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Mary Susan McCrae of the Clement McCrae Puppet Co. entertains area youths during a puppet show Saturday morning at the East Side Library. The Kansas City puppet company also performed for children at the Savannah Library Saturday.

Puppets entertain St. Joe, Savannah kids

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Paws the puppy was a big hit. So were the chickens, the ice skater, the dancing French poodles and the Mexican man whose hat was too big for his head. All these characters were part of the Clement McCrae Puppet Co., which performed Saturday at the Regional Bluffs Regional Library's East Side Library in St. Joseph and at the Savannah, Mo., library.

The McCraes' daughter, Allison, 6, then came out with Paws the puppy. A little boy, excited to see the puppy, ran to the front to pet him, as did other children at the end of the show. The McCraes have performed at the library before. They put on a show this summer during the library's summer reading program. For some of the children, this was the first time seeing a puppet show. Kate Johnson, 4, attended the show with her mother, Jenny Johnson. It was Kate's first show, and she enjoyed the puppets.

"She had a great time," Mrs. Johnson said. "And so did I." The puppet show also was the first for Tess Boe, 10, who said she liked Paws the best. The show began with two singing flowers welcoming everyone to the show and continued with an ice skater, French poodles, Mexican musicians, and Hershey's kisses and gingerbread men being chased by a pair of giant lips. A big hit with kids and adults were three chickens clucking to Big Band music. The McCraes, who live in Kansas City said they do about 150 shows a year throughout the Midwest. They have traveled to

many places, including Oklahoma City and Quincy, Ill., as well as performing at fairs, company parties and churches. Mrs. McCrae has been involved in puppetry since high school, and for her it's a full-time job. Mr. McCrae owns his own business and helps with the show on a part-time basis. His interest in puppetry began after the couple was married in 1988 and continues to another generation with their daughter, Allison. Each puppet takes about two weeks to make and the McCraes make all the puppets they use. Although they haven't counted the puppets lately, Mrs. McCrae said they had about 200 in 1990.