

## Organizations Background

The Fox Cities Children's Museum opened its doors to the community in November 1992. When it opened in late 1992, it occupied only a portion of the space it currently occupies today. With the support of the local businesses and surrounding communities, in 2006 it was able to expand into the current space it occupies with renovated exhibits. It would also change its name to The Building for Kids.

Children need a place where they can explore and let their imagination run wild, all while being in a safe and stimulating environment. The Building for Kids has grown into more than a fun time for your kids. Here at The Building for Kids, kids learn important social and emotional skills and families create stronger bonds. They acquire these skills through our specialized exhibits, which encourage children's imaginations to run wild and allow them to curiously explore. These skills are also taught through our programs, which are designed specifically with these goals in mind. So not only will you watch your children have fun, but you can watch them have fun while they learn.

Over the past few years The Building for Kids has turned into more than just its namesake, a building for kids. We listened to our community's thoughts and concerns. After evaluating them we put into place new programs and tweaked the old ones to satisfy the needs of our community. We now seek to include more than just the kids in our area into our institution and its programs. Through already in place programs and new programs we have become a building where everyone can come to play, including adults and the elderly.



## Mission Statement

Our mission at The Building for Kids is, to empower children, engage parents and energize communities.

Our goals are to inspire, teach, and reinforce curiosity in the minds of young children. Through our specialized exhibits along with our programs and events, we can achieve our mission and goals.



Empower  
Children



Engage  
Parents



Energize  
Communities

## Programs at The Building for Kids

### Children's Educational Programs:

- **Build It!** Each week we will do a different building challenge and use materials. This program is held in our Innovation Lab.
- **Storybook Stars.** Three to four times a month we have story time. Reading has been shown to assist with language development and helps to grow imagination and curiosity in children. After the story reading we will do an activity.
- **Non-Stop Art.** We will explore the elements of visual art and after we will create a project using the elements we learned about.
- **STEM Explorers.** Join us as we explore the different facets of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). We will explore a new topic each week and do different activities which pertain to that topic.
- **Spectrum Saturday.** This program is held the third Saturday of each month and has been specifically created for children on the autism spectrum. This event is free for children on the autism spectrum and their families.

### Adult Programs

- **SPARK!** We are proud to be part of the SPARK program! This program occurs once a month and is specifically designed for people who are experiencing memory loss and their caregivers. This program channels our mission in that it is designed to evoke imagination and creativity.

\*Except for the SPARK program, all other programs are funded by The Building for Kids. We routinely send out surveys and monitor feedback, so we can stay aware of what the community wants to see from us.



## The Need for Expanded Programming

There are still needs from our community however that we are not able to meet currently. 1 in 88 children has been diagnosed with autism and the number of kids in school with special needs has grown to over 13% nationwide. Our museum is not very inclusive to families with these disabilities and with the growing number of children and adults being diagnosed with autism and other disabilities nationwide, this number will also increase in the Fox Valley.

People in the Fox Valley will need programs and exhibits that children and adults with all kinds of disabilities can benefit from. We currently have programming for children on the autism spectrum but have seen the need for it increase in the past three years. This has been a demand that has not been satisfactorily met by us. Last year we had over 6,000 people participate in our programming and in addition we had over 200 people on waitlists for programs, such as spectrum Saturday. People like Elena and her six-year-old son Josh. Josh is on the autism spectrum and would be a perfect fit for the spectrum Saturday program. Those programs fill up quickly though and he was unable to get into the program for three and a half months. The average wait time to get into that waitlisted program was 3.5 months. That is a long time for growing children, like Josh, to be missing out on valuable learning programs which could prove a great benefit to them. With increased funding we could expand this program so that more people like Josh can participate.

People with disabilities will also need exhibits which are inclusive to them. This means redoing our current exhibits to make them more sensory input friendly, which people on the autism spectrum suffer from. Too many loud noises and bright lights can cause an overload of sensory input, which will lead to a breakdown in a child with autism.

## Opportunity for Funding

With increased funding, we will be able to expand our specialized programs for people with disabilities and continue to update and improve our exhibits to make them more inclusive. Our goals for this project are to create programs and exhibits where children and adults with all types of needs can participate in and to create an environment that is inclusive to everyone.

We will first use the funds to expand already in place programs which have long waitlists. This includes programs such as Spectrum Saturday, which has an average waitlist time of 3.5 months. With the rise in autism cases in the United States (1 in 88 kids diagnosed with autism), the number of families with autistic children in the Fox Valley will also rise and we will need to counteract this increase.

The last thing we would like to do is redo current exhibits to make them more autism and disability friendly. This would include reducing the number of gratuitous sights and sounds which can cause an overload of sensory input. We would also add raised guides or auditory indicators to help children move from one exhibit to another and to understand the different purposes of the exhibits. We would also increase the general safety in the exhibits. This would include adding chairs with back for support, adding more railings and ramps for wheelchairs, and making sure all the exhibits and their props are properly secured.

On the following page is our current budget for this project. Our fundraising goal is sixty percent of our budget (\$34,920), which would leave \$23,280 to be obtained through grants.

## Proposed Project Budget

Project Expenses	
Temporary Employees:	
• Program Coordinator (14 hours/week @ \$10 per hour)	\$7,280
• Program Assistant (21 hours/week @ \$10 per hour)	
	\$10,920
Program Supplies	\$7,500
Exhibit Upgrades:	
• Construction Costs	\$25,000
• New Equipment	\$15,000
Total	\$58,200

Project Revenue	
Grants	\$23,280

## Board of Directors

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Dale Ver Voot  
Owner, Crazy Sweet  
Graphic Designer, Best Version Media

## Five Facts About The Building For Kids

- 1) Every year 110,000 people visit us.
- 2) 6,400 Took part in our programs last year.
- 3) Most of our visitors come from the surrounding communities but we see visitors from all over the world.
- 4) 2,700 People came to The Building For Kids last year for birthday parties.
- 5) Last year our number of members reached an all time high of 2,061 members.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1) How is The Building For Kids Funded?

- The Building For Kids is a 501 (c)(3) community and visitor funded organization. We rely on admission and membership pricing to support our operating costs.

### 2) What is Access Admission?

- This grant program is for families going through financial hardships. Families will need to show documents showing income support. Approved documentation includes WIC, Head Start, verification of state or federal assistance. Documentation needs to list the name of the person entering The Building For Kids.

### 3) How much is daily admission and what does it include?

- Child (age 1-15): \$7.50
- Adult (16-64): \$7.50
- Senior (65+): \$6.50
- Infant (under 12 months): Free
- Admission includes programs and exhibits, along with the da Vinci Studio & Innovation Lab.

## Testament to Success



“My daughter Addy and I love going to The Building for Kids. The programs and exhibits there are wonderful. They have so many different programs and exhibit areas. Due to Addy’s autism disability it has been difficult for us to find museums that are geared towards kids with Addy’s disability. The

Building For Kids spectrum Saturday is an amazing program that we have attended on a regular basis. When we first wanted to register for it we had to be put on a waiting list. We were unable to get into that program for three months. Their exhibits currently are not very much geared toward my child’s disability, which is one of the downfalls. Their programming however makes up for this and very much sets them apart from other museums in the area. We hope that over the next few years they are able to make the building itself more autism friendly.”

We will then create new programs for disabilities with growing numbers. An example would be creating more programs for children with autism, since that is the fastest growing disability in the world. Lastly, we will update our current exhibits to meet the standards for people with all types of disabilities. This will include adding new interactives to current exhibits along with the regular wear and tear fixes.