutzman

Shakespeare enthusiasts and others no longer have to travel far to experience the Bard’s plays as they were performed in Elizabethan England.

Blackfriars Playhouse in Staunton, an indoor theater modeled after the same-named playhouse where Shakespeare himself once performed in London, opened for regular performances in September. Four plays are currently being performed at the 300-seat theater, including Shakespeare’s Much Ado About Nothing, and King Lear as well as Molière’s Tartuffe, and Francis Beaumont’s The Night of the Burning Pistle.

The playhouse, plays are performed as authentically as possible, so they are similar to the way they would have been performed in Shakespeare’s day. They use such techniques as universal lighting, in which the audience and actors can see each other; doubling, in which one actor plays several different roles; and simple sets. The stage is also authentic to Shakespeare’s era, surrounded by the audience on three sides.

Blackfriars Playhouse is not only open for theatrical performances of Shakespeare’s plays, but also for other theatrical and musical performances as well as workshops, tours, and educational programs.

Construction of Blackfriars Playhouse began in 2000, and the first performance at the playhouse occurred in 2001. The playhouse is a part of the Shenandoah Shakespeare Playhouse at the company’s home in Staunton.

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