

Children's Museum Update

by Executive Director Darcy Way and Robin Shih
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The Children's Museum of Eau Claire opened its doors six years ago as a result of generous donors in the Chippewa Valley. According to **Darcy Way**, Executive Director, the Children's Museum had a great 2010, supporting memberships are holding quite constant at just under 1,100 members, and there are lots of exciting things going on at the Museum. For example, a trip to the Museum is part of the Eau Claire Area School District Kindergarten classes' curriculum.

The Children's Museum is also available for themed birthday parties, and recently, with the support of Xcel Energy, a new program has been introduced... "Fun with Fathers" where once each month, Dad and the kids can spend 2½ hours together enjoying what the Museum has to offer.

There are six interactive exhibits available throughout the Museum that encourage learning through play. Children have the opportunity to touch and explore exhibits such as:

- **Toddler Park** – children uncover a world of activities in an enchanted city park.
- **Bitty City** – children find opportunities for imaginative role-playing in six interactive businesses.
- **Water Works** – children and adults enjoy exploring the power and properties of water.
- **Body Smarts** – children are taken on an adventurous journey through the digestive system.
- **Kidstruction Zone**, where kids can crawl, climb and fix structures deep in the midst of construction.
- **Show Business**, a place where kids can act on stage, make sound effects or direct a production from the Director's chair.

In addition to all of the activities on the main level, there is 4,500 square feet of vacant space on the second floor awaiting renovation. According to Way, the Museum staff is working with design classes at the various local colleges to develop the space. Various themes are being considered, and it is expected that 4-5 themes will be adapted and constructed over the next 2-3 years, working toward a 2013 completion.

Fellow Rotarian **Robin Shih**, Board Member and Community Relations Chair, shared some information on and invited Rotarians to support an upcoming event that will benefit the Children's Museum... "Hollywood 2011". This Annual Winter Gala will be held on Saturday, February 26 at the Eau Claire Golf & Country Club. The evening will feature a live auction, silent auction, raffle and live music.

For more information on the Children's Museum, go to www.cmec.cc.



Darcy Way, Children's Museum Executive and **Robin Shih**, Community Relations Chair