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Scout helps steer kids to Stuhr Museum's new ambassador is fun, fuzzy and a Facebook video star

By Jeff Bahr

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Fun and fuzzy, Stuhr Museum's newest staff member is an orange creature with purple eyes, a green nose and two teeth.

The new employee, named Scout, doesn't have a big presence. He stands only 2½ feet tall.

But the museum hopes the little character will connect with young people in a big way.

Scout, who is a puppet, is Stuhr's new youth ambassador.

Scout appears in videos on the museum's brand new Facebook page, which is called Stuhr Kids.

The puppet will star in a new video every Wednesday on the Stuhr Kids page, which debuted last week. An introductory video and the first installment in the series are ready for viewing.

Scout is designed to appeal to kids from ages 2 to first-graders.

The Stuhr Kids page and Scout are meant to "connect our younger visitors with our love of history here at the museum," said Karen Buettner, the Stuhr's director of education.

Buettner and colleague Carly Cremers hope Stuhr Kids and Scout will spark the curiosity of young people and get them excited about both history and the museum.



Courtesy Stuhr Museum

Through weekly videos, a puppet named Scout is introducing young people to attractions all over Stuhr Museum.

■ turn to **STUHR AMBASSADOR**, page 2A

STUHR AMBASSADOR: Scout complete July 1

Through weekly videos, a puppet named Scout is introducing young people to attractions all over Stuhr Museum.

Courtesy Stuhr Museum

Continued from 1A

Each video introduces viewers to a different attraction at the museum. By watching the videos, kids will learn more about the museum and recognize the attractions when they visit.

Having Scout tell them about each feature is probably more effective than listening to a lecture, Buettner said.

The new Facebook page should also help young kids feel more comfortable on their initial visits. Preschoolers, dropped off at the museum with older siblings, can be uncertain about what they might find. Watching the Scout videos should help calm any fears.

Unfolding during the pandemic, Scout's birth was a quick one. Cremers pitched the idea to Buettner in June. By July 1, Scout was complete.

The cost won't strain the Stuhr Museum budget. Using a lot of found objects, staff assembled Scout at a cost of \$4.

His overalls are made with a material that reminds Buettner of "70s flower power."

"I found it at a garage sale a couple of years ago, and I knew that someday it would come in handy," Buettner said of the fabric.

Not only did Cremers build the puppet, but she is also its secret identity. She operates the puppet and provides its voice.

Cremers, 23, had built a puppet before she started work at the museum.

At Hastings College, she had a double major in theater and elementary education. She built her first

puppet in a props class.

Cremers, a Columbus native, has always "liked doing weird voices," she said.

Cremers even performs the Scout theme song heard on the videos. Among other things, she is a singer-songwriter.

She took a lot of things in her life "and shoved him into this guy," she said, referring to Scout.

Instead of being a prairie pioneer, the puppet is a contemporary character. Cremers describes Scout — who is of indeterminate gender — as a modern child who is curious, eccentric and outgoing.

Buettner, meanwhile, has long been a part of Stuhr Museum. Her parents are strong Stuhr sup-

porters. Now 30, Buettner started coming to the museum when she was 4 or 5 "and I've never left," she said.

Stuhr Museum is trying to create more programming geared to kids,

Buettner said.

Stuhr created the new Facebook page and Scout because "we hired a person who had a passion for this sort of children's outreach," said Mike Bockoven, the museum's director of marketing and public relations. "We had someone who could do it and do it well."

If you watch the videos, you can tell they're done well, Bockoven said.

"Children have always been a very key part of Stuhr Museum's outreach," he said.

Children and education continue to drive the museum, he said. Scout fits

within the role of introducing kids to Stuhr Museum “and the history and stories that we tell,” Bockoven said.

Scout is a social media presence, but don't be surprised if the adorable character starts making personal appearances as time goes on.

People can follow Stuhr Kids on Facebook and

Instagram.



The Independent/Jeff Bahr

Scout is Stuhr Museum's new youth ambassador. At left is Karen Buettner, the museum's director of education. At right is Carly Cremers, who built the puppet, operates it and provides its voice.

