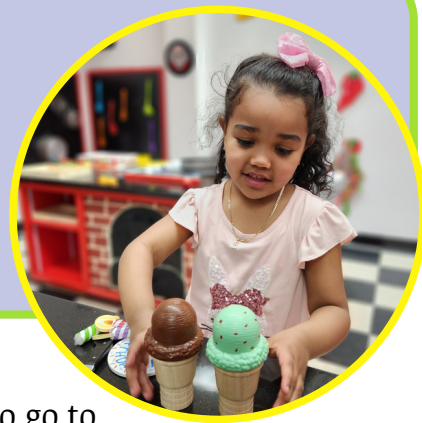




The Scoop

News from KidsPlay Children's Museum
Fall 2023
Imagine · Discover · Create



Visitor Spotlight: Growing-up KidsPlay Style!

When Rhys was learning how to talk, he would often ask his mother, Alicia, to go to the “train house.” Alicia could not figure out what he meant - until one day, the family went to visit KidsPlay Children's Museum, and Rhys, seeing the train sculpture mounted over the Museum's main entrance, exclaimed “train house!”

Rhys and his family started visiting the Museum when he had just learned to walk at 13 months old. Now, at five years old, “He's just as excited to visit as he was at the beginning” - at least according to his mother. (At the time of this interview, Rhys was at school and could not be reached for comment.)

As Rhys has gotten older, he's explored more and more of the Museum, and his parents have learned alongside him. “I've been able to see my son explore things I never would have thought to show him,” says Alicia. “The Museum provides stimulation I don't have at home and it inspires me once I walk out the door.”



KidsPlay Awarded a Prestigious Museum for America Grant

We are happy to announce that the **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)** selected KidsPlay as one of the 122 recipients of the highly competitive Museums for America grant program. **This three-year grant will be used to strengthen KidsPlay's ability to serve the public by launching the Hub@KidsPlay.** The Hub is both a new space within the Museum's 57 Main Street expansion and a program initiative!

The Hub convenes partners who possess skills and resources that support the collective success of children and families. It is a new model of multi-sector collaboration for the Museum, public schools, social service agencies, cultural organizations, and the business community. Funds from the IMLS will be used to build leadership capacity and infrastructure in order to set this initiative up for success.

This prestigious grant represents a major step forward for KidsPlay's positive impact on developmental outcomes for children and the wellbeing of families in our community.



The **Northwest CT Community Foundation (NCCF)**, the **Robert Rosenheim Foundation**, the **Northwest Community Bank Foundation**, the **Seherr Thoss Foundation**, and **The Neag Foundation** have also provided significant investments to build the physical space designated as the Hub@KidsPlay and the program initiative.

This grant is a testament to years of support from hundreds of volunteers, donors, and supporters who have built the Museum to the point where we are ready to launch this initiative. We are truly grateful for your support and advocacy.

Welcome New Advocates!

KidsPlay is pleased to welcome Ruth Nadeau Dwyer and Pascale Nejaime as Museum Advocates.

Pascale Nejaime



Pascale holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management and speaks English, French, and Arabic. She has worked as a real estate professional in Litchfield County and Hartford County for ten years and is passionate about serving the area community.

Ruth Nadeau Dwyer



Ruth holds a law degree from William and Mary School of Law and currently works as a family law attorney in Torrington. She is an active community member participating in both nonprofit organizations and local government. Ruth and her 8 year-old son love visiting KidsPlay and have created many cherished memories playing in Museums and participating in programs.

Advocates are individuals who are passionate about KidsPlay's work and have specific skills, abilities, and community affiliations that help advance the Museum's mission. Potential Advocates are invited by the Board of Directors to officially support the Museum's mission and activities without the commitment and fiduciary responsibilities of board service. If you are interested in learning more please contact Mary Guilfoile, Board Governance Chair, humanresources@kidsplaymuseum.org.

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Supporter Spotlight : Mary Guilfoile



When describing her work with KidsPlay as a donor, a volunteer, and a board member, Mary Guilfoile can boil it down to two words: she’s a “systems person.”

“I’ve had the gift of being able to use the skills that I developed and the knowledge I acquired during my career in my retirement, and it’s very fulfilling and very rewarding,” she says.

