

SCARE-CROW HAUNTED MAZE OPENS FOUR NIGHTS OF 'NIGHTMARES'

Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshop (CROW) is searching for more help in finishing renovations to its Center for the Performing Arts.

The incomplete area marks about a third of the unique performing arts educational space, and is comprised of a planned dressing room for boys and girls, workshop for scenic artistry, green room and cast member restroom.

\$20,000 in upgrades are still needed to finalize the plumb-

ing, electrical, drywall, flooring and paint on the back section of the facility.

CROW, a nonprofit organization, is dedicated to providing youth arts opportunities and experiences that reach all ages.

Through classes, camps, workshops, an annual Haunted maze, live theatrical presentations on the mainstage of the Florence Events Center and an annual community holiday performance, CROW looks to prove that the arts

really do matter.

This fall, CROW will be holding a variety of fundraisers to meet their renovation goal, along with funding yearly programming. Scare-CROW, the annual haunted maze, will have the terrifying theme of "Nightmares."

"Come see the CROW Center transformed into a frightening abyss of theatrical scenarios that are sure to give you a few nightmares of your own," says Heard.

The maze will be held the

nights of Oct. 27, 28, 30, and 31 from 6-9 p.m. The maze is recommended for those eight and older. Tickets are \$5 per person.

Entry is at your own discretion. It's not for little kids or "big chickens."

"Your attendance at these events makes a dramatic difference in the lives of our local children," said Heard. "Through CROW's arts educational programs, we not only inspire and educate many future leaders and provide

countless opportunities for local kids to succeed in the arts, but we will keep troubled kids on the right track and help provide them with a home away from home. Thank you to every single person out there who has helped us on any step of the way."

For more information, visit www.crowkids.com or call Melanie Heard at 541-999-8641.

Tax-deductible donations can be mailed to PO Box 184, Florence, OR 97439.



COURTESY PHOTO

CROW's Scare-CROW Haunted Maze returns for third year.

Millennials from 1A

but the lack of available gathering places can be isolating.

"I think one of the barriers in meeting people is the fact that, after work, there isn't much opportunity to really meet anyone. Unless I go to a restaurant or a bar, there aren't any other places where I could meet anybody. I could just go to the gym and meet people there, but it's weird to make friends at a gym," he said. "I think it's that lack of a space where there's a chance that a young person will walk in that's an issue."

Geraldine Lucio, 30, didn't know where to find people her own age when she moved to Florence three years ago, either. In fact, she still doesn't. When asked how many millennials were in Florence, she said, "I don't know, 20 or 30?"

That's not to say Lucio doesn't have friends. As owner of the Old Town Barbershop, she has plenty of people coming through her doors, and she volunteers with multiple organizations like the Elks.

"But I feel all my friends are older than 50," she said. "I do have a little group of who are in their mid-20s to early 30s, but I mainly hang out with older people."

It's not that Lucio or Lokie are averse to befriending different generations.

"I feel Florence is different and unique because all the cool older people migrated here," Lucio said. "I guess it's kind of weird, but I like it. It's not like I went looking for 70-year-old friends, it's just how it happened. My oldest friend is 97. No prejudice towards the ages."

But Lucio understands how a new person coming into town can have difficulty finding people, particularly if they're under 50.

When asked to give advice to Lokie, Lucio said, "Go sit at the bar and make friends? I don't know. What else is there to do? There's not really much. You have to find friends."

Lokie isn't desperate. He knows that once he gets involved with the community through volunteer opportunities and connections through work, he'll find people. As for now, he finds himself going to Eugene to hang out with college friends on some weekends.

But that outlook may change, particularly when it comes to

dating.

"I'm sure the younger people in my age group I've already met already have a significant other or are married," he said. "So, I think that's a challenge. I don't know, it'd be nice to find someone here. I'll keep my eyes open."

Statistically, millennials are putting off marriage at historic rates. According to a 2014 Pew Research Center study, only 26 percent of millennials aged 19 to 32 are married. For the boomer generation, it was 48 percent.

Brynne Sapp, a 27-year-old who grew up in Florence, married when she was 19, but has since divorced.

"I'm so glad I'm not there, because even when I was married it wasn't the life that I wanted," she said. "Maybe it's all the options we have. Maybe it's having the world in our pocket at all times and being able to see what everybody else is doing and seeing all the possibilities. All the endless possibilities. I just don't want to be tied down."

