

Circle of Friends Unites Northeast Missouri Community

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM ENJOYED BY ALL

Circle of Friends is a loose knit group of friends throughout 14 counties in Northeast Missouri that come together to showcase their abilities and to build relationships between themselves and the community. They do this by participating in events like the 12th annual Circle of Friends Christmas Program.

Rehearsals for the program started in early November. To overcome the distance of our rural community, several groups met weekly throughout the 14 county region, and then successfully came together for the dress rehearsal and performance. Some participants traveled as far as 100 miles to be a part of the program. The goal of having an evening not focused on perfection, but one of inclusion was successfully met with the help of the Kirksville Regional Office staff, direct support professionals, local SB40 staff and families.



The evening's performance created the opportunity to enjoy the true spirit of Christmas through song, dance, drama and caroling. A stirring rendition of "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer", an impersonation of Elvis Presley singing Christmas songs, and a solo of "Santa Clause Is Coming to Town"

started the evening off. A performance by the PACT dancers and *The Littlest Christmas Tree* drama followed along with a surprise performance of "My Favorite Things" and caroling. The evening created an opportunity for everyone to be a star.

Participants in Circle of Friends come from more than 900 individuals served by the Kirksville Regional Office. Along with the annual Christmas Program there is also an annual Circle of Friends Art Show held each April. These programs provide the opportunity to showcase individual and group abilities, support families, foster self-determination and build community.



To share the success of other individuals and families, visit www.dmh.mo.gov/dd/spotlight.

