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up front

# learning through song

Teacher provides life lessons with musicals  
by Tiffanie Bond PHOTOS BY Jim Laurie

LEARNING TO ACCEPT others and work together are lessons every child learns. And Audrey Smith, a music teacher at Alexander Dawson School at Rainbow Mountain, is helping to make those lessons a little easier through creative expression.

Smith wrote the books and musicals "The Halloween Misfits" and "The Mischievous Bugs" to teach children social skills — along with a little singing and dancing.

"I've worked with kids for so long I know it's a fun experience for them ... to pretend to be someone else," says Smith, a teacher since 1976. "And children aren't

always kind to each other. We need to all get along and accept each other."

Smith created "The Halloween Misfits" out of desperation. While a teacher in the Clark County School District, she committed herself to produce a Halloween show. When the musical she ordered didn't arrive, she wrote

one herself. Smith and a cadre of volunteers handcrafted costumes and scenery.

"I have four rolling suitcases full of costumes," Smith says. "You should see my garage."

The success of the first musical spawned "The Mischievous Bugs" for use during the rest of the school year. Students also are introduced to different genres of music and dance.

"The kids learn it's OK to be different, and it's OK to include one another regardless of their differences," says Shelly Ensign, mother of two of Smith's students. "It's got multifacets. She's a wonderful teacher."

After success at her school, Smith took the show on the road. During Nevada Reading Week, Smith held performances at 15 schools. This month, "The Halloween Misfits" is set for a performance at 11 a.m. on Oct. 21 at Barnes & Noble Booksellers, 8915 W. Charleston Blvd.

Those interested in Smith's musicals, worksheets for classrooms and other activities can visit her Web site at [www.audreyproductions.com](http://www.audreyproductions.com). ■



Audrey Smith (center), a teacher at Alexander Dawson School at Rainbow Mountain, has created two musicals aimed at helping youngsters learn about life.