

BFK Rocket Report

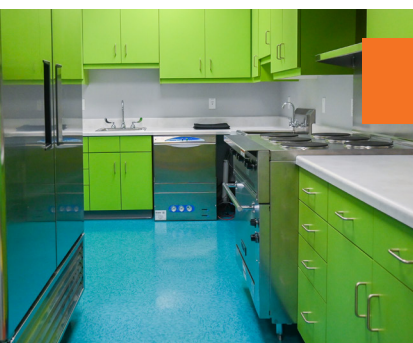


Inspiring Discovery and Building Resilience



More Than Meets the Eye

When you look at the Building for Kids Children's Museum, what do you see? Most observe an immersive space where families come to play together. This intergenerational play is critical, as families create lasting memories, build strong and resilient relationships, and learn about the world around them - while developing essential life skills. However, there is so much more happening than initially meets the eye at this community institution.



Family Meal Workshops

Recently, the Building for Kids remodeled our kitchen into a commercial kitchen, thanks to a grant from the Fox Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau. This new kitchen will better support and expand activities in our Food to Grow exhibit, Family Meal Workshops, Explorer Camps, and more while ensuring we meet safety and health guidelines.



Family Meal Workshops are designed for kids and their grown-ups in our community to build skills and memories together around food. During these workshops, partner organizations teach families how to cook a nutritionally-diverse meal. Families are able to prepare the meal together and bring the ingredients home to create the dish again later.



Expanded Sensory Superstars

The Building for Kids Children's Museum was recognized as the first "Autism Friendly Community Partner" in the State of Wisconsin because of a long history of authentic, participatory program and environment design to maximize accessibility for neurodiverse children and their families. With nearly 15 years of continuous programming, we have recently expanded our existing programming and partnerships to include a monthly Friday evening Sensory Superstars program which provides museum-wide accommodations for families with children with additional sensory processing needs.



After-School Explorer Camps

Twice a week, the BFK hosts After-school Explorer Camps for 1st - 4th grade students from local schools. Hundreds of students have participated in this evidence-based after-school museum enrichment. During camp, students are able to participate in child-directed guided play around the museum as well as choose among educator-led activities, ranging from STEM to music to art.

Participation in programming like this at the Building for Kids has been linked with stronger academic performance and greater social self-confidence for elementary school children. We work hard to address the barriers of transportation that exist for many of these families by sending our staff to lead walking school buses to three local elementary schools where they pick up participating students and walk them to the museum for camp.

BFK Children's Parade

Presented by ThedaCare | July 24

You're invited to be a part of the 15th annual BFK Children's Parade presented by ThedaCare!

During this annual parade, kids and their grown-ups stroll through downtown Appleton in themed costumes and non-motorized floats. Families are encouraged to brainstorm their theme together. Costumes often range from old Halloween attire to hand-made floats to simple group themes, like superheroes.

After the parade, join us for the after-party in City Park. Enjoy food trucks, an award ceremony, free activities, a DJ, and more. We'd love to see you at this summer tradition to celebrate the kids in our community!

Sign up your family or put together a group from your school, daycare, work, business, or any other organization.

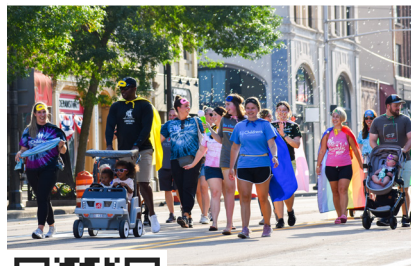
U.S. Venture Children's Week

July 21 - 27, 2024

Join us for a week of free or reduced cost activities with organizations across our community. Check out the full schedule of events at AppletonChildrensWeek.com



The BFK Children's Parade is a signature event of U.S. Venture Children's Week.



This is a free event but registration is required at buildingforkids.org.

The Lab is Open!

In early April, we opened our newest activity space, The Lab sponsored by Amcor. This exhibit is a place where future generations of scientists and engineers can explore their curiosity about the world around them through the scientific method.

Upon entering The Lab, kids and their grown-ups will be presented with a question which they can explore in four stations: Ask, Think, Learn, and Share. Throughout the space,

kids are encouraged to document their scientific findings to share with the community.

At the Learn station, visitors can participate in an educator-led activity focused on that day's topic. Currently in The Lab, we're diving into the question: "Why does food spoil?"

Topics and activities will change regularly. By using the scientific method as our framework, we're able to explore a wide range of topics that families might be interested in. Everyone who visits the space is invited to share a question they are curious about, so we can consider it for a future topic.



Daily Activities at the BFK

Did you know that every day at the Building for Kids our educators lead activities that everyone is welcome to join?

