

Expo serves up fun activities for kids

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It's hard to imagine a nicer venue for an event catered to children than the banks of the Hudson River on an early fall day.

That's where the Kids Expo is being held for the first time this weekend. Because of the warm, sunny weather on Saturday, it felt more like summer at Waryas Park in the City of Poughkeepsie, where much of the event is taking place.

Organizers did not give an attendance estimate for Saturday, but said traffic was similar to previous years. Typically, the two-day event, which continues today, draws 15,000 to 18,000 people.

Sunlight sparkled on the water as boats and jet skiers passed by, some beneath the Walkway Over the Hudson.

"It's beautiful weather," said Cody Liriano of the City of Poughkeepsie, who was gripping a baby stroller. "It's just good to get out to the park."

She was accompanied by her husband, Robert Liriano, and their children -- Brandon, 3, and Dominic, 3 months -- to the 15th annual Kids Expo. Brandon enjoyed peering at two white ducks behind fencing at the Two by Two Zoo from Millbrook, which also included an alligator, a kangaroo, ring-tailed lemurs and goats.

The previous expo events were held at the Civic Center on Market Street in Poughkeepsie in the early spring. The Mid-Hudson Children's Museum, next door to Waryas Park, though, continues to be one of the venues for the expo.

Caylena Cahill of Highland said having the museum right next door to Waryas Park eliminates the transportation needed to get from one venue to the other.

Some of those attending the expo Saturday said they liked the change of location and time of the year.

"It seems more spacious and the weather is nice," said Jessica Davis of Highland who brought her children, Julianne, 3, and Sebastian, 1.

The event's major sponsors, including IBM, have exhibits and tables set up in the Children's Museum offering interactive activities. Other sponsors include the City of Poughkeepsie, Clear Channel, Poughkeepsie Journal, Price Chopper, Stop & Shop and Hannaford.

Irv Miller, a retired IBM employee and executive director of the Math and Physics Exploratorium, was joined by student volunteers from Arlington school district at the IBM booth. Sayid Yasin, a senior at Arlington High School, and Catherine Atkinson, an eighth-grader at LaGrange Middle School, offered children chances to play games that were intended to interest them in math and demonstrate basic math principles.

Children enjoyed making macaroni jewelry at the Price Chopper table and coloring burlap backpacks at the Hannaford booth.

Some enjoyed the thrill of crawling through the gigantic bouncy caterpillar just outside the museum.

"It's like squishy and stuff," said Richie Lamping, 5, of Highland.

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