



Child's Play

NEWS After spending vacations at EdVenture in Columbia, South Carolina, and the Sandbox at Hilton Head, Lancaster mother Kathy Kern-Ross returned home knowing she wanted the same magic world of make-believe for local children. She brainstormed with five other neighborhood parents, and their vision became reality in March, when AHA! A Hands-On Adventure, A Children's Museum, Inc. opened its doors on South Broad Street.

Kayla Ross plays veterinarian in Lancaster's new children's museum.

"To children, their work is their play," Kern-Ross says. "We wanted a place where they can learn and interact with their caregiver, parent or grandparent — where every day is different."

Creating this 4,000-square-foot kid space — one of only a handful of children's museums in the state — was, Kern-Ross says, a labor of love that was completed in a little over a year. An auction of sponsorship rights raised \$250,000 for the cause; Dublin's Roto Studio, with a client list that includes the Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh and the Gulf Coast Exploreum in Mobile, Alabama, designed the exhibits; and Lancaster's custom wood company, Creative Cabinets, brought them to fruition.

Created for children ages birth to 7, the museum features a pretend pizza shop where kids can concoct their own pretend pie, an interactive bank where pint-sized customers can learn the value of a dollar, and a water table where children can launch boats or just splash around. There's also plenty of opportunities for career exploration as youngsters discover what it's like to be a carpenter with Legos, minister to stuffed animals in a veterinary clinic or jam on the piano in a theater complete with lights, microphones and costumes.

"There are so many learning opportunities here," Kern-Ross says proudly, "and chances for parents to have fun with their children."
— Steve Herrick

AHA! A Hands-On Adventure
315 S. Broad St.
For more information,
call 740/653-1010 or
visit www.aha4kids.org.

Look for these exciting new venues, exhibits and events in 2008.

Opening Acts

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

CENTRAL

AHA! A Hands-On Adventure, A Children's Museum, Inc. — Lancaster

Finally, a museum where kids can be kids. Designed for ages 7 and under, this hands-on, interactive museum lets little imaginations run wild as youngsters explore the make-believe bank, pizza shop, market and veterinary office; try out the honeycomb climbing area; take a turn at arts and crafts and face-painting stations; or cast off on the imaginary fishing boat. 315 S. Broad St., Lancaster, 740/653-1010. www.AHA4kids.org