



Interactive Transportation-Themed “Pit Stop” Exhibit for Kids Proves to be Irresistible

All kids love machines. The more moving parts, the better! That’s why Children’s Museum of Phoenix (CMOP) recently teamed up with DD&F to mastermind more than 1,200 square feet of kid-friendly interactive bliss for little visitors.

The creative juices began flowing on this exhibit in April 2007 when CMOP challenged DD&F to design, fabricate and implement a transportation-themed workshop for young children. The DD&F team, which happens to be comprised of some *serious* automobile fanatics, couldn’t pass up this opportunity. They immediately began brainstorming and accessing their own childhood memories to sculpt the project and bring it to life in a BIG way.

The DD&F team wanted to produce an environment that was both a fun and stimulating space for visitors. Their goals were simple, but challenging; they must construct a safe and inspiring setting for young children while identifying unique ways in which to create a learning environment that supports a child’s physical, emotional and social development.

The result was “*The Pit Stop*,” as the exhibit came to be called. The exhibit is not only fun, but also challenges children intellectually as they have the opportunity to experiment with size, shape and weight.

Guests enter the three-level mezzanine workshop to find race tracks stemming from each level. Immersed in this “race experience,” you will find a very brightly-colored environment with springs, gadgets, wheels, and more than 55 feet of the race track created using natural wood scale model cars.

The space is full of activity, such as a sprint car races with moving engine parts that kids can touch and adjust. There is a vintage motorcycle with a removable tire and a variety of musical instruments made from actual reclaimed cars and real auto shop tools and trappings.

On another floor, Children are able to ride through a “trike wash,” which emulates an actual carwash with rotating and moving parts that resemble water hoses, brushes and air-dryers. And parents can watch their child’s excited reactions to all the moving parts as they kick back on a full-size Chevy truck bed that has been cut down, re-framed and repainted to create a seating area.

In addition to infusing this exhibit with plenty of “cool factor,” DD&F demonstrated its commitment to “reuse, recycle, and repurpose” by utilizing materials that could be pulled from auto junk yards and auto shops, cleaned and refurbished.

In fact, more than 2,800 pounds of junkyard steel was reused in this exhibit. A vintage race car chassis was revitalized. Scrap vintage tools were repurposed to create a xylophone and hand levers. “*The Pit Stop*” exhibit also features over 550 square feet of recycled rubber flooring.

“Any visitor can see that the DD&F team enjoyed creating *The Pit Stop*. The ingenuity and attention to detail is phenomenal,” said Nancy Stice, Director of Exhibits. CMOP hosts visitors and locals from all around the Valley. For years to come children will have the opportunity to roll up their sleeves and revel in the joy of this interactive transportation-themed experience.

