

Santa collects wish lists at Holiday on Main Street



MICHAEL LAPOLLA / OBSERVER-DISPATCH Jacey Hinds, 4, of Vienna, mails her letter to Santa Claus during the Children's Museum Holiday on Main Street, Saturday, November 28, 2009, in Utica. [Gallery : Children's Museum Holiday on Main Street \(11/28/09\)](#)

By **ELIZABETH COOPER Observer-Dispatch** *Posted Nov 28, 2009 @ 04:01 PM*

UTICA — At 311 Main St., the sounds of children laughing and playing is commonplace throughout the year. But Saturday, there were guests who made it an especially festive day at the Children's Museum of History, Natural History, Science and Technology.

It was Santa and Mrs. Claus who enlivened the atmosphere as they listened to children spell out their Christmas wish lists. "As long as they're good, I'll see what I can do," said Santa, who was a main attraction on the second floor at the museum's Holiday on Main Street event.

The occasion celebrated the holiday of the area's diverse communities, and museum Executive Director Marlene Brown said she expected more than 200 people would visit by the end of the day. "My joy is watching kids with adults following them," she said. "The smiles on the children's faces make it worthwhile."

A few yards away, a group of girls were running back and forth on a floor mat filled with multicolored lights. It was a computerized dodge ball game, and they were trying to avoid being hit by a moving ball of light. Hannah Bochniak, 8, of Barneveld, took a break to talk about what she liked about the museum. "I like it because it has cool things on the first floor," she said.

Downstairs, Carolanne Garofalo was watching her daughters Taylor, 3, and Kailey, 5, as they played in several child-sized stores. "We love it," she said. "It's great." She and her husband grew up in the area, but now live in Virginia Beach. They were here visiting family for the holidays, and her husband was attending his 20th reunion at Frankfort-Schuyler High. Taylor and Kailey told Santa they wanted Barbie-related gifts.

Samuel Butcher, 6, of Clinton, Brown's grandson, was eating lunch with his family in the museum's dining area. He said his favorite thing about the day was seeing Michael Zarnock, who holds the Guinness Book of World Records title for owning the greatest number of different Hot Wheels car models. "I have 115 of them," the youngster said of the cars. Zarnock was on the museum's fourth floor, signing Hot Wheels cars and posters. "I've been in love with Hot Wheels since 1968," said Zarnock, who has up to 20,000 of the cars. That number is broken down into 8,128 different models, which is what he holds the world record for, he said.