

# BFK Rocket Report

➡ Inspiring Discovery and Building Resilience ➡

## Age-Based Early Childhood Programming

Four years ago, we launched the Welcome Baby Community, a program created to support and connect first-time parents. In 2023, around 600 parents and their babies engaged with us through this program. Building off the success of the Welcome Baby Community, we're excited to launch additional age-based early childhood opportunities at the museum. Our early childhood continuum includes specially-designed, facilitated programming for kids from birth to age 4, all of which are free or included with the cost of museum admission! Learn more about the Welcome Baby Community, Early Explorers, and Jr. Explorers below.



Welcome Baby Community

**Designed for:** First-time parents with babies under 18 months old

The Welcome Baby Community is a free program that supports the needs of first-time parents in the Fox Cities. As part of the Community, parents receive access to resources, experts, and weekly opportunities to engage with their baby and other first-time parents. Plus, all who join the community receive a free membership to the Building for Kids.



Early Explorers

**Designed for:** Toddlers between 18 - 36 months and their adults

Early Explorers is a weekly program led by a Museum Educator. Activities aim to strengthen the relationship between children and their grown-ups, help kids develop fine and gross motor skills, and provide opportunities for social connection with other children and their grown-ups. This program is included with museum admission.



Jr. Explorers

**Designed for:** Kids ages 3-4 years old

Jr. Explorers is a free 90-minute drop-off program created to provide kids with the opportunities for social, play-based learning. Occurring twice a week, this program seeks to build confidence, communication skills, and emotional awareness through exploration of the museum and facilitated activities.

Learn more about our Early Childhood Continuum at [buildingforkids.org](https://buildingforkids.org).

# Coming Soon!

If you've visited the museum recently, you may have noticed that we have some exciting changes coming very soon! We continually strive to make the museum a safe, dynamic, and engaging place for all.

By mid-September, we'll have 4 updated spaces ready for you and your family to explore.

## Welcome Center

Our new space-themed Welcome Center will be the perfect place to launch a visit to the museum. The updated Welcome Center will have enhanced safety features and create a more functional space for visitors entering and exiting the museum. Plus, the Welcome Center will house an expanded gift shop!

## The Littlest Branch sponsored by Fox Communities Credit Union

This completely updated exhibit will transport you to a real-life credit union. Step into the branch to work behind the teller desk or make a withdrawal. Or take a turn through the drive-thru to work with a virtual teller or make a deposit with our new pneumatic tubing system!

## Doll Hospital sponsored by ThedaCare

Our refreshed Doll Hospital will include many of your favorite components from the old exhibit, including the x-ray puzzle and all the tools needed to give a doll a check-up, as well as a few new features. The Doll Hospital will be located in a slightly new position, just around the corner from its previous home.



## The Studio sponsored by School Specialty

Visiting artists will have everything they need to create to their heart's content in our fully revamped studio space, including pottery wheels, easels, looms, and so much more!

Plus, in October, we will be opening an updated quiet room - The Space Station. Equipped as a safe place to go when you or your child need a little break, the Space Station will offer modular seating and tools to help calm or regulate anyone in need of support.

# BFK Impact Crew

## Inspiring the Next Generation of Change Makers

How do we teach kids that they have the power to create the community they want to live in? How do we show them that we all have a responsibility to invest in our shared future? How do we build habits of community involvement and philanthropy that will follow them into adulthood?

Introducing the BFK Impact Crew! Through facilitated programming opportunities, take-home activities/resources, and engaging milestone challenges, we aim to inspire the next generation of community change makers.

The BFK Impact Crew will kick off September 28 during Worldwide Day of Play. Kids will have the opportunity to join the Impact Crew and create their own fundraising pages as well as engage in a community impact workshop.

Through December 3, members of the Impact Crew will have the opportunity to engage in meet-ups and workshops, while earning milestone prizes along the way. All funds raised by the Impact Crew will support the Building for Kids, showcasing how every gift makes a difference to organizations in our community.

Join us September 28 to join the Impact Crew, or stay tuned for more information on how to join virtually.



# IMPACT CREW

Kicks off September 28,  
Worldwide Day of Play

### Milestone Prizes:

- \$50 - Impact Crew Hat
- \$100 - Impact Crew T-Shirt
- \$500 - Giving Tuesday Reception Invite
- \$1,000 - Lock-In at the BFK
- Largest Donor - BFK VIP of the Year



# 15th Annual BFK Children's Parade

Presented by ThedaCare



Thank you to everyone who joined us in July for the 15th annual BFK Children's Parade presented by ThedaCare, a signature event of U.S. Venture Children's Week!

Over 1,000 kids and their grown-ups joined us in celebrating the creativity, imagination, and confidence of our community. We can't wait to continue this summer tradition next year!

## Director's Digest

A few weeks back, we received a \$4 donation from a young girl named Bailey. She gave this gift "because she is four," and because of the important role the Building for Kids has played in her life so far.

