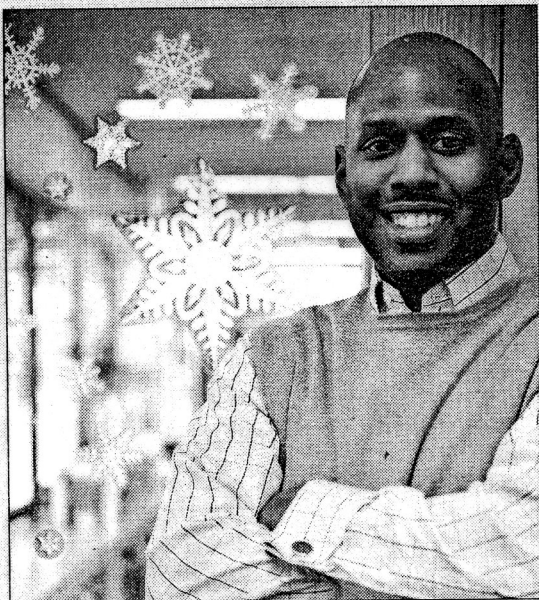


SJ Faces: Al Hall



Al Hall teaches children about the importance of respect and healthy lifestyles, but he does it as Jubilee, a seven-foot-tall koala bear.

FAYE MURMAN
Courier-Post

When he's not working as an investigative security specialist for Federal Express, Algernon "Al" Hall dons another uniform, that of a seven-foot-tall Koala bear named "Jubilee."

The 36-year-old introduced area children to the talking, singing bear in 2008, with the launch of his company, Jubilee Children's Entertainment.

Since then, Hall has taken Jubilee's character-building message to hundreds of children in schools, hospitals, churches and museums. His long-term goal is to make Jubilee as well-known as Elmo or Barney.

Hall lives in Burlington Township with his wife, Alicia, and their 13-month-old son, Avery.

Jubilee will be performing live at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 19, at First Steps Gym, 403 Larchmont Blvd., Mount Laurel. For information, call (856) 222-0040.

He will also be appearing at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 23, at the Cinnaminson branch of the Burlington County Library, 1619 Riveron Road, Cinnaminson.

To learn more about Jubilee, visit www.jubileekidz.com

Q: Who is Jubilee?

A: Jubilee is a seven-foot, lovable Koala bear that's very colorful. He's very unique. When he was manufactured, we selected someone on the high end so it can be durable and so it would be top-quality. That's exactly what we got.

Q: Where does his voice come from?

A: I've always had a gifted voice that would go high or low. The voice was something experimental at first . . . I had to come up with a voice that was not strenuous.

Q: Why did you create the character?

A: What we focus on is character-impacting, building things like love, kindness, service, respect, speaking positive words, faith, working hard, being healthy — things that children need to help shape their character. The whole mission behind Jubilee is simply to inspire, develop, empower children in a unique way to change their environment, as opposed to an environment changing them.

Q: How do kids respond to Jubilee?

A: They love it. Granted, you do have a couple who are afraid, but 95 percent of the children are on board immediately.

Q: How do you prepare for a performance?

A: I make sure I'm there with ample enough time. You don't want to have to rush. The second thing is I get in my quiet space and I pray. You have to reprogram yourself. You have to get into a place of peace. A lot of times, a show doesn't go the way it's scripted to go and you have to be able to ad-lib and go with the flow of things and just have fun with it. I had to learn that it doesn't have to be so structured. The kids love playing with Jubilee.

- Kim Mulford