

Who's Counting?

Living Well, Staying Active

FALL/WINTER 2010

GUIDE TO LIVING HERE for Monterey County's Older Adults
DINING, ENTERTAINMENT, TRAVEL, DWELLINGS, FASHION & MORE

Kids & their grownups learn at MyMuseum

going

PHOTO PATRICIA SKINNER



By Patricia Skinner

When MY Museum moved to 425 Washington Street in Monterey from its old location on Cannery Row nearly two years ago, the administration anticipated that attendance would more than double. They never expected to be welcoming four times as many visitors annually.

"We went from 20,000 visitors a year to 80,000," says Lauren Cohen, the museum's executive director. "Many more people are using the museum on a daily basis."

"We built MY Museum for multi-generational use," Cohen explains.

"Grandparents are watching their grandkids more these days instead of the kids going to a formal childcare setting."

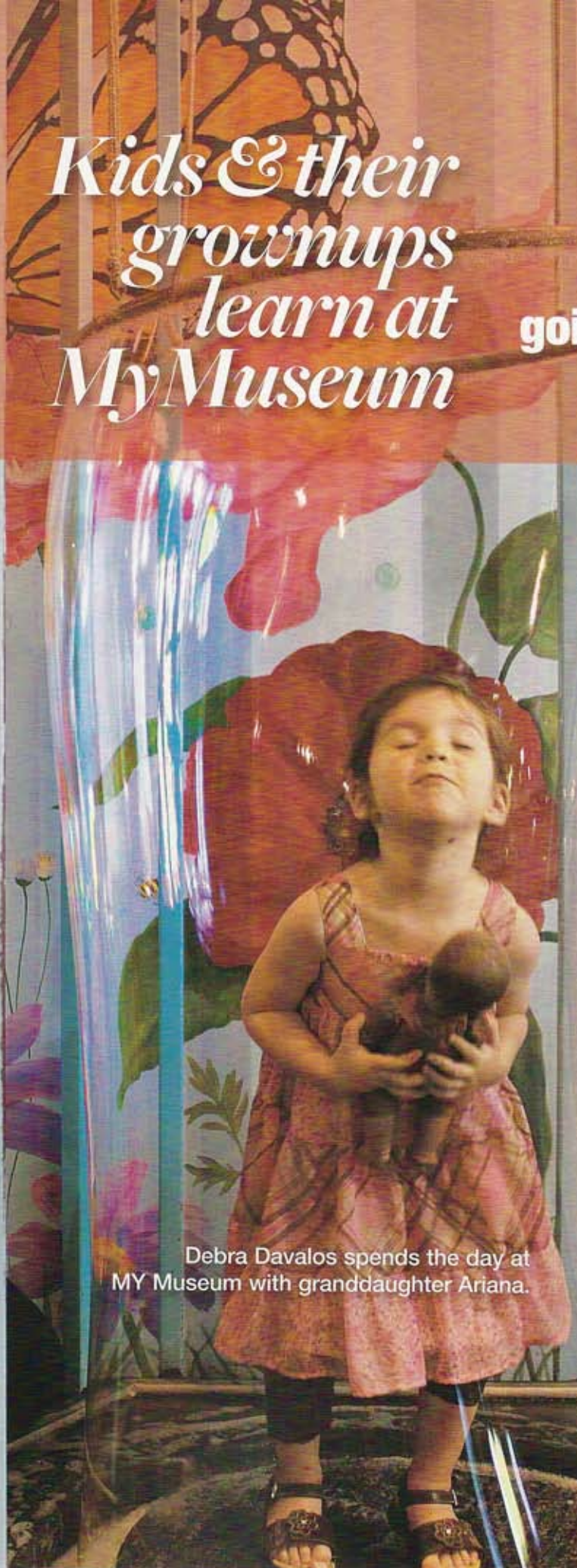
Most museums today have special areas where children can touch exhibits and participate in activities. At My Museum, interactive galleries, all representing aspects of Monterey County life, invite children, and the adults who accompany them, to explore, discover, imagine and learn together.

"The freedom to explore is very appealing, not only for the kids but for the grownups, too," says Debra Davalos, who brought her two-year-old granddaughter, Ariana, for a first-time visit. Ariana found MY Day at the Beach, an exhibit intended for visitors ages three years and under.

