

'Nobodies' laughing

Comedy tour makes stop at LMC's Mendel Center on Saturday

By JEREMY D. BONFIGLIO
HP Features Writer

BENTON HARBOR — Most people would bristle at being called a “nobody.”

But for 23-year-old stand-up comic Dwayne Murphy Jr., being tapped for the second annual Nobodies of Comedy tour feels like the break he's been working toward.

“It's funny, because I've been doing comedy for six years and I would consider this my first real big opportunity even though it's the Nobodies of Comedy,” Murphy says. “It's kind of the truth, though. You wouldn't see me on your television tomorrow. So I can't really complain about the name. I just love the fact that I can be funny for people I don't know.”

In addition to Murphy, the second edition of the Nobodies of Comedy tour, which stops Saturday at the Lake Michigan College

IF YOU GO

What: Second annual Nobodies of Comedy

When: 8 p.m. Saturday

Where: Lake Michigan College Mendel Center Mainstage Theatre, 2755 E. Napier Ave., Benton Harbor

How much: \$25-\$28

Contact: 927-1221 or www.lmcmainstage.org

enne Iapalucci has also been on the tour, but her appearance at Saturday's Benton Harbor date was still awaiting confirmation.

Murphy, who hosts a comedy showcase at the Comedy Works in Albany, N.Y., still thinks he got the gig by accident.

“I host this local showcase twice a month, and after one of these showcases this woman came up and gave me her card and asked if I'd be interested in being a part of this tour,” Murphy says. “I got a little excited. You say tour to a comic and they think, I'm getting famous tomorrow. I don't know why we all think that, but we do.”

While Murphy has honed his comedy chops in Albany, he was born in Omaha, Neb. His comedy reflects those origins, often emphasizing the fact that not all black people come from urban areas.

“I lived in Nebraska my



Photo provided

Dwayne Murphy Jr. will perform Saturday at Lake Michigan College's Mendel Center as part of the second annual Nobodies of Comedy tour.

first 11 years and then moved around a lot because my parents were military people,” Murphy says. “We moved from Nebraska to Brooklyn, and all the kids were just ... aggressive. I was very shy and scared, plus it was middle school so you've got hormones. Basically what I'm trying to say is I got beat up a lot. I eventu-

ally started telling jokes to keep people from hitting me and by the time I got to high school I figured it was the best way to meet new people.”

Encouraged by a friend, Murphy first hit a comedy stage at age 17 and was hooked. He spent two years at East Carolina University, where he ran the student

comedy organization Seriously Clowning.

“After two years the school wanted me to start going to class so I left,” Murphy says.

He landed in Albany because that's where his best friend from college lived.

“I wanted to get closer to



MIELE



WALTON

Mendel Center Mainstage Theatre, features Liz Miele and Mark Walton. Adri-

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the city because I felt like that was my next move,” Murphy says. “But I also knew I couldn’t live there. It costs \$5 just to breathe in New York City. So I came up here and got into the Comedy Works. I needed to make rent so I got a job serving and bartending and working the door and I was doing comedy as well. There were nights I was taking your ticket, making your drink and then doing 10 minutes of comedy.”

In 2013, Murphy toured college campuses and comedy clubs opening for Loni Love, and is still based in Albany – at least for now. He says moving around so much during his childhood has helped him prepare for a life in stand-up.

“I talk about my experiences in Nebraska and having divorced parents,” he says. “I talk about never really feeling like I fit in because every time I got a chance to get accustomed somewhere, we’d pack up and move. It all plays into my act, but it also helps me relate to a lot of different kinds of people. I basically take everything I’m most embarrassed about myself and put it on stage. If I make people laugh, I’m doing my job. If you’re laughing, I win.”