

BFK Rocket Report



Curious George: Let's Get Curious!

Traveling Exhibit: January 15 - May 8

Visitors can step into the world of Curious George with our new traveling exhibit, Curious George™: Let's Get Curious! The immersive exhibit takes place in the neighborhood where Curious George lives with his friend, The Man in the Yellow Hat.

Inspired by George's famous inquisitiveness, the exhibit encourages children's natural curiosity as they explore STEM concepts through hands-on, interactive activities. Families can experiment with light and color in George's apartment complex or practice their engineering skills at the construction site. Visitors can also play at George's special mini golf course or experiment with the wind as they build whirligigs at the farm.



This exhibit also encourages intergenerational play. H.A. and Margret Rey's familiar stories have spanned generations, from those who grew up on the books to those who now watch the PBS Kids show. Throughout the exhibit, there are opportunities for kids and their adults to learn, explore discover, and, of course, play together.

Curious George™: Let's Get Curious is open now through May 8 at the BFK.

This exhibit is sponsored locally by the Appleton Noon Optimist Club, Menasha Corporation Foundation, and Infant Welfare Circle of King's Daughters Donor Advised Fund within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region.

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Check out the back page to learn about how you can meet Curious George!



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2021 Highlights

2021 was a very exciting year at the Building for Kids as we continued to strive toward our mission of inspiring discovery and building resilience through intergenerational play-based learning and exploration of the arts, sciences, and humanities. We are so grateful to everyone who spent part of their year with us. Take a look below to learn more about some of the highlights from 2021, including bringing in a new traveling exhibit, beautifying our building with new murals, welcoming Afghan refugees to Appleton, celebrating the BFK Children's Parade on College Ave, and hosting the first ever BFK Maker Challenge.



Run! Jump! Fly!

After putting a new traveling exhibit on hold in 2020, the BFK welcomed Run! Jump! Fly! Adventures in Action in September of 2021. In this action-packed traveling exhibit, sponsored by Children's Wisconsin, families could explore rock climbing, kung fu, surfing, snowboarding, and many more fun ways to stay active!



New Murals!

The BFK commissioned three new murals to beautify downtown Appleton in 2021, including "Dream Bigger" by Gretchen Wood, located next to the BFK Discovery Tree; "Water Cycle Mural" by Elyse-Krista Mische, located in the BFK Water Gallery; and the mural created during U.S Venture Children's Week by Irineo Medina outside the Appleton YMCA.



Welcome Neighbor

To welcome Afghan refugees to the neighborhood, the BFK provided engagement kits filled with age-appropriate toys and activities, and free memberships to families with kids resettling in our community.



Children's Parade

The 12th annual BFK Children's Parade presented by ThedaCare once again consisted of kids and their families strolling down Appleton's College Avenue in themed costumes and non-motorized floats in a parade all about them!



Maker Challenge

In the first ever Great BFK Maker Challenge, six teams of kids and their adults set out to become the greatest BFK makers of all by competing in hands-on, STEM-based challenges and raising funds for the BFK.



The BFK Store

Did you know we recently opened up a gift shop at the BFK? Next time you need a gift for a child in your life or next time you visit the museum, be sure to check it out!

The BFK Store is full of cute shirts and educational toys, plus lots of Curious George books, which pair perfectly with a visit to our traveling exhibit.



Director's Digest

Thank you for being part of our community at the Building for Kids! We are so grateful to have members, volunteers, and supporters like you.

2021 was another exciting year of innovation at the BFK. In the face of numerous challenges, and thanks to profound community support, our team adapted to meet the emerging needs of kids and their grown-ups. One of the ways we did this was by launching Explorer Camps. Explorer Camps are a combination of open-ended play in the museum and facilitated STEM, Art, and Mindfulness programming. These after-school and weekend drop-off camps provide hands-on learning opportunities that go beyond the classroom. Out-of-school museum enrichment has been found to significantly increase kids' social self-confidence as well as academic success.

This past year, our community also welcomed hundreds of new neighbors, including a large group of families fleeing Afghanistan. We are proud to partner with World Relief to support the arrival, engagement, and integration of these families in our community. We believe that all families should have the opportunity to play together and form stronger family bonds, so we created Welcome Neighbor Engagement Kits, each of which came with toys, activities, and a membership to the BFK.

