

Minions, Irish-dancing zombies take over Lansing Center

RJ WOLCOTT | LANSING STATE JOURNAL

LANSING - Ghostbusters, Minions and Star Wars characters took over the Lansing Center Saturday as part of the third annual How-To Halloween.

Among the dozens of attendees dressed as iconic or spooky characters was 5-year-old Rafael Quintero, playing the role of Batman. Alongside his younger cousin, Alano, who was dressed as a Power Ranger, the two gravitated toward a hands-on demonstration hosted by the Haslett High School Vex Robotics Team.

As the pair piloted their robots across the square obstacle course, Rafael's father, who goes by the same name, provided coaching. This was the first year Quintero's family attended the event, saying it was a fun preview of the holiday coming later this month.

This weekend's event was the idea of former neighbors Steve Sneed and Jerry Jodloski. Back when the pair lived in the same Haslett neighborhood, they competed annually to see who could create the best Halloween display.

"We wanted to make it a cool experience for kids coming out," Jodloski said. "Hundreds upon hundreds of kids would show up every year and we loved building the displays."

Sneed and Jodloski decided to aim for a bigger audience three years ago, while also providing a space where organizations like TinkerLab and the Lansing Makers Network could bring in hands-on displays for kids.

Among the 3D-printed ghosts and pumpkins on display were child-sized prosthetic hands attendees could try out. TinkerLab makes the hands in collaboration with Enabling the Future, a group of volunteers that 3-D prints prosthetic hands for kids with special needs.

Allowing kids to touch and interact with objects is far more engaging than simply showing them a demonstration, said TinkerLab store owner Melissa Allen.

"We want them to play, and if we break something then we show them how to fix it," she said.

A replica Ecto-1, the Ghostbuster's car, as well as Irish dancers made up to look like zombies also drew onlookers during the event.

This year's How-To Halloween is the first spanning two days, Jodloski said, so those who missed in favor of the Michigan State University football game don't have to worry. The second day of How-To Halloween kicks off at 11 a.m. Sunday and runs until 5 p.m. The 2016 Zombie Walk will also kick off from the Lansing Center at noon Sunday as part of the pre-Halloween festivities.



PHOTOS BY ROBERT KILLIPS/LANSING STATE JOURNAL

A duo dressed as ghostbusters play a game of Tetris at the How-To Halloween event at the Lansing Center Saturday.



Dan Wier of AFK Games, from Holt, works on assembling figures for table top games at How-To Halloween.



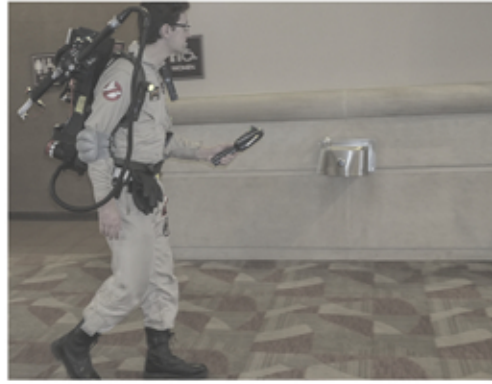
Dancing Irish zombies perform for the audience at the How-To Halloween event at the Lansing Center Saturday.



Shawna Jackson pushes around a stroller with her 18-month-old son Mickey Heck in with an Alice in Wonderland theme.



Barbara Shooter and her son Jackson Patterson, 3, have fun with the robots at How-To Halloween.



Anthony Snyder from the Kalamazoo Ghostbusters scans for ghosts at the Lansing Center on Saturday.



Sarah Foss is dressed as Merida from the Disney movie "Brave" at How-To Halloween.