When I first visited the Fox Cities Children's Museum, I was the same age as Bailey is today. At that time, I didn't have the same sense of agency her gift represents. I was unaware of the individuals and organizations that supported the wealth of opportunities and community assets that shaped who I am and what I can be.

Now as an adult entrusted to support one of my favorite community assets – the Building for Kids Children's Museum – I have the incredible opportunity to pull back that curtain and see how an individual or small group of individuals can make tremendous change happen.

I'm grateful for the mentorship of many of these community leaders and, through it, have gained a radically different perspective on our responsibility to take action and invest in our shared future. One thing is clear through each of these conversations: we need to find ways to inspire agency and activate our next generation of philanthropists and community leaders.

That is why we are launching the BFK Impact Crew this fall. Through this program, kids will gain perspective, personal agency, and develop an increased understanding of their responsibility to invest in the things that make their community great for themselves and for others. We hope you can join us by signing your child up to join the Impact Crew. If you're interested in inspiring the next generation of change makers and amplifying their efforts through a matching pledge, please send me an email.

The funds raised by the Impact Crew will support the important work of inspiring discovery and building resilience through intergenerational, play-based learning as well as address key security needs throughout the building. While we have always strived to be a safe place for play, there is more we can do to create a secure environment for family bonding and exploration.



The new Welcome Center is a great example of a space where we are doing more than just enhancing the visitor experience. Updates to the Welcome Center include a wide range of new security features, many of which will be invisible to the average visitor. We are heeding the advice of national safety assessments and local law enforcement to ensure we create the safest experience possible for families entering, exploring, and exiting the museum.

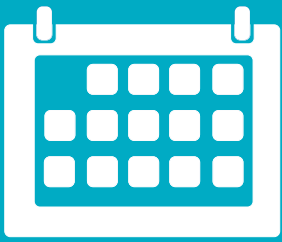
Like usual, this summer has been a busy one, full of lots of exciting and new opportunities, and I am looking forward to everything we have planned this fall. I hope you and your family can join us!

Wishing you all a wonderful end to your summer and a great start to your school year!

See you soon,

Oliver Zornow  
President  
[ozornow@buildingforkids.org](mailto:ozornow@buildingforkids.org)





## Upcoming Events

September 13  
5:00pm - 7:00pm

### **Character Playdate: Rainbow Fish**

Dive into the underwater world of Rainbow Fish! Enjoy after-hours playtime, themed activities, and the chance to meet Rainbow Fish!

September 21  
4:00 - 7:00pm

### **Diversity Discovery Free Night**

Join us for an evening of food and free admission as local non-profits and community groups lead hands-on activities and host performances for families to learn, discover, and celebrate their diversity.

September 28  
9:00am - 4:00pm

### **Worldwide Day of Play**

We're celebrating Worldwide Day of Play with a pay-what-you-can day and activities with the History Museum at the Castle!

For more information about these and other upcoming events, visit [buildingforkids.org](http://buildingforkids.org).

## Member Spotlight

### Bailey's Family

*Members since 2020*

#### 1. Why did you become members?

We initially joined as part of the Welcome Baby program in 2020. Bailey was born as the world shut down in spring 2020, so the program gave us a chance to meet others also facing first-time parenting in a lockdown. As Bailey got big enough to explore, the safety protocols at the BFK gave us the confidence to enjoy the toddler zone during a pandemic which gave us a moment to do something more "normal". Bailey has enjoyed visits ever since and finds something new to learn every time, so we've continued the membership.

#### 2. What do you enjoy most about visiting?

Hands-down the excitement Bailey has for visiting. It has never wavered, which makes it fun for us to attend because she thinks it's such a special place. We love making a point to see the exhibits through her eyes at every visit and enjoy learning right along with her. We especially love the character events!

#### 3. Why is the BFK important to our community?

The Building for Kids serves as kind of a one-stop shop for parents looking for a fun day of play, teachers looking to connect classroom lessons to environments, a gathering place for friends (both young and young at heart), and an educational, creative, and safe environment to explore. It's a place to learn, grow, and create memories at every age.



#### The Story of Bailey's \$4 Gift:

We received the newsletter in the mail with the giving envelope tucked inside. Bailey found it on our counter, recognized the BFK logo and asked what it was for. We explained to her it was an envelope so people could donate money, allowing other children to also enjoy the Building for Kids.

We've tried to instill the idea of giving with a divided piggy bank (with sections for save/spend/give/invest) and had explained donations to our church. This was the first time Bailey showed interest in donating to something she was passionate about, so we absolutely wanted to encourage her and just followed her lead from there.

We asked her how much she thought she should give, and as any four-year-old would, she answered **\$4 because she was four**. We went to her piggy bank and took out \$4. She helped put the donation in the envelope, and she mailed it out. Bailey was so proud, and it was a great learning activity. She was even more excited when another letter came in the mail with the Building for Kids logo on it acknowledging her contribution.

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