

Guest view: Child's play a growing opportunity



O-D file photo

The Children's Museum of History, Natural History, Science & Technology at 311 Main St. in Utica's historic Bagg's Square area was originally built in 1893 as a dry goods warehouse by businessman John C. Hieber because of its proximity to Utica's railyard. Hieber business occupied the building until the 1930s, when it became a furniture store. The Children's Museum, organized in 1963, relocated here in 1979 and has maintained the building since. In 2007, the building, with its Romanesque revival influence, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

By **JOHN NOGAS Observer-Dispatch** Posted Aug 08, 2010 @ 09:00 PM Copyright 2010 The Observer-Dispatch

Under hot Central New York summer skies, the Children's Museum has seen an increase in attendance, with visitors, tourists, and field trip groups enjoying exhibits inside a cool air-conditioned museum. When I joined the board of directors in 2008, I never expected to see the museum grow as much as it has. Recently, the museum received two collections from generous people who believe in what we are doing. One was a village of Christmas porcelain houses, to be displayed on our third floor. It will be lit up for our November holiday events. The other was an extensive HO train exhibit, with numerous cars and engines and track, which will be displayed on our fourth floor. A volunteer beekeeper redid our beehive, and the bees are now once again busy filling it with nectar from the marsh and making honey in the hive. The collections were left to us from people we didn't know, a testament that the Children's Museum is being recognized by the community as the important asset it is.

Although the museum currently receives no government funding, we're proud of our continued growth over the past decade. As part of our historic building renovation, the roof repair and redesign is underway, thanks to support from The Community Foundation and other donors. The museum believes in the premise that environmentally sustainable building & operational practices are sustainable institutional practices, thus our continued use of green technology. Today's world encourages our children to learn more about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) in order to compete in the global economy.

Nearly 50 years in existence, the Children's Museum is committed to providing an educationally enjoyable experience for kids from 1 to 101. Our four floors contain hundreds of interactive exhibits in a multi-themed historic setting. Think about bringing in your family or visitors, booking your summer group on a field trip, becoming a sponsor or making a donation. It will be a lasting memory, a legacy to you, and will help enrich the lives of our children and many others.

Visit our website at www.museum4kids.net for more information and help spread the word about the cool things going on during this hot summer.

John Nogas is board chairman for the Children's Museum of History, Science & Technology.

Comment: An enchanting, informative impressive presence in the city of Utica thanks to among others Marlene Brown, a tireless worker who infects those around her with enthusiasm and drive.