Before all that, though, Mary began volunteering so that she could spend time with children. When visiting an aquarium with her own grandchildren, who do not live in the Torrington area, **Mary watched a volunteer docent facilitating a touch-tank experience for young visitors. “I thought, ‘Oh, look at that - that’s such fun! I could do something like that.’”** After that, she signed up as a volunteer at one of KidsPlay’s early Thursday-night pop-ups at the Main Street Marketplace and has been a dedicated part of KidsPlay’s team since.

Mary’s initial work as a volunteer involved working with guests and helping to create exhibits, and it soon evolved into formally joining the Board of Directors. Mary’s role on the board has included developing human resources policy, risk assessment, and board governance for the Museum.

“One of my philosophies is that you need to be poised and ready,” Mary says. **“We have things in place so that when an opportunity comes, we’re ready for it. We’re prepared for the future.”**

Mary’s generous contribution of her time and talent over many years has helped to make KidsPlay what it is today. Thank you, Mary!



Exhibit Spotlight: Asian Culture

“Play”, an exhibit from the Freeman Foundation Asian Culture Exhibit Series (FFACES), created to help children learn about Asian culture is back at KidsPlay and better than ever.

In 2022, KidsPlay was selected by the Association of Children’s Museums (ACM) to host a prototype of “Play”. ACM used feedback and suggestions from the Museum’s visitors and staff to improve the exhibit before rolling out the final version to KidsPlay and other museums in Virginia, New York, Louisiana, New York and Michigan.



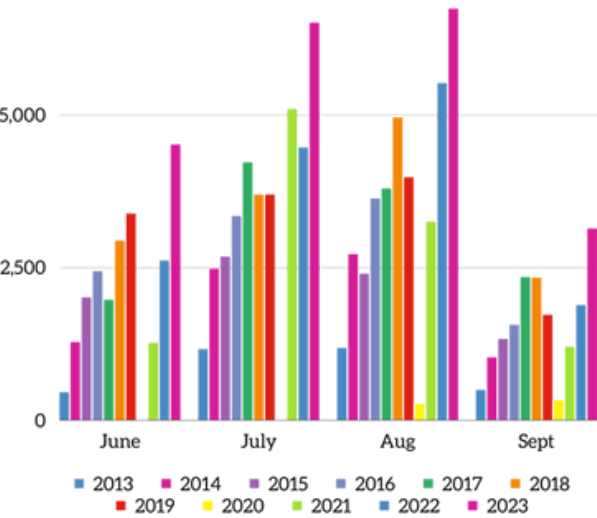
Legacy Giving

Only 34% of Americans have an estate plan. Are you one of them?

As you consider your legacy and your estate planning strategy, did you know that one of the most tax-efficient ways to make a planned gift is to name a nonprofit the beneficiary of your IRA? When you donate your IRA to a charitable cause as part of your estate, neither your estate, nor your heirs, nor the cause of your choice are responsible for income taxes on the assets. Work with your financial advisor to explore this and other ways that you can leave a legacy by supporting charitable organizations like KidsPlay in your estate planning!

A Record Summer!

20,884 visitors from June through September!



A Night of Imagination Benefits KidsPlay

Master Illusionist **Lyn Dillies** amazed children and adults alike with a performance sponsored by **Northwest Community Bank, Thomaston Savings Bank, Torrington Savings Bank, and Union Savings Bank.**

Susan McCray, Museum Advocate, hosted a cocktail party before the performance to raise additional funds for the Museum.



Program Spotlight: Spooky Science



Nilsa Moquette, a volunteer from Dymax enjoyed sharing her science background with the children at our Signature Program, Spooky Science. **She said “it’s important to get children involved and interested in science at an early age.”** We certainly think so too!

A Gallery in the Making!

The Museum’s expansion will soon be open for play, in addition to the Hub@KidsPlay, exhibit space will increase by 60%. New STEM exhibits will explore physics concepts including forces of motion, mechanics and optics. There will also be a kid-powered train and a construction exhibit that introduces children to design, engineering and other occupations in the trades.
Warning - Surprises ahead!

