

special advertising section

# MARY MACARONI

BY TRICIA DESPRES

When she takes off her signature yellow wig and sequined vest, Mary Macaroni (aka Karen Burris) deals with the stresses that all adults face these days...which is why she never likes to take them off for long.

"Children live in the moment instinctively, and if adults did that more often, life would just be so much more fun," chuckles Burris from her home in Chicago. "I love being able to spend time with them and truly empower them to live the life of their dreams. It's one of the favorite parts of my job."

Known throughout Chicagoland as one of the area's most dynamic children's performers and entertainers, the character of Mary Macaroni has delighted children since first breaking onto the scene in 1997. Armed with

a music degree and a theatre background, Burris says she always had a pretty good idea of who she wanted Mary Macaroni to represent to her enthusiastic audiences of children.

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- Mary Macaroni

"I picked the yellow wig because it just seemed more real to me," says Burris, who will bring her character to Chicago's Beat Kitchen on January 27 for their annual Winter Fest. "I also swayed away from becoming this traditional clown with a ton of makeup, since

some children simply don't like it. I guess I resemble more of a doll than anything else."

And while Mary Macaroni performs at an average of 4-5 private and public functions each weekend, Burris says she also can transform into a long list of other characters perfectly suited for a variety of events. "My

week is spent doing marketing and sending contracts and shopping and researching new material for whatever show is coming up," says Burris, one of seven brothers and sisters. "Whatever character I show up as, I focus every party on my audience. I want them to take a break from the real world for a couple hours and just have fun."

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