

WHERE **SCIENCE****HISTORY****AND****ART** CONNECT

To: Raven Hill friends  
From: Cheri  
Date: January 18, 2025  
Re: Young Explorers

As part of the **HOT (Here Or There) Project** sponsored by Charlevoix County and Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundations, a Strong Beginnings classroom of three-year-olds enjoyed an exciting field trip adventure Wednesday morning.

*Riveted by the Rollway*



Before their arrival, I shoveled the sidewalk and cleared a pathway to the building. When the county transit bus pulled up, I quickly extended the pathway to the bus. Standing at the bottom step of the bus, I realized just how high that step must have seemed to the little ones. One by one, tiny hands naturally reached out to me for help as they carefully navigated that big final step.

Still on the bus and caught behind the eager children, the teachers hadn't yet joined us. After helping the last child down, I turned to guide them into the building—only to discover that they had disappeared! To

my great surprise and delight, the little explorers had taken it upon themselves to head straight inside and start discovering the wonders that awaited them.

I can hardly put into words how wondrous the entire morning was. The little ones were captivated by everything around them. It didn't matter that the lightbulb on the Energy Bike wasn't lighting up—they loved the simple joy of working the pedals. They didn't try to slow the golf ball on the Rollway to win a prize. Just watching it roll down the ramp was pure magic for them.

What struck me most was their fascination with even the smallest details, the ones most people overlook in favor of the larger exhibits. Their curiosity was boundless and their excitement contagious.

*Awash with color*



*Loving the energy bike*



*Totally captivated*



I couldn't decide which pictures to share because every moment felt special. The children were absolutely adorable! So enjoy a few extra photos this week—you won't want to miss their sweet smiles and wide-eyed wonder! I also want to give a proper shout-out to the teacher for her photography skills!

According to *Current Biology*, “children learn more quickly than adults due to increased levels of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) during learning activities. This neurotransmitter helps stabilize new information, effectively turning young brains into little sponges.” *Science Daily* highlights that “children’s brains respond to training in a way that allows them to more quickly and efficiently stabilize new learning compared to adults.” These findings remind us about the

remarkable capacity of young brains to absorb and retain new information. Research on learning in three-year-olds highlights their rapid cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. At this age, children absorb information from their environments through play, exploration, and social interactions. Early experiences shape the architecture of the brain, creating a foundation for future learning.

Raven Hill offers quality interactions and spaces designed to inspire exploration and discovery through a diverse range of experiences. By providing opportunities for play, building, imaginative exploration, and hands-on activities, we support the development of both cognitive and motor skills. The Center balances free and guided discovery, tapping into a three-year-old's natural curiosity and encouraging them to engage deeply with their surroundings. Sharing with others fosters essential social skills like taking turns, cooperation and teamwork. By nurturing these areas of growth, Raven Hill helps three-year-olds lay the groundwork for lifelong learning.

*Stop Slow Go close-up*



*Checking out levers*



*Peeking into the kaleidoscope*



This is a great time to visit the Center. Raven Hill is open weekends—noon to 4pm on Saturdays; 2pm to 4pm on Sundays, as well as holidays and other times by appointment. Families and field trip groups can visit and explore both indoors and outside or book a science, history or art class for any age and ability. The Center is a perfect place for scout and 4H activities, birthday parties for youngsters & adults, retreats, weddings and other gatherings. For more information about onsite or outreach programs, email [info@miravenhill.org](mailto:info@miravenhill.org) or call Cheri at 231.536.3369.

I am attaching two flyers. Feel free to share them:

1. **HOT (Here Or There) Project** for Charlevoix & Emmet County teachers—field trips to Raven Hill or Raven Hill outreach into the classroom. Sponsored by the Charlevoix County Community Foundation and the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation.
2. **FREE 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturdays** for families—free admission for families. In memory of Diane Strzelinski

Until next time,

Cheri

*Composing at the marimba*



*Checking out Checkers*



*Looking into a different world*



*Spike, my new BFF*

