

# Moving Martilee Mae Carnival Fundraiser Planned

BY SARAH WETZEL  
For the Plain Talk

Those who knew Phil and Vanessa Covington and their family while they lived in Vermillion saw how community-oriented they were.

Now when these givers are in need, the community has chosen to give back to them.

A community fundraiser will be held next Saturday, November 21, from 12-4 p.m. at the Clay County 4-H/Extension Building (515 High St. Vermillion).

Free will donations and other money raised through the Carnival-style event will go towards helping the Covingtons purchase a wheelchair-accessible van to accommodate their 13 year old daughter, Martilee Mae, who is becoming increasingly difficult to move.

"Martilee has Rett Syndrome, a debilitating neurological (movement) disorder that predominantly affects females," the Facebook event says. "Although she is nonverbal, her smile and the sparkle in her eyes speak volumes. She has very little purposeful hand use, suffers from seizures, and has scoliosis."

According to the page, so far Martilee's parents have been lifting her in and out of their car even as she has grown, almost as tall as her mother who has recently sustained a shoulder injury.

"She is a sweet, sweet girl," said Pastor Steve Ford of Grace Baptist Church. "She's entering teenage years and has a father who's six foot eight I think. She's getting really tall and it's difficult for her mother to get her in and out of the car so they decided they need a wheelchair-accessible van."

According to Ford, the family had set up a fund for those who wished to contribute to the purchase which inspired Ford and others to intervene.

"I talked to some people at church and everybody agreed that it was something we wanted to do," he said. "Our goal is to raise about half of what they need. They're about halfway there now and we'd like to finish off what they need. The total they need is about \$30,000. We're hoping to raise between \$10-15,000 for them."

The Covingtons are hoping to



COURTESY PHOTO

**Community members are invited to attend a Carnival-type fundraiser to assist a previously local family purchase a wheelchair-accessible van to more easily move their daughter, Martilee Mae.**

attend the carnival if their schedule allows.

"Phil worked for USD," Ford said. "That's what brought them to Vermillion. They were here about five years. Then he took a job with the University of Nebraska in Omaha. They moved just this past summer. They're just a wonderful family, really involved with the community."

Ford and others planning the event have seen a great response from the community already.

"All across town businesses have been donating goods for food and items for a silent auction," he said. "We decided to do a carnival, just a good time for people in the community and then just have opportunities to for them to give while they're there."

The event will also have hot dogs, chips, bounce houses, cotton candy, snow cones, popcorn, face painting, Twist Ty the Ballon Guy, carnival games, the Vermillion Juggling Club and a bake sale with donation buckets at various stations for free will donations.

Jessica McKenzie, director of the Vermillion Food Pantry has been organizing the event.

"Jessica's just done a wonderful job," Ford said. "She's really motivat-

ed, being inspired by the family. When I first mentioned the idea that I wanted to do this she asked if she could head it up and she's just done a wonderful job."

McKenzie's whole family has apparently been inspired by the Covingtons as shown by her five-year-old son.

"My sweetheart of a five-year-old came up to Forest and me earlier to tell us something," McKenzie said in a Facebook post. "He said, 'Mom, Dad, I decided that I don't care about money anymore at all. I don't need to save it for toys, because I want to give it to my friend, Martilee, so that she feels happy and can drive anywhere she wants to go. So I'm going to give seven dollars and seven quarters and seven dimes and seven nickels and seven pennies. Okay? I already decided. It's a deal.' Talk about a lesson in a tender, loving heart!"

Anyone wishing to volunteer for the event in any way or to donate silent auction items, contact Grace Baptist Church at (605) 624-4949 or visit the Facebook event page, 'Moving Martilee Mae Carnival Fundraiser.'

"I'm sure we can find places for people to serve," Ford said. "There's a lot to do."

## Behring

From Page 1

personality motivates people to do their best. I think a big part of that comes from the fact that I am from here."

Behring said he came by his work ethic by watching his family.

"My dad worked at Morell's for 27 years. He worked hard his entire adult life," he said. "My cousins, brother - I have a massive family base here - and they are all essentially in farming. That is hard work. Just because it is cold outside you still have to do the work. And frankly no one is interested in hearing you complain because they have to do the work, too."

"Part of what I have learned to do is to provide that kind of leadership where we go into an adversarial situation, such as it is raining, and we still have to shoot. People flounder around asking how can we do this? My answer is, 'Put the camera there, put the actors there, role sound and let's go, because we can't wallow in it.' I think my work ethic as a Midwestern farm kid has taught me to shut up and get to work."

Tim Pyles, professor of Theatre at USD said the two days the students spent with Behring offered a fantastic opportunity.

"For our students to really see what is possible outside of this place and to have the education that they are receiving here affirmed in terms of that it is preparing them well for what they need to do is an amazing opportunity," Pyles said. "The students are hungry to get every last bit out of their education that they possibly can. They are like sponges soaking up all of the information and advice that they possibly can for when they launch out to New York or Los Angeles or where ever it is."

Pyles said the time spent with Behring will help the students both during school and after.

"We had sessions devoted to different aspects of the whole process," he said. "We had a session devoted to the design and technology issues. We had a session that was devoted to the auditioning and casting process. We had a session where we had



SHAUNA MARLETTE/FOR THE PLAIN TALK  
**John and Shari Behring are pictured in front of Old Main located on the campus of the University of South Dakota. The Behrings are both graduates of USD. John returned to spend two days doing workshops on campus in an effort to give back to his alma mater.**

actors doing scenes for him that he coached. Then we had him talking more about the whole process from the directorial perspective. It has been great to have the students get a window into the process of making a television episode from all of these different angles, the angle of the actor, the angle of the technicians, the director. I think a lot of times when people think about a theatre department they think about acting, but

there is so much more to it. Many of our students are engaged in wanting to be lighting or sound people, or whatever.

