

FAMILY ADVENTURES




The Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum

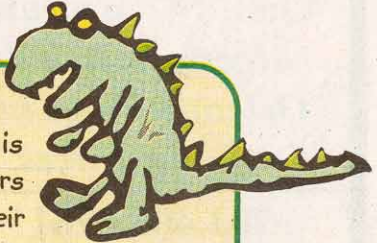
BY NIKI WILSON

Traditionally, museums provide history, art and nature collections to look at, but not touch. Discovery museums have created a new paradigm: focus on the visitor's needs and expectations, and satisfy the natural curiosity of humans with touchable objects. Discovery museums provide stimulus-rich environments where children encounter things they can touch, move through and climb on, arrange and re-arrange, use as props in pretend play and otherwise explore. These interactions are based on their prior knowledge about an object, theme or idea, and form the basis for developing new ideas about those themes.

Learning across a lifetime takes place in formal and informal environments. The Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum complements formal education and instills a sense of wonder and hunger for knowledge in children at an early age.



While play can mean different things to each of us, there is no question that it is critical to a child's well-being and development. In play, studies indicate a child always behaves beyond his or her average age and above his or her daily behavior. Play contains all developmental tendencies and is in itself a major source of development. As children master new concepts and



"A Children's museum is an informal education setting which, unlike a school, is organized according to space, not time. Visitors follow their own interests for as long as their natural period of concentration lasts; they do not study in artificial time periods measured by ticking clocks and interrupted by bells. Among other reasons, the importance of a learning environment organized by space is that it allows concentration and skill to develop." - The Association of Children's Museums

practice them through repetitive play, they progress to the next level. Children like to learn new information and want to master new tasks. Play provides the ultimate curriculum for social, emotional, physical and cognitive advancement.

The Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum ignites creativity, sparks curiosity and inspires learning in patrons of all ages by providing a rich variety of interactive, hands-on exhibits and programs which focus on the sciences and mathematics, the humanities and the arts.

All exhibits, activities and experiences provided by the Discovery Museum adhere to the following philosophical guidelines:

- Exhibits, activities and programs are interactive, participatory and informal, and give visitors opportunities to experiment, play and have fun, use their imaginations and share ideas.
- Visitors are engaged at their own level of expertise and experience.
- Activities and programs are multi-sensory, authentic, honest, and factual.

Hands-on learning is what the museum does best! Explore life along the Moccasin Trail in the Native American exhibit. Learn about simple machines while playing in an apple shed. Experience the laws of physics while racing balls over ramps and through loops, or test your agility while scaling a climbing wall. With eleven exhibit areas,

the Discovery Museum offers hours of fun for the entire family. Birthday parties, summer day camps, special programs, Visiting Artist Series and other exciting activities are scheduled throughout the year. ♦

Niki Wilson is the Director of Marketing and Development at the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum.

At A Glance . . .

- **Location:**
54 S. Loudon St.
Old Town Mall
Winchester, VA
- **Website:**
www.discoverymuseum.net
- **Admission:** \$5.00 per person
Free for members and to the general public on the first Friday of every month.
- **Hours:**
Monday-Saturday 9AM to 5PM
Sunday 1PM to 5PM
- **Phone:** 540-722-2020
- **To Get There:**
The museum is located off I-81 in Historic Winchester, VA
- **Your kids will really like:**
Everything can be touched!