

Haunted Hallway is kid-friendly creepy

North Heights teachers create Halloween experience for students

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There may have been some screams coming from Atteiram Drive as North Heights Elementary School's first Haunted Hallway made its debut.

Thursday evening, students and their parents attended the annual Fall Festival, which included the usual dance, games, photo booth and costume contest, but the spectacular, scream-inducing Haunted Hallway was all new.

Filled with plastic spiders, gauzy webs, bloody fingers and ears and spooky — though humorously named — tombstones, the Haunted Hallway was the brainchild and labor of love of several teachers.

"We wanted to try something different," explained Jennifer Campbell, fourth-grade teacher. "We talked about developing a haunted bus and then it evolved into a haunted hallway."

Halloween enthusiast and pre-K and kindergarten teacher Amy Holt was immediately excited, she said.

"It was time to create something fresh that would get the kids interested," she said. "We hope that maybe we can make it a yearly tradition and even expand next year."

The hallway featured a spooky house section with creepy faces peering through the windows, a mad scientist lab with bowls of "eyeballs" and a graveyard with tombstones and a looming phantom.

The hallway even created quite a stir before it opened, according to the teachers.

"We wanted it to be a surprise, so we closed it off and let no one come in, except for the teachers decorating," explained Campbell. "Kids have been very, very curious. I caught one boy peeking around the corner, trying to look in and when I asked him if he was peeking, he said 'no, ma'am' really fast and walked away."

The decoration process was intense, the teachers admitted. The group even received advice from the managers of the local haunted house The Gates of Misery.

"The woman there told me that lighting is everything," said fourth-grade teacher Ashlyn Ritch. "And you can never have enough spider webs."

Teachers have managed to make quite a dent in local stores' Halloween decorations in the last few days, they said.

"I think we ended up with at least 40 bags of spider webs," laughed Ritch.

As they decorated, Ritch said it was fun to listen to the discussion outside the closed curtains.

"Kids would come by and ask what that was and they'd talk about how they were saving their money so they could have the dollar admission cost," Ritch said. "There were also a few screams."

Students' reviews were positive.

"I think it's really scary," said fourth-grader Ka'onna Turner. "They have people popping out at you and it's terrifying."

Between the bowls full of icky eyeballs (marbles) and Uncle Bob's ashes (kinetic sand), quite a few "Ews" were heard.

"They make you put your hand in the eyeballs and it was cool, but whew, I thought it was real for a minute," said Leah Toland, fourth-grader.



Zion Watkins (left) asks teacher Jennifer Campbell if he can enter the Haunted Hallway at North Heights Elementary.



Fourth-graders Leah Toland (from left) Ka'onna Turner and Kenvonna Sams make their

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...way through the entrance.



Photos by Kristina Wilder, Rome News-Tribune

Teacher Amy Holt prepares the graveyard section.



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Leah Toland tests the bowl of "eyeballs" in the mad scientist's lab at North Heights Elementary School.



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Teacher Jennifer Campbell adds more streamers and balloons to the entryway.

