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These youngsters were excited to ride in the Blairsville Sorghum Festival Parade with the giant pumpkins grown by Tim Grizzle and Patrick Fix. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

weight estimates put their pumpkin close to the 1,252-pound Georgia record.

What they didn't count on was that both giant pumpkins they took to Allardt would place in the Top 10: one at 561 pounds and the Georgia record holder at 1,306 pounds.

And the 668.5-pound giant pumpkin they previously entered into the Knoxville State Fair was also a Top 10 finisher.

What Grizzle and Fix have figured out is that, for some reason, people are fascinated by the giant fruit, and the two have zeroed in on this phenomenon by infusing their approach to growing the pumpkins with a passion for inspiring wonder in people, especially children.

All throughout their round-trip visit to the festival in Allardt, Grizzle and Fix found themselves always and suddenly surrounded by onlookers, as cars slowed on the road and people gathered around them at rest stops to

Hope House

Hope House is a faith-based, non-profit benevolence center to help Union County residents and homeless in times of critical need. Hours of operation: Monday 9 a.m.-12 p.m. & Thursday 1 p.m.-4 p.m., located at 178 Brackett's Way, Blairsville, (706)781-3090. NOV14ZJCA

marvel at the sight of the gigantic pumpkins.

Closer to home, Grizzle and Fix have cherished opportunities to introduce kids to the giant pumpkins at the Union County Farmers Market, lifting the youngsters up to sit on the fruit so they can pose for pictures and ponder the limits of what is possible.

"There's a few special seconds in there when you set a kid on top of a giant pumpkin," said Fix. "You've got just a few seconds there, it's a little twilight zone, but there's magic there in that kid's face. And I like that."

Fix spends a great deal of time interacting with the community. He works out of the Natural Resources Conservation Service office in the Blairsville Civic Center, helps out at the Union County Canning Plant during its open season, volunteers at the Farmers Market and more.

In all his encounters, the times that Fix values most are the days he gets to spend with the children of the area, working with the 4-H and FFA programs, as well as kids in youth groups.

Fortunately, Grizzle is as passionate about giving back to the youth in his community as his cousin.

"What we want to do is, next year, the Georgia 4-H has a pumpkin contest, and we want to help," said Grizzle. "We're not going to do it for

them, they're going to do it, but if we can get some interested 4-H'ers, we're going to supply them with fungicides and stuff like that, and we're going to win that."

As far as what's next for the green-thumbed twosome and their personal pumpkin plans, Grizzle and Fix aim to produce even larger pumpkins in the future, considering with meticulous care as many growing variables as possible.

And while they can't say whether they'll continue to break records with their pumpkins, one thing is for certain – they plan to continue putting smiles on children's faces

Grizzle and Fix drove their pumpkins through the 2017 Blairsville Sorghum Festival Parade on Saturday, Oct. 14.

One of the smaller giant pumpkins is on display at Meeks Park as part of the Sorghum Festival, and the other two giant beauties – including the record breaker – are available for viewing at the Farmers Market through the regular season, which ends the last weekend this month.

"We're glad that Tim and Patrick have done this this year," said Mickey Cummings, manager of the Union County Farmers Market. "I hope what they've done will create some excitement out there, and other people will grow big pumpkins, too."