"It was an all-around helpful experience for our students. I think it was very affirming, because it can be easy to think here in Vermillion, South Dakota is not the way they do it in New York and it is really affirming to have someone come in and say, 'No, what they are teaching you here is what

you need to know. You are being well prepared."

Behring said that knowledge base he gained here allowed him to succeed.

"Shari and I were just married, she was 19 and I was 21," he said. "She had applied to the doctoral program in psychology here and for whatever reason did not get in. So, we had to put together a new plan for her. I had been working at KCOO in Sioux City doing commercials down there. She was accepted into four masters programs including the Marquette program in Milwaukee. So, we moved to Milwaukee and I ended up at a television station there doing a show and other editorial photography. While I was doing that this guy who had a commercial company in town (Milwaukee) called me up and said you are going to come and work for me."

"We left Vermillion in many respects out of necessity. From there the question was what next. Her post-doctorate work took us to Los Angeles. I was in a phone booth in New York and we had to make the decision right then so we said let's go to LA. We packed up our Pinto station wagon and off we went. We didn't know a soul but through hard work we made it work."

In terms of developing

## Adoption Program To Be held

What: Public Talk, free admission  
When: Tuesday Nov. 24, 6:30 p.m.  
Where: St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 10 Linden St., Vermillion

Phil and Mary Reed (not their real names) had a beautiful home, full of love and opportunities for learning. Eight-year old Charlie had a lifetime of feeling like a suitcase, being passed from place to place. He knew how to blend in to new places, and the Reeds knew how to be good parents. Everybody knew that it was the best thing ever when the Reeds decided to adopt Charlie - everybody, that is, except Charlie.

After years of struggle, Mary Reed knew a breakthrough had occurred when Charlie spoke three little words to her. Not, "I love you," which he'd repeated without conviction from the beginning, but something more honest. Charlie said, "I feel sick." Then, he threw up.

Attachment is the kind of love that children reserve for people whom they trust to take care of them, especially when they don't feel clever or attractive. It's the kind of love that we want around us when we feel sick or sad, and it's the faith in one certain someone to make us feel almost magically better.

Attachment is the "golden ring" in older child adoption: the prize that every adoptive parent longs for, and that every adopted child like Charlie finds hard to give. The child's Attachment to caregivers is the foundation for reaching adulthood safely, and for becoming a secure and productive member of the family and community. But children like Charlie often experience traumas in their very early life, beginning before birth and continuing through infancy and early childhood. These experiences can compromise and challenge their ability to form true Attachments when they finally meet their adoptive family.

Dr. Patterson is the author of Hunter, Faith and the Ancestors: An adoption story of courage and belonging. She will be speaking on her forthcoming book, Loving the Porcupine: The Role of Developmental Trauma and Attachment in Older Child Adoption, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Vermillion, on Tuesday Nov. 24 at 6:30 pm. This is a free presentation that offers crucial insights for adoptive and foster parents, social workers, child and family therapists, and especially students of social work, psychology, education and child development.

## Clay County 4-H Recognition Event Set For Sunday

The Clay County 4-H Recognition Event is scheduled for Sunday, November 15, 2015 at the Clay County 4-H Center in Vermillion beginning at 2:00 pm. Area 4-H members, leaders, families and friends are invited to attend.

Clay County 4-H members will be recognized for their achievements, project accomplishments and participation during the past year. Various local sponsors will present special awards.

The Friends of 4-H and Meritorious Service awards will be presented to local individuals in recognition of their community support of the 4-H program.

## Correction

In last week's story about the Winter Warm Coats event Pastor Steve Ford was incorrectly identified. We apologize for this error.

his own style, he said technology has finally caught up with his style and vision.

"Part of what I was referring to is that technology has caught up with us," Behring said. "The aesthetic of a television series or movie where the camera angles are dynamic and low and wide and different than regular TV is part of what I was referring to. Had I done that kind of photography on other shows they would have had a fit. Because they would have said that wasn't their show. In this new era of superhero fandom and storytelling, I get to flex that muscle. I have learned to be appropriate to the story. Gotham is an entire different aesthetic than others."

"I do hear from certain people that they do know when my episodes come on and recognize my work in that way and I appreciate

it."

Up next for Behring is another episode of Gotham.

"This next script is a monster and ambitious and I think it is going to be a great movie when it is done," he said.

However, he said of all the discussion he held while in Vermillion he hopes one message got through.

"You can do it," Behring said. "I am just like them. I am a kid that grew up in Canton, a tiny little town. Came to the University with an idea of what I wanted to do and didn't give up on it. My message to the students, and I hope they heard it, was I want them to know that it is ok to dream big. Somebody is going to do it, why not you? I hope they took away the knowledge that they can do anything if they are willing to work for it."



**KEEP INFORMED ABOUT PUBLIC NOTICES IN SOUTH DAKOTA.**

Learn more at [www.facebook.com/PublicNotices](http://www.facebook.com/PublicNotices)



## Vermillion School District

is pleased to announce their upcoming Open House and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Vermillion High School Renovation

1001 E. Main St.

Monday, November 16th • 5pm to 7pm

Refreshments will be served!

Ribbon Cutting ceremony will be held at 5:15pm



You are invited to come Christmas Shopping with the Shepherd Roegiers

Nov. 16th-20th and 23rd-24th • 9am-5pm  
Muenster University Center • USD Campus

Quality Sheepskin and Deerskin Gloves, slippers, wheel covers, sheepskins and multicolor pet bed wool rugs.

**Merry Christmas from Chuck!**  
Sponsored by ROTC Cadets

