

[DIY Haunted Garage raises money for MS](#)



Couple's ghoulish garage brings in donations for MS every Halloween.

by Vicky Uhland

When Charline Werts met Keith Allen 30 years ago, she knew he was fiendish about Halloween. Not only did he still have the hobo costume he wore as a 3-year-old, but in the years since then, he had filled his garage with macabre figurines and props commemorating his favorite holiday. Werts shares Allen's love of all things spooky, and the couple's annual Halloween garage ghoulfests became must-attend bashes for their friends in Tipp City, Ohio.

Fourteen years ago, a pizza deliveryman who got a glimpse of Allen and Werts' creepy collection suggested they share it with the public, and the Haunted Garage was born. But as much as the diabolical duo enjoyed scaring other Halloween fanatics with life-size figurines like the Fuming Rotter and Hanging Witch, they felt they could do more. After Werts' mother, Betty, who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in the 1980s, passed away in September 2004, they decided to make their Haunted Garage a Do It Yourself fundraiser for the [National MS Society](#).

Get the word out!

Find tips on "[Do It Yourself Fundraising from the Haunted Garage.](#)"

Allen and Werts don't charge admission to the Haunted Garage because they want to

encourage people who can't afford pricey Halloween haunted houses to enjoy their display. They do place Society brochures at the entrance with a sign encouraging donations. The first year, they collected \$200 and each year since then, the total has increased. "Our goal is always one dollar more than the previous year," Werts says.

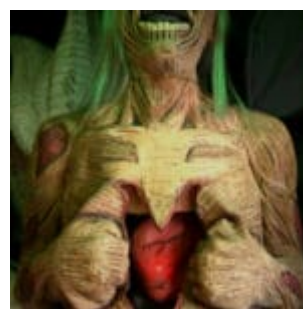
Allen, a retired machinist, and Werts, an animal care technician, shop year-round for Halloween memorabilia to add to the Haunted Garage. Leatherface from "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" wields his chainsaw at unsuspecting passersby as Norman Bates' mummified mother sits in a rocking chair. A wheelchair-friendly pathway, set off by yellow crime-scene tape, winds through the terrifying tableau, which stays up year-round but only comes to life on weekend nights from late September to early November, and by appointment at other times. A ghoulishly dressed Werts greets patrons, while Allen, usually in full costume, works the panel that controls the sound and movements of the displays.



Casket car



Can you spot the grim reaper?



A screaming cadaver



Count Dracula



Jason from "Friday the 13th"



More mummies!

Last year, Allen and Werts invited Butch Patrick, who played Eddie on the 1960s TV show "The Munsters," to commemorate the 13th anniversary of the Haunted Garage. Patrick sold autographed pictures at the Haunted Garage and donated a percentage of his proceeds, allowing Werts and Allen to collect \$1,313 for the Society.

Up to 1,000 people visit the Haunted Garage each year, and most of them leave a donation. “Some people drop in their loose change, and some write us checks. A few years ago, we even got two \$100 bills,” Werts says. “It’s always fun at the end of the night to see how much is in the jar.”

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