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Why We Explore

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Exploration. It's why we create inventions, why we climb mountains and why we take things apart. You could also call it curiosity. That burning desire to know why and how the world works drives us to try and figure it out. Exploration now takes us beyond the Earth, as well. We travel into space, and we're planning to travel to the Moon and Mars. What sparks that curiosity? What makes us want to explore?

Image: The Why We Explore Exhibit is on the fourth floor of the Children's Museum in Utica, N.Y. Credit: NASA

Visitors to the Children's Museum of History, Natural History, Science & Technology in Utica, N.Y., can find out. "Why We Explore" is an exhibit on long-term loan to the museum from NASA. It's part of the "Transportation Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" collection on museum's 4th floor.

Image: Part of exhibit showcases NYS astronauts

"Why We Explore" includes materials from NASA's Centennial of Flight touring exhibition that was seen by millions in the United States in 2003. A pictorial display charts the first 100 years of air travel, from early flight to airplanes to the Space Shuttle, and offers glimpses of future vehicles that will take humans to the Moon, Mars and beyond. Local residents particularly enjoy the "wall of fame" that highlights the 32 astronauts who have roots in the state of New York.



Image: A model of Mars Rover part of exhibit.

Because people learn more when they participate, the exhibit has interactive activities such as the Solar System Scale, where visitors can see how gravitational forces would affect their weight during a Space Shuttle launch, on the Moon and on each of the nine planets. "Why We Explore" joins other NASA artifacts at the Children's Museum, including scaled models of an Apollo Lunar Module, Space Shuttle and a Mars Exploration Rover.

"This is an educationally enjoyable experience for kids from one to 101," said Marlene Brown, executive director of the museum. "I hope visitors will leave the exhibit with an understanding for why it's critical to explore. Our security, our product spin-offs and the excitement to look at exploration as a future career are important to our lives. Science and technology are our future."

Image to right: Visitors to the Why We Explore exhibit have many items to see! Credit: NASA

"Why We Explore" opened in Utica in June 2005 and has welcomed 100's of visitors daily.

Related Resource

Children's Museum of History, Natural History, Science & Technology, Utica, NY Web site

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