

Museum Helps Kids Welcome New Year

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The Winchester Star

Kids at Shenandoah Valley's Discovery Museum didn't need Dick Clark's countdown to officially ring in the New Year Saturday — all they needed was some bubble wrap, noisemakers, sparkling cider, and cookies.

Following a 10-second countdown, the sound of noisemakers and the popping of child-friendly fireworks — bubble wrap — filled the corridors of the museum when the clock struck noon.

The New Year was toasted with Dixie cups full of sparkling cider and a plate full of cookies. Sheets of bubble wrap were distributed before the countdown and were set off as fireworks at noon.

The early-day celebration was a way for those youngsters who are normally sleeping when the New Year's Eve ball, or Winchester's apple, drop at midnight to partake in the holiday festivities.

Before they rang in 2006, children had the opportunity to learn how other countries ring in the New Year.

Four craft stations were assembled in the museum's party room to allow kids to make art representative of how the United States, Japan, Brazil, and France celebrate the holiday.

Niki Wilson, the museum's marketing director, said at the Brazil station kids were making art with glue and lentils because the beans signify wealth in the South American country.

Five-year-old Fallon Turner and her friend Lauren Armstrong, 6, of Winchester were among the party's attendees who were making lentil art and enjoying the other activities the celebration had to offer.

Turner said she had no particular pattern for the beans she was attaching to a white sheet of paper with paste, but she understood the meaning behind them.

"You get rich," she said when asked what the lentils meant.



Sara Crabb (above) watches as her grandson, Alex Lentz, 3, visiting from St. Augustine, Fla., decorates a paper lobster Saturday morning at the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum as part of the museum's New Year's Eve festivities. Ethan Nokes (below), 5, of Winchester, shows off the two paper flutterfish he made Saturday morning at the museum. (Photos by Scott Mason)

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At another craft station, children were creating an adaptation of the French tradition of giving cards with fish on them. "Flutterfish" were made by cutting and folding colored strips of paper into a fish-like shape that spun around when thrown into the air.

Turner said her two flutterfish — one pink and one green — were one of her favorite things she made during the party.

Children also colored and decorated lobsters with glitter and glue.



In Japan, the hump of the lobster represents the hump of an old man, Wilson said.

Katelyn Shea, 6, said she planned to attach a string to her lobster and hang it on her porch.

The lobsters were also going to be used as decorations at her sister Olivia Adams' birthday party.

Adams, who was a New Year's baby, was celebrating her 5th birthday on Sunday.

Both Shea and Adams of Winchester were also making noisemakers at the United States craft station that were used by the kids to ring in the New Year at noon.

With the help of some tape and different colored ribbon, straws were transformed into the devices that have become synonymous with New Year's Eve celebrations.