We are looking into the new year with optimistic curiosity, inspired by the largest traveling exhibit the BFK has hosted in 10 years, Curious George™: Let's Get Curious! We are excited to host this nationally traveling exhibit that helps introduce important STEM concepts in a fun, approachable, and engaging way. If you haven't



already, I hope you're able to visit the exhibit while it's here and explore Curious George's neighborhood.

We are so grateful for your continued partnership as we work to inspire discovery and build resilience through intergenerational play-based learning and exploration of the arts, sciences, and humanities in 2022 and beyond.

Hope to see you soon!

Oliver Zornow
Executive Director
ozornow@buildingforkids.org



Upcoming Events

To celebrate our new traveling exhibit, Curious George™: Let's Get Curious!, we hope you can join us for one of our upcoming Curious George themed events!

Curious George PJ Party

February 18: 6 - 8pm

Join Curious George for a night at the museum, reading stories and visiting stargazing stations throughout the museum.

Breakfast with Curious George

April 2: 8 - 10am

Spend the morning with Curious George, eating breakfast and joining in themed activities sponsored by TDS.

Register at www.buildingforkids.org/upcoming-events/

Did you know you can also host a **Curious George themed birthday party** at the BFK?



Learn more at www.buildingforkids.org/birthday-parties

Meet the Board

Eric Lempke

Chair, BFK Board of Directors

1. How long have you been a member of the BFK Board of Directors?

I have been a member of the Board for seven years now and have had a family membership to the museum since 2012.

2. Why did you join the Board?

When my family first moved to the area in 2012, I wanted to find a way to become engaged in the community. When I learned about the Building for Kids, I felt connected to their mission. As someone with a young family, I could see the value the museum provides to kids and their adults in our community.

3. What has kept you engaged on the Board?

The more I learn and understand about the role the Building for Kids plays in our community, the more excited I am to be a Board member. One aspect that I love about the BFK is how we support and engage families through partnerships with other non-profit organizations in our community. Plus, every day and every year with the BFK is different. We're always adapting, innovating, and evolving to meet the needs of families. This has been especially important since the start of the pandemic. One of the changes that I am most excited about is the BFK's new Curious George traveling exhibit! My family loves it!

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

My favorite part about being a Board member is the relationships I've been able to form with other Board members and the staff at the BFK. I enjoy being able to work with people who have different talents, skills, and perspectives than I do.

Board of Directors

Eric Lempke, *Chair* - BMO Harris Bank, N.A.

Kristen Trimberger, *Vice Chair* - Reach Counseling

Barb Gonnering, *Treasurer* - Wipfli LLP

Tom Hardwick, *Secretary* - SECURA Insurance

Michael McCormick, *Past Chair* - Kimberly-Clark Corporation

Amanda Chavez - Go Valley Kids

Bob DeKoch - The Boldt Company



5. Why does the BFK matter to the community?

The BFK plays an important role in our community because it provides a space for intergenerational play. When kids and adults learn and explore together, that's where the magic happens! Playing together helps build resiliency and makes kids feel empowered. As a banker, I also think about another role the BFK plays in our community. When I speak with business owners, their concern is often attracting and retaining talent. The BFK is a differentiator for our community. Having a children's museum the size and quality of the BFK shows families considering moving to the area that the Fox Cities prioritizes the needs of kids and families.

6. How has the BFK impacted your life?

The BFK has had a huge impact on my family. All of my kids have grown up going to the BFK. My oldest is 11 years old and she still enjoys going to the museum. My youngest is five and, as someone who has experienced some of his most fundamental years during the pandemic, the BFK is a great place for him to explore. As a parent, I have been able to see the influence of the BFK reflected in my kids as they've grown up and evolved.

Jamie Hess - M2 Logistics

Natalie Klika - Johnson Financial Group

Kurt Krizan - Shawano School District

Ben LaFrombois - von Briesen & Roper, S.C.

Debra McDowall - Community Leader

Victoria McNeal - Community Leader

Dr. Abby Smolcich - ThedaCare

Rick S. Stezenski - Grant Thorton LLP

Carrie Willer, PhD - Appleton Area School District

Empowered Children. • Engaged Parents. • Energized Communities.

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