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Article updated: 10/24/2012 6:37 PM

Lake Zurich couple create scary home for a good cause

Lake Zurich couple create spooky display for good cause

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Fluffy guards the front yard of Todd and Mickey Horndasch's haunted house display on Old Mill Grove Road in Lake Zurich.

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By Bob Susnjara

Todd and Mickey Horndasch once again are trying to be the creepiest neighbors on Old Mill Grove Road in Lake Zurich while doing some good at the same time.

Called "Kill on Old Mill," the Horndasches have converted their front yard, garage and part of their home into a haunted house. One of the highlights of the ever-expanding haunted house is a 15-foot reaper-style creature named Myron accompanied by his skeletal pet, Fluffy.

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"I've been a Halloween fan my whole life," said Todd Horndasch, 46, an Arlington Heights public works employee. "Since I was a little kid, I was building stuff in my parents' foyer. And once I got my own house, that's it, I can do whatever I want."

Myron, Fluffy and the rest of the haunted house crew will be in action from dusk to about 10 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Halloween, Oct. 31, at the Horndasches' place at 115 Old Mill Grove Road, just south of Route 22. Todd and Mickey plan to dress as gravediggers.

Visitors are asked to bring nonperishable donations for St. Vincent de Paul Society's weekly food pantry at St. Francis de Sales Parish in Lake Zurich. In addition, the Horndasches for the first time are seeking donations for Young at

Heart Pet Rescue, which provides for animals' needs at human food pantries in Palatine and Lake Zurich.

Mickey Horndasch, 40, longtime curator for the Arlington Heights Historical Museum, said the couple started by dressing as spooky characters when handing out Halloween candy. They graduated to assembling a graveyard scene in their living room about 12 years ago, then later created a front lawn display.

Debuting on Friday will be a haunted house addition to the garage, featuring an evil pumpkin creature and other scary characters.

"Basically, the story kind of in here is that the old farmer planted his pumpkin patch a little too close to the cemetery where weird stuff happens, then bad stuff happens," Mickey Horndasch said as she viewed the garage scene this week.

Local history is reflected on most of the headstones. The names include one of Cook County's two known Revolutionary War veterans, Eli Skinner, and Seth Paine, who with George Ela started farming in the Lake Zurich area in the late 1830s.

The Horndasches, who generally start building new characters in January, have linked their effort to the Palos Heights-based Haunts Against Hunger Food Drive founded by Thom Kramer. Haunts Against Hunger's website has a list of participating homes, mostly in the South suburbs.

"The Exorcist" star Linda Blair has joined Haunts Against Hunger and suggested the group seek pet food donations as part of its effort this year, organizers said.

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