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Taking flight with the Wrights

Children's Museum hosts free day in honor of flying brothers

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Mara Davis, 18 months, of Munster, Ind., climbs on a model airplane Saturday during Wright Brothers Day at the Iowa Children's Museum in Coralville. / Bill Adams / For the Press-Citizen

Written by Alesha L. Crews | Iowa City Press-Citizen

Children made flight goggles and pilot patches, flew paper airplanes and learned to speak like pilots in honor of the Wright brothers on Saturday.

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The Iowa Children's Museum hosted Wright Brothers Day, which included free admission and special activities in honor of National Wright Brothers Day, which celebrates the Wright brothers' first successful flight in a mechanically propelled craft.

This event gave families the opportunity learn about the Wright brothers and visit the museum's aviation exhibit, Take Flight!, which

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opened in 2009. The exhibit features flight-related activities including flight simulators, pedal planes and a NASA flight center. The Take Flight! exhibit and free admission for Wright Brothers Day were sponsored by NASA.

Rachel Spengler, a master playologist at the Iowa Children's Museum, said the exhibits offer children a fun way to learn.

"It's a different approach to education because everything is very hands on and it is an unstructured environment and kids really get to take the lead," Spengler said. "We are all about learning through play."

Haidyn McHugh, 7, sported a pair of green flight goggles that he made at the museum. He said he was having fun and that he thinks airplanes are cool.

"I really like that big one," Haidyn said.

About 700 people were expected to visit the museum to help celebrate Wright Brothers Day, Spengler said. Free days allow more people from the community to be able to experience the museum.

"It allows a lot of community members that are economically disadvantaged to experience the museum," Spengler said. "A whole free day gives more people time to enjoy the exhibits."

Free admission to the Iowa Children's Museum is also offered the last Friday of every month from 5 to 8 p.m.

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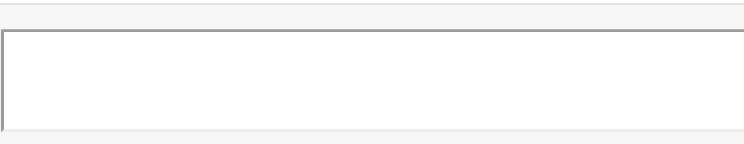
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