

The Courier-Journal

October 11, 2004
Section: NEWS
Edition: MET=METRO
Page: 03B

ACHIEVER; Teen strives for a successful 'Horror Show'

Patti Smith

Wearing fishnet stockings and bright red 5-inch heels takes some getting used to, but Rachel Helson is willing to dress out of character for a cause.

This weekend, Rachel, a sophomore at Louisville Collegiate School, will play the lead in a stage production of "The Rocky Horror Show" - which she also is producing and doing promotions for - to benefit the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Rachel collected \$10,000 from corporate sponsors, paid \$3,000 for rights to the play and hired professional director Gil Reyes, a family friend, to direct it.

"She has exceeded all my expectations," Reyes said of Rachel's drive, commitment and talent.

Looking much older than her 15 years in costume, Rachel fits right in with the cast of professional actors who are volunteering their time to participate in the fund-raiser.

Shows will be held Friday at 9 p.m. and Saturday at 8 p.m. at the Kentucky Center for the Arts' Bomhard Theatre. Tickets are \$25 and are available through Ticketmaster at 361-3100, or by calling 584-7777.

Rachel, who has been performing since she was 6, spent the summer in New York City working with professional actors in Circle in the Square Theatre School, a musical theater training program where she took lessons in voice, dance, tap and scene study.

Four of her aunts have had breast cancer. That's why she wanted to use what she learned over the

summer to help contribute to finding a cure and improving early detection methods.

"They're all very close to me, and it made me feel good that even though I'm so young, I'm able to do something," she said.

Robert McFarland, who retired two years ago from the Louisville Ballet, was cast as Dr. Frank-N-Furter - the owner of a strange castle that young Janet Weiss (Rachel) and her fiance stumble upon in the rain after their car breaks down.

"You rarely get the opportunity to do something that you love for a great cause like this," McFarland said. "And it's rare you find someone so motivated."

Rachel, who lives in Mockingbird Valley with her parents Jan and Tim Helson and her brother Jackson, 11, hopes to raise \$10,000 for the foundation.

"She's very focused. And she's willing to work really hard to make what she wants happen," Jan Helson said.

RACHEL HELSON

Age: 15

Grade: Sophomore at Louisville Collegiate School

Hobbies: Theater, yoga, Pilates and voice training

Rachel Helson rehearsed last week. She will play the role of Janet Weiss in a stage production of "The Rocky Horror Show."

By **Michael Clevenger**,
The Courier-Journal