

Robin Hood flies with audience Actors Gymnasium show a hit - with the whole family

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Three-year-old Drew Bartels of Batavia purchased an inflatable sword and anxiously took a seat beside his parents to watch "Robin Hood and his Aerial Extravaganza" in Naperville.

"He's a huge fan of Robin Hood, and he always has been," said Drew's mom Jennifer Bartels. "Little boys and swords - there's some kind of connection."

Fifteen performers from the Evanston-based Actors Gymnasium swung around, got feisty with swords and told Robin Hood's stories Sunday at North Central College's Merner Field House. The Naperville Jaycees sponsored the presentation, which consisted of three shows throughout the day.

Jaycees spokeswoman Tricia Tvrdik said it was the first time the group presented a show of this nature.

"We've always had a circus before and we're trying to get out of the animal scene," she said. "It's very different, and it's really fun to see the children come in, and see their excitement."

Angela Sumner, a Jaycees volunteer, agreed.

"It looks like it's going to be fun for the kids and people of all ages," she said as parents purchased tickets for their little Robin Hood fans.

"I hope to at least get to sit in on one show."

Len Epelbaum, his wife Rachel and their girls Sophie, 5, and Laila, 3, did get a chance to watch the show Sunday afternoon.

Laila said she was looking forward to watching people swing like monkeys.

"This gives us something to do on a Sunday," said Len Epelbaum, who usually takes his kids to all the carnivals in Naperville. "Afterward, we'll have lunch in downtown Naperville."

Tvrdik was content with the turnout Sunday.

"Jaycees always gives back to the community with our efforts," she said, "and the money we take in."

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Caption: Kyle Gibson, left, as King John, battles against Kevin Wasielewski, as Robin Hood, while both perform in the Naperville Jaycees' presentation of "Robin Hood and his Aerial Extravaganza." The show was performed by members of the Evanston-based Actors Gymnasium. TANIT JARUSAN/tjarusan@@dailyherald.com

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