

Dave Payne



Dave's love of puppetry stems from his days as a marionette builder and performer in Neenah's summer recreation program during the 1960's. Gradeschoolers including Dave and his sister sewed marionettes for shows each summer and then the troupe "hit the road" to perform at playgrounds across Neenah.

Most memorable of those early shows was his role as Charlie Brown in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. His interest in puppetry was rekindled as a co-director of his church's youth group puppet team when his children were growing up.

Dave served as a director of Hands 2 God puppet team from its inception. The children grew up, but his

love of puppetry continues to grow. He has written scripts, built puppets, performed, served as emcee, sound technician, and all the many challenges tasks native to puppetry. The team has performed across the Midwest and traveled to the East Coast.

Dave has 25 years of teaching experience Fox Valley Lutheran High School level and currently teaches the school's honors level senior English course. He also serves as the school's Communications Director and has used puppetry in both the classroom and promotion settings at the school. Also during his years at FVL, he spent five years as director of a large puppet team that shared anti-drug and alcohol messages with area elementary students. Known as the Blacklight Zone, the group performed imaginative skits -- many written by the students themselves -- designed to highlight the dangers of becoming trapped in substance abuse.

Since 2004, Dave has served as director of FVL's newly-formed Fox Folk Marionette Troupe. They debuted their first show in January 2005. Entitled "The Search," the performance is an adaption of Henry Van Dyke's classic Christmas tale, "The Other Wiseman." Plans are underway now for their 2005-2006 performance season.

Cassie Payne

Cassie Payne recently graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran College with a double major in Theatre and English. She has served as one of the lead puppeteers of Hands 2 God for the last eight years. She brings special life to the stage with her whimsical characters Violet and Sparky among many that she performs.



Recently, she was asked to be a lead puppeteer in an educational children's video series entitled *Strawberry Preserves*. In addition to performing, she is also experienced at script writing, puppet choreography, and building puppets. Cassie has served as director or co-director for three different puppetry teams.

Since her graduation, she has been working to incorporate Hands 2 Grow as a troupe that will bring classic literature and character-building messages to schools, libraries, and other community venues.

Dave and Cassie are members both of the Wisconsin Puppetry Guild and the Puppeteers of America. They were privileged to attend the 2005 POA National Festival in St. Paul, Minnesota. They have also attended a number of international Christian festivals and have studied under puppetry greats such as David Pannabecker and Larry Engler.