Of the millennials interviewed for this article, only one was married.

One Florence 20-something, who preferred to remain anonymous, grew up in Florence and isn't having much luck when it comes to finding a suitable partner.

"Usually my relationships start from long friends," he said. "Options are limited, so you get what you can get. Romance is a tough thing in Florence. Not just the number of people, but also limited interests and diversity. For instance, women who care about ATViing might not be your type."

So, he ends up going to Eugene to find people.

"I've totally given up on Florence, to be honest," he said. "If your article is titled 'How to Date in Florence,' change it to 'Don't Do It.'"

He does admit that the majority of people he's tried to date are people he grew up with. His outlook could change if he were to find transplants from other states or cities; he would be more amenable to staying, but like Lokie, he has no idea where to find them.

"For me, dating is the top reason to leave," he said.

Even if local millennials were able to find people, where to go on that first date is another hurdle to conquer.

While Lucio spends the majority of her leisure time outdoors, she did find some aspects of the town lacking, particularly compared to her previous city of Austin, Texas.

"There was live music everywhere. I miss the fresh water swimming holes there and outdoor volleyball," she said.

It's the live music she missed the most, a sentiment shared by almost all millennials interviewed for this series.

Lucio brought up the Florence Events Center (FEC) as an example. She does attend some of the shows, and made it a point to say she fully supported the venue, "But it's hard for me to go to the events center because some of it is stale to me," she said.

Lucio attempted to offset this by lending her barber shop out to local acts that couldn't be found at the FEC, like a drag show by local performer Fanny Rugin and a concert by local band Speakerwave.

The purpose was to have an open floor venue where people could mingle and dance.

While many of her shows were well attended, they took Lucio a lot of work to set up. Between her business and her volunteerism, she had to give up on the idea for the time being.

"I'm on a 'no' binge right now," she said.

It's not the first time a small business attempted to create an open floor dance hall in Florence.

SK Lindsey, former owner of the Kenneth B. Art Gallery, had better success with live music when, on the weekends, she turned her art space into a nightclub. Well known national bands like Sol Seed and Soul Vibrator filled the venue with audiences spilling out into the parking lot.

And the bands, Lindsey said, were hungry to come out to the coast.

"They would offer to play very cheap because they wanted the 'coast' audience. College crowds were an easy market, but bands like Petunia and the Vipers recognized the value of increasing their audience, so they gave me a steal of a price," Lindsey said.

Audiences from Portland were attending her shows, but she eventually had to close down after a couple of bands flopped.

"I was scraping by with a

couple of bands, and when the music wasn't very good that set me back," she said.

There are places in Florence that do offer this kind of entertainment. Traveler's Cove has live local bands weekly, and it's a favored place for Lucio to go dancing on the weekend, but the dancing area is extremely limited.

Three Rivers Casino Resort's Blue Bills Sports Bar and Tap books live music, mostly country bands, but their local success has yet to be seen.

What's ultimately missing from these experiences is variety. Like other age groups, millennials like concerts, dancing, arcades and a whole host of other activities.

Without those, most millennials interviewed either opt for taking their money to a bigger city or hang out at home with a small group of friends.

"I seriously believe somebody could make this happen in town," Lindsey said about her try at a nightclub. "Younger people were showing up and they were getting dressed up like it was a fun night out. I think if the young people had a place to go, and if they really knew about it, they would come out in crowds."

The questions becomes, who is going to start it?

"We have to start it," Lucio said. "Or you organize it. Or

you round up people for a meet-up. I don't know why that is. It's weird. It's just how this town is. You have to make the most of it."

Of course, putting one's foot forward to make that change can be either a financial gamble, as it was for Lindsey, or time consuming, as it was for Lucio.

Lucio was invited to be on the Seacoast Entertainment Association (SEA) board, which helps bring live entertainment to schools, libraries, residential facilities and the FEC.

"The majority of people on the board are probably older than 50," she said. "But I was on a 'no' binge because I was doing too much."

While she was too overwhelmed to take part SEA, she believed that millennials should be more involved in making decisions in the community's future.

"Put younger people in charge of things here. I feel like the older community wants to keep it the way it was, and they don't really like seeing change sometimes," she said.

All who were interviewed felt that the current infrastructure in the area can support a full life for millennials, but business owners, employers, city officials and the millennials themselves have to organize and step up.

"It's not happening unless you do it," Lucio said.

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