At My Day at the Beach, Ariana sat in and steered a boat that rocked, and built sandcastles with sand blocks. There is also a cozy corner where children and adults can read together and share quiet time.

At My Healthy Farm visitors pick wood-

Debra Davalos spends the day at MY Museum with granddaughter Ariana.



en "crops" and deliver them to market. Visitors also learn about making healthy food choices in this gallery. The area is designed to help educate about childhood obesity and encourage active lifestyles.

Visitors are given tools to make their own masterpieces using a variety of recycled and non-recycled materials at My Creation Station.

"We did My Theater," says 11-year-old Belle Lerissa, visiting the museum with her sisters, mother and grandmother. "We could dress up in costumes and push buttons to make sound-effects for laughter and applause. There was a little stage and curtain. Parents could sit and watch us. Grandma loved it."

The museum also has ongoing events, such as the My Little Chatterbox — Spanish play-group style language immersion class. Children, ages three to five years and their grownups, learn a foreign language together, in a fun, interactive environment with games and music.

Every Thursday, My Concert Series offers children five years and under the chance to sing, dance and play rhythm instruments with MaryLee Sunseri. The first Sunday of each Month is free for members, and the first Tuesday of each month is \$2 for all Monterey County residents.

Ariel Theater will bring young actors to perform at MY Museum presenting *School House Rock*, October 2; *Goldie Locks &* »



PHOTO: TODD DAVALOS

When is Alzheimer's Care the best option?

Does your loved one...

- Have trouble remembering recent events?
- Have difficulty remembering names of people and places?
- Experience difficulty solving simple problems?
- Have difficulty recognizing familiar surroundings or people?
- Often misplace or lose personal items?
- Forget how to perform daily tasks?
- Spend most of their time alone?
- Forget to take medicine?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, it may be time to see if Alzheimer's care can help.

Take part in our local Memory Walk October 16th, 2010. To join our team or learn more about this event call 831-443-6467 and ask for Beverlee Hamby.

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Restoring Hormone Balance

Women have questions! We have answers!

Interest in Customized Hormone Replacement Therapy surged after Oprah's recent guests, including doctors Christiane Northrup and Prudence Hall, discussed the science behind customized HRT. Dr. Phil's wife Robin McGraw described how through extensive research and with the help of a compounding pharmacist and her physician, she found natural ways to battle menopausal symptoms and turned the "change of life" into a positive experience.

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the Three Bears; November 6; and *Winnie the Pooh*, November 20. The performances are free with admission.

With the "Wheelie Mobilee" — a Dodge Sprint Van — My Museum is able to offer extensive outreach program. At events like the Jewish Food Festival in August, the Wheelie Mobilee enhances learning experiences for children.

"Last year we partnered with First Five (also known as the California Children and Families Commission) to go out to more places, such as Head starts and schools," explains Cohen.

"We are partnering with Laguna Seca Raceway next season," Cohen adds. "The van will be at four races."

The 8,500-square-foot museum provides excellent access for anyone on wheels. At the entrance to the museum, I watched as a youngster spun around in his wheelchair to determine what exhibit he wanted to go to first.

"We were careful in building the new museum," says Cohen of the museum's accessibility.

"There are ramps everywhere," says Desiree Maysonave, Belle Lerissa's mother. "My mom used her walker and she could go to all the galleries."

My Museum is working with Easter Seals and Special Kids Crusade to provide additional accommodations for any visitor with special needs. The museum is considering signs in Braille, special lighting and alternative hours for children who need a quiet environment with less stimulation. My Museum keeps a constant eye to the future to consider what will be new there in 12 months, 18 months or five years from now.

"Kids like the same and grownups want [it] different," Cohen explains. "We are committed to doing both. An important question is: How can we modify the museum to be successful?"

Eight-year-old Ella Lerissa and her grandmother walked out of the My Hospital gallery to meet her mother and sisters. It was time to leave.

"We had fun today, didn't we?" Grandma Fran Maysonave asks. All three generations agreed. ■

My Museum is located at 425 Washington Street, Monterey, CA 93940; phone 649-6444, email info@my museum.org or visit www.mymuseum.org.