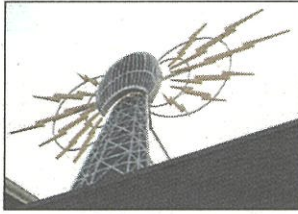


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Molecular magic

Fire and Ice show introduces children to wonders of science, Page 17

Braxton Jagannathan, 5, of Frankfort gets a handful of special foam from Professor Maria, a Mad Science instructor, on Thursday, April 25, during a Mad Science event at Kidsworld Children's Museum in Frankfort. MARY COMPTON/22ND CENTURY MEDIA

 COVER STORY

Children embrace passion for science at KidsWork show

MARY COMPTON, Freelance Reporter

A child fascinated by a physics experiment today may well go on to become tomorrow's great scientific mind.

On Thursday, April 25, the Fire and Ice show at KidsWork Children's Museum in Frankfort enchanted young scientists with an entertaining array of foaming showers, flash paper, a balloon that fit in a small glass and much more.

Professor Maria, the instructor who ran the event, is part of the worldwide program Mad Science.

"I am part of a group of instructors that go around and show kids how fun science can be," she said. "Anywhere there are kids, Mad Science is there. Kids learn differently; they learn by seeing something amazing and will remember it. Our most important group is preschool through fifth grade."

Professor Maria started her show by asking Braxton Jagannathan, 5, of Frankfort, to tear up a card in a deck of cards. Next, she lit the card on fire, which of course disintegrated. After covering up the burnt pieces, Professor Maria asked Jagannathan to lift up the lid — and lo and behold, the card had been put back together.

"This is a magic trick, but I explain the science behind it," Professor Maria said. "We hit keywords. I'm using dry ice in the show, so they will be hearing words like 'carbon dioxide,' and they'll hear 'sublimation.' Hopefully, they will remember that dry ice is made from carbon dioxide and it sublimates."

The professor then encouraged Dennis Curtin, 6, of New Lenox, to get more air in a large red balloon, explaining that the experiment demonstrated a physics law discovered by scientist and mathematician Daniel Bernoulli.

For Nicole Underwood, KidsWork Children's Museum executive director, one of the goals was to bring fun STEM, or science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs to the museum.

"We have brought in two new exhibits from our fundraisers the last two years," Underwood said. "In 2017, we were able to acquire our fire station exhibit. This year we installed our wind tubes, which is geared towards STEM and STEAM.



Professor Maria (left), an instructor with Mad Science, shows Dennis Curtin, 6, of New Lenox, how to get more air in a large balloon during a science experiment Thursday, April 25, at KidsWork Children's Museum in Frankfort.
MARY COMPTON/22ND CENTURY MEDIA

That is what the museum has been lacking. We're hoping that will bring in older kids to the museum."

KidsWork Children's Museum is geared toward children ages 1 through 6, but Underwood is hoping to reach more children in the 8- to 10-year-old range.

"Bringing this Mad Science program is good for our older students as well, even 12-year-olds," Underwood said. "I really want to put an emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics in this museum."

According to the museum's website, KidsWork is Will County's first children's museum and provides cultural and educational opportunities for families throughout the area.

"We want to bring more exposure to KidsWork," Underwood said.

Rebecca Rossi, a Frankfort parent, visits the museum several times a month. On Thursday, she brought her 7-year-old son Benjamin because he loves science.

"He enjoys experiments with dry ice," Rossi explained. "My husband is an engineer, so we do a lot of science activities at home and go to a lot of science events. It's very important."

The museum's yearly fundraiser is scheduled for 7-11 p.m. Friday, May 3, at CD&ME in Frankfort. The 10th annual gala is hosted by Mayor Jim Holland, along with his wife, Stacy, and features a Cinco de Mayo theme. Tickets are available at the museum at 4kidswork.eventbrite.com or by calling the museum at (815) 469-1199.



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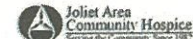
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