

A jubilant education



Jubilee the Koala Bear entertains children during a performance at First Steps Gym in Mount Laurel. Al Hall, of Burlington Township, founded Jubilee Children's Entertainment in 2008 as a unique way to educate children. Hall makes appearances as Jubilee at day care centers, schools, hospitals and churches, offering music, dancing, stories and games.

Grin and bear it

Burlington Township man entertains and educates.

By Ed Moorhouse
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Al Hall sees himself as a businessman, teacher and entertainer.

Children see him as a 7-foot koala bear in a T-shirt and shorts.

Hall, a Burlington Township resident, founded Jubilee Children's Entertainment in 2008 after years of dreaming about a unique way to educate children.

"We had a passion to reach out to children," Hall said of himself and wife Alicia. "We tried other entrepreneurial ventures but we kept coming

County People



Al Hall

Age: 36

Occupation: President of Jubilee Children's Entertainment
Residence: Burlington Township

back to this. Our main focus is to entertain the children but also to inspire them and empower them."

Hall said he kicked around a few ideas about making appearances at birthday parties in costume but wanted to take it a step further. He wanted to design and create his own character.

"We had been interested in starting our own business and we prayed

about it," said Alicia Hall, a librarian at Burlington Township Middle School at Springside. "My husband came to me one day with this idea for Jubilee and we went with it."

The Halls asked for help from Vincent Abanyie of Masterpiece Design Group in Mount Laurel. Abanyie sketched the koala bear wearing a green T-shirt, yellow shorts and yellow boots.

Hall took the image to costume designer Yvette Helin in New York City and Jubilee came to life.

"Jubilee is able to talk and sing with the children, which isn't like the typical routine for mascots, who generally don't talk," Hall

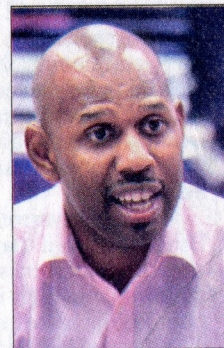
said. "We wanted to be different in that way. We wanted something unique and (Abanyie and Helin) did an amazing job."

Hall, who also works as a security specialist for Federal Express, said he has taken acting classes but received no formal mascot training. He has a background in education as a former adjunct instructor at Burlington County College.

"I did a lot of research," he said. "It was a lot of trial and error."

Hall makes appearances as Jubilee at day care centers, schools, hospitals and churches, offering music, dancing,

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Al Hall

Hall

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stories and games.

During a visit last week to First Steps Gym in Mount Laurel, Jubilee had the children cheering, singing and dancing.

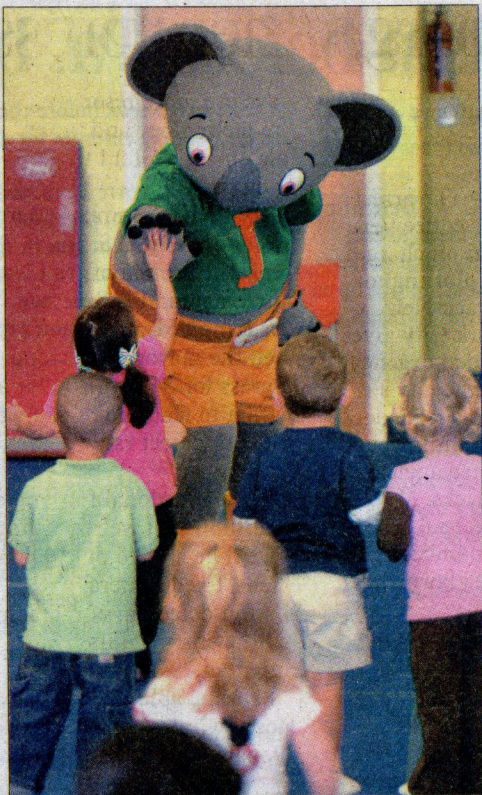
Beneath his costume, Hall was all smiles.

"We want to be able to build up a child's self-esteem," he said. "We focus on love, literacy, multicultural awareness, health and other themes."

Hall said Jubilee has appeared on local television shows but he hopes to have his own show one day.

He said he's always amazed by the positive reaction Jubilee gets from children.

"It's rewarding," Hall said. "When I was growing up I didn't have anything like this. We believe we can have an impact on these children and instill confidence



in them. It's an awesome feeling."

For more information about Jubilee Children's Entertainment, visit www.jubileekidz.com.

Jubilee the Koala Bear high fives a child during a performance at First Steps Gym in Mount Laurel. Al Hall, of Burlington Township, invented the character as a way to help educate children.

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