Activities vary daily and can range from making music with our resident musician, throwing clay on our pottery wheels, exploring coding and robotics, taste testing in Food to Grow, and so much more!

You can find a full list of the week's activities on our website. We hope you can join us!



Director's Digest

2024 has been an exciting and dynamic year so far at the Building for Kids Children's Museum.

The opening of The Lab, sponsored by Amcor, was the result of months of collaboration and brainstorming among our community partners, such as local engineers and school districts. Through this activity space, we want to help build the foundations of STEM-based learning and develop children's skills of inquiry, collaboration, and communication - all skills that will aid a child's future success regardless of their chosen career path. Thank you to everyone who has visited The Lab so far and explored with us. We're looking forward to many inquiries and discoveries to come.

The Lab has been one of our most anticipated updates this year, but we aren't done yet!

To help ensure a safe and engaging environment for the kids and families in our community, we have many exciting projects on the horizon that I can only begin to talk about here. For example, we will soon be renovating our Welcome Center to create a safer and more functional environment for visitors entering the museum.

In addition, our upcoming plans include a refresh of two beloved exhibits on our first floor. First up is an update to The Littlest Branch sponsored by Fox Communities Credit Union, followed by a renovation of The Doll Hospital sponsored by ThedaCare. Stay tuned for more information on these updates and more we have planned in 2024 and beyond!

Providing dynamic spaces and programming for play-based learning in the Fox Cities is important to our mission and the future of our community. This museum was critical to my own growth and development as a child in the 1990s. Now, as a parent myself watching my children learn and grow, I recognize how fortunate we are to have an asset like the Building for Kids in our community. Here kids can develop core life and academic skills while building greater belonging and social self-confidence.



2023 was our second highest engagement year in our 30-year history, and we can already see that 2024 is set to be another year of huge impact for our organization, so we need your help. None of this would be possible without the support of individuals and organizations who share our vision of empowered kids, engaged grown-ups, and energized communities.

We hope you will consider making a gift today to ensure this work continues to scale in number and depth of reach - supporting every child and family as they work to reach their developmental potential. With your gift, you will support expanded programming and outreach, facility updates and maintenance, scholarships for families facing financial barriers to play, and so much more.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to sharing the rest of what 2024 has to offer in future letters!

Oliver Zornow
President
ozornow@buildingforkids.org





Upcoming Events

June 28
5:00 - 7:00pm

Character Playdate: Work It Out Wombats

Zeke from the PBS Kids show, Work It Out Wombats, is coming to visit the BFK! Join us for play, themed activities, and lots of opportunities to meet Zeke.

July - August
8:30am - 4:00pm

Summer Explorer Camp

Make new friends and explore fun themes at Summer Explorer Camp, designed for students who have completed 4K - 4th grade.

July 24
6:00 - 8:00pm

BFK Children's Parade

March through downtown Appleton in costumes and non-motorized floats!

For more information about these and other upcoming events, visit buildingforkids.org.

Meet the Board

Jamie Hess

Board Member since 2021

1. Why did you join the Board?

I joined the board because it's important to me to give back to my community and specifically to support a mission that has a personal meaning to me and my family.

2. What do you enjoy most about your role as a Board member?

I enjoy being able to add value to an organization that I believe in. It's fulfilling for me to find ways outside of my day-to-day job to apply my own skills and experience. And it's also a great opportunity for me to learn from the BFK staff and the other community leaders on the Board.

3. Why does the BFK matter to our community?

The BFK has been a long-standing organization in the Fox Valley. My kids loved going there when they were younger! I remember having to pry my son away from the Azco Move-it exhibit on the 2nd floor! I also love how the BFK contributes to the vibrant atmosphere of downtown Appleton. There is something for everyone in downtown Appleton, including a place where our kids can safely play and learn foundational skills that will serve them well as they grow into young adults.

4. How has the BFK impacted your life?

The BFK has been an outlet for me in many ways - professionally, creatively, and



philanthropically. It's important to me that I have a positive impact on my community through my own time and talents, as well as where I choose to invest my monetary giving. The BFK has been that opportunity for me.

4. What is your favorite memory connected to the BFK?

One of my favorite memories was when I volunteered along with other Board and Committee members to tear down our traveling exhibit space. Although we were all doing hard work, it was fun to engage with the team outside of Board meetings and events. And it really gave me a different perspective on how hard the BFK staff works to make the space safe and enjoyable for our kids and their adults.

4. Anything else to share?

I would encourage any families with young children to spend time at the BFK. Not only is BFK a place where kids can play, learn, and burn off that creative energy! But it's a place where adults can truly interact with their children and guide them towards play-based learning.

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