

Rackham Graduate Parents Newsletter



December 2008-February 2009

WORK AND PLAY



For graduate students with children, winter in Ann Arbor can be challenging: for the next three months, playing outside is limited at best. But we are also privileged

in that we have a wide variety of indoor play areas where we can take our children to play while we try to study for the next test or write a chapter of our dissertation. When you need to get the children out of the house, but still have to do some work, grab your laptop, bundle up your children and check out these indoor play areas where your kids can work off some extra energy.

Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum

Located downtown, the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum has been voted best place for kids under 12 by *The Ann Arbor News*. Many parents do not realize that on the second floor there is a kids' play area. Benches surround the play area where parents can watch their children and get some work done. The play area is best suited for children ages 3-10. With free wi-fi access to Internet 2, Director Mel Drumm said, "With the speed of Internet 2, parents will never want to work from home again." Food is allowed in the vending area, but not the play area. Admission is \$8.00 for ages 2 and up (parents must also pay). An alternative choice is to purchase a year-long family pass for \$75, \$70 if you buy it online.

Jungle Java

High-energy children from ages 6 months-12 years old love to run around and play at Jungle Java. The four levels of indoor play structure, with three slides, are perfect for developing gross motor skills. Besides their huge play area, there is also a smaller, dedicated area for toddlers 3 and younger. With tables and chairs situated around the play structure, you can easily keep an eye on your child while you check e-mail. They also have great coffee and adult lunch choices, like their Traverse City salad. If you are hoping to be productive, the best time to go is during a weekday or early or late on the weekends when it is less crowded. Admission for children ages 2-17 is \$6.50; children ages 12-23 months, \$3.00; free for children under 12 months and parents.

My Urban Toddler

Located in Saline, My Urban Toddler is well worth the drive. My Urban Toddler is an amalgamation of boutique, learning center, and playspace for children ages 0-5. The design of their city-themed playspace encourages imagination and creativity. Kids can play in any of the different spaces ranging from the fine arts room to the firehouse. In the middle sits a park created especially for infants. As kids play, you can work in the adjacent café area. They have coffee and snacks for sale and you can order food from the restaurant next door. Entry fee is \$5.00 per child. Admission for parents is free.

Future Events



MLK Day

On Monday, January 19th, U-M will celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and legacy. In addition to a series of lectures and movies for adults and older children, the University will also provide a day of free events for children from K-12th grade. Activities vary depending on your child's age (K-5, 6-8 and 9-12). They include skits, singing, and storytelling. The program runs from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Pre-registration is encouraged, but not required. For more information and to pre-register, visit their website:

<http://www.umich.edu/~tauep/MLKDay.html>.

Past Events

Washtenaw Dairy

On what felt like the last day of fall, grad parents and their children crowded into Washtenaw Dairy to learn the secrets of making donuts. With the help of Dave, the manager, children frosted their own donuts (see picture below). While we waited for them to cool off, we all ate donuts and drank coffee and milk.

Graduate Parent Fair

The raging wind and blowing snow didn't deter U-M graduate parents from attending our second annual Graduate Parent Resource and Information Fair in December. The theme this year was pirates.

Pirate Mike handed out prizes from the treasure chest that included Piston tickets, family passes to Domino's Farms, soccer balls and eye patches.

At the workshops, parents could find out about some of the programs available to them such as the childcare subsidy and the WIC program.

Ann Arbor Art Center sponsored the arts and crafts table where children made pirate hats. K-Gram undergraduate volunteers painted children's faces with flowers, snakes, ladybugs and pirate skulls. Jose, the amazing balloon artist, returned this year to make balloon animals and swords to accompany the pirate hats.

Fourteen local businesses and organizations presented their goods and services at the resource fair. Children who stopped by the My Urban Toddler table had the chance to design a boat with faces of their family and paste it onto the high seas (see picture below).

We also had children's activities that included dinosaur stories, playtime and toddler music sponsored by U-M Natural Science Museum, Lamaze Center of Ann Arbor and Ann Arbor School for the Performing Arts.

Some parents took advantage of the free massages on the 3rd floor provided by The Ann Arbor Institute of Massage. In short, it was another successful fair!

