

# KU museums collaborate to scare kids with facts

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Groups of kids, some with faces painted powder-white with dark eyes and lips, explored the Spencer Museum of Art on Sunday afternoon, making graveyard dioramas and viewing the spooky exhibits with parents in tow.

As 3-year-old Ellie Rice sat stock-still while getting her face painted, one of the favorite activities at Sunday's event, her father Glenn, of Kansas City, Mo., showed off her diorama.

"She had fun making the diorama," Rice said. "But face painting will be one of her highlights; she likes that."

Glenn, Ellie and dozens of other families attended "Spiders, Spirits and Skeletons" at the Spencer Museum of Art and the Natural History Museum on the Kansas University campus Sunday afternoon. The two museums collaborated for the first time to offer Halloween-inspired activities for families.

At the Spencer, kids crafted and explored some of the spooky exhibits, including a sculpture of a soldier that stood guard over a tomb in Japan and a painting of the preserved head of a mummy.

The exhibit "Comanche is Dead" drew several families to the back of the museum. Here, historic photographs of Comanche's taxidermy were placed side-by-side with a re-creation of the process by International Artist-In-Residence Diego Teo. Teo sculpted Comanche, a U.S. Calvary horse that survived The Battle of the Little Big Horn, and buried the sculpture in the front lawn of the museum.

After viewing this exhibit, attendees could go upstairs to see the actual Comanche at the Natural History Museum.

"We're doing the skeleton and spirit side of things," said Kristina Walker, director of education at the Spencer Museum of Art. "The Natural History Museum has Comanche, and we have his spiritual version."

## **Bugs, bats and bones**

Inside the Natural History Museum, families learned about bats and spiders, handled skeletons and ate insects.

Robert Timm, professor of ecology and curator of animals at the museum, sat behind a table lined with different species of bats, answering questions and debunking myths.

He showed off several different bats, from the large Flying Foxes found in Southeast Asian, Africa, India and Australia to the Big Brown Bat that is common in Kansas.

In other areas of the museum, graduate students of anatomy pointed out ligaments and bones on a model skeleton and explained the structure of the human skull.

Kids had chance to eat crickets or larvets (sour cream and onion, cheddar, barbecue or salt and vinegar flavored) while learning some bug facts, such as that for every human on Earth, there are 4 tons of insects.

"Halloween is coming up," Timm said. "We want to scare them with facts."

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