

Brunswick Library holds special Children's Museum day

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During Saturday's winter rain-storm, a few dozen children and their parents kept dry, warm and entertained at the Brunswick Branch Library's third annual "Children's Museum at the Library" event.

"We have a lot of really wonderful toys and activities, so the Children's Museum is a day where we can get them all out at once," said Sarah Showe, a children's librarian. "Children's Museums are this wonderful resource for people, but they often cost a lot of money, so we wanted to do something where we could invite the community out for free."

Staff pulled out the library's collection of large toys, the kinds that most kids don't have at home, and opened their doors to children ages 0 to 10 to play from 10 a.m. to noon.

The toys available included a water and sand table, a wind tunnel, a floor piano, giant tic-tac-toe games, floor puzzles, pneumatic tubes and a wide range of art supplies.

Holly Nelson, who spent much of the event watching her 5-year-old son, Wesley Hollenberg, assemble a large box with Fort Boards, said it's fun to bring her kids to a place with toys they don't normally get to play with.

"We wanted to get out of the house and do something fun," she said.

Wesley said his favorite part of going to the Children's Museum event was "probably just getting to free play and build."

Aaron West spent most of his time at the event watching his two girls, ages 2 and 4, play with a maze of interlocking tubes known as Air Toobz. The set allows kids to use a pneumatic fan device to send balls through the maze.

The two girls and several other children repeatedly ran around the tube maze laughing, following the balls along their circuitous routes.

"My wife said she's looked into getting something like this," West said, "but it's probably too cost-prohibitive to have at home."

Unfortunately, Showe said, there is only one day a year when the library can bring out all of the big donated toys at the same time.

"It's a lot of pieces," she said. "To have all of this out at once, the library would be a mess. But today we have volunteers helping and the mess is worth it for sure for a few hours every now and then, because it brings a lot of joy to the community."

Showe said the library has such a large collection of elaborate toys and games because of the local Friends of the Library volunteer group that does regular fundraisers.

"They often will purchase us big ticket items, like our wind tunnel or our water table, and they've always been super supportive of our library," she said. "It's been wonderful."

She said the fundraisers that support the big purchases are a lot of fun themselves, such as Brunswick's annual Railroad Days celebration and the "Not Quite Burns Night," an informal celebration of the Scottish poet Robert Burns. That will be held on Thursday, Jan. 22, at Smoketown Brewing Station at 223 W. Potomac St. in Brunswick from 6 to 9 p.m.

Showe said the staff tries to offer a lot of weekend events in January because people are always looking for indoor activities in the winter.

On Saturday, Jan. 24, from 10 a.m. to noon, the Brunswick Branch Library will offer an opportunity for children to meet Heiress, a service dog with the Child Advocacy Center. The event will be a class session that teaches children about "body boundaries."



Staff photos by Erik Anderson

Holly Nelson helps her son, Wesley Hollenberg, 5, assemble fort boards at the Children's Museum at the Library event at the Brunswick Branch Library on Saturday. Wesley said his favorite part of the event, which featured a wide range of toys and games, was "probably just getting to free play and build."



Children and parents play with a variety of toys at the event.