

# TriCity

MONTHLY LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

## Contemporary Country

A stunning remodel  
creates a barrier-free home

### HOMEGROWN IN THE TRI-CITIES

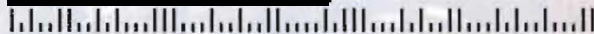
Do you know these  
18 famous locals?

### Tri-Cities PreK-12 HANDBOOK

- Is my child kindergarten ready?
- Raising readers in an Xbox world
- Finding your best-fit daycare
- Helping ADHD kids succeed
- Prepping for success beyond high school

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### PLAY, LEARN & EXPLORE

What you'll find at  
the Mid-Michigan  
Children's Museum

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## Try It! You'll Like It.

Communities unite around children's museum

by Andrea Deering | photos by Avram Golden



**W**hat began as a dream more than seven years ago is becoming reality this spring. The Mid-Michigan Children's Museum in Saginaw will officially open its doors to excited children of all ages. Kids and adults alike have been watching the progress and waiting with anticipation for the doors to open to a plethora of pint-sized exhibits that encourage play, exploration, and learning.

The list of museum supporters is long and filled with community and business leaders, parents and volunteers from Bay City, Midland, and Saginaw who have joined forces for a cause bigger than each individual city. Supporters who have vision. Supporters who believe in the Tri-City region. Supporters who understand the principle "united we stand, divided we fall." Supporters who realize that our children are the future.

"Any time you can get children together and help the community, it's a win-win," explains Dr. Sam J. Shaheen, SSP Associates in Saginaw and chairman of the Mid-Michigan Children's Museum. "It was a great chance to do something special," says Shaheen, regarding his involvement in the venture.

"We have been making sure people know it is a regional destination. We can't survive with walls around each community," says Sharon Miller, former chairperson and owner of ITH Staffing in Midland. "There has been resistance. It's not about politics. It's about our children. We need to rely on each other. We want this community to be a place for families." Each community continues to step up to the plate. Business and individual supporters represent each of the Tri-Cities along with all three community foundations.

*"Any time you can get children together and help the community, it's a win-win."*

Dr. Sam J. Shaheen,  
Chairman, Mid-Michigan Children's Museum



Members of the Mid-Michigan Children's Museum Executive Committee include: (Back row) Scott Ellsworth, board member; Tim Dijak, campaign chair; and Angela Barris, president and CEO. (Front row) Sharon Miller, immediate past chair; Dr. Sam J. Shaheen, chair; and Jaye Blakely, chair elect.

Shaheen says he's most excited about "the opportunity to improve the image of mid-Michigan—specifically, Saginaw—as a place where kids can come to learn and play." He's optimistic that the "museum will become an economic stimulus to development across the county" with revitalization to follow as it has near other children's museums that have sprouted up around the country.

Just as the Great Lakes Loons have drawn crowds from the Tri-Cities and beyond, board members and supporters expect the Mid-Michigan Children's Museum to have the same effect. They are working to pack a powerful punch to market the region's attractions and mid-Michigan as a full-package community to live and play in.

What a wonderful sight it will be to see children and adults from suburbs, cities, and rural communities exploring the museum and the region's history together. Sometimes it takes seeing life through an innocent child's eyes to realize we are all in this together.

"I'm really encouraged by the collaboration that has taken place with Tri-County leaders," says Mike Colucci, a research associate with SC Johnson in Bay City, second longest serving board member and exhibit committee chairperson. Just like Mikey in the 70's Life Cereal commercials, Colucci, a big kid at heart, excitedly says, "Try it! You'll like it. And, you just might make memories you'll never forget."

## Key Players Bring Play and Exploration Destination to Mid-Michigan

In 1998, a group of visionaries met to discuss the possibilities of a regional children's museum. Since the initial light bulb came on, thousands of hours have been donated by a lengthy list of volunteers who have played roles big and small in getting the Mid-Michigan Children's Museum from a lofty vision to a concrete reality.

"The board of directors has been tireless in their dedication," praises Angela Barris, the museum's president and CEO. Many other individuals also representing Bay, Midland, and Saginaw counties have given of their time and talents. While there isn't enough space to identify them all, Barris says there are some who deserve special recognition including Dick Garber, who donated the former Garber Buick building located on Genesee for the museum site; Joe Turner, who assisted with building uses; and John Humphreys, who was the first president of the board.

There are also many contractors to thank including Bierlein Companies Inc., Standard Electric Co., Graham Construction, and Schauman Construction Company.

### Officers:

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# Calling All Kids!

## Play, Explore, and Learn at the Mid-Michigan Children's Museum

Imagine a place where you can run free and explore whatever tickles *your* fancy. Nothing is off limits. Imagine a place that was filled with bright-colored stations where you could pretend to be and do whatever *you* wanted. Imagine a place where you can create and discover to *your* heart's content. No fairy godmother or magic wand required. There is such a place.

Welcome to the Mid-Michigan Children's Museum. And, you don't have to be a kid to join in the fun—just a kid at heart. The museum caters to children under age 12 and highlights important historical and economical aspects of our region. With 11 interactive hands-on galleries, your children will have plenty of opportunity to learn, create, and frolic.

Ready to plan your exploration? Here's a snapshot of what you'll find:

**Entryway** – Get a taste of the fun to follow plus a showcase of contributors

**oMaze** – Explore and find the way through a maze by using your senses

**Art Mart** – Tap into the imagination and create art of all kinds

**Aunt Sugar's Farm** – Explore our region's agricultural roots, learn where our food originates, and pretend to be a farmer

**Car Works** – Become a car mechanic, learn how a car works, and play by driving, washing, repairing, and filling your "car" up with gas

**Connections** – Learn the importance of working together to make connections in the community, build friendships, and get things done

**Insides Out** – Discover how the mind and body work together through exploration of muscles, giant teeth, skin, the heart, and digestion, plus explore healthcare jobs

**Night 'N Day** – Experience natural sounds and sights as dawn turns to dusk and back again in this outdoor nature experience complete with a tree to climb

**Try It!** – Try your hand at the printed challenges or do whatever you want in this inventive space with a myriad of materials to play with

**Water, Water, Everywhere** – Splash, pour, measure, get wet, and experiment with fun floating and sinking objects in water

**Outdoors, Year Round** – Enjoy the exterior "room" of the museum and play and explore the true outdoors (to be added in phases as funding is secured)



*Growing the Mid-Michigan Children's Museum from a dream to a reality required the work of many community leaders throughout several years. Singled out as VIPs essential to making it happen are, left to right, Joe Turner, Carole Hemminger, and Dick Garber. Turner is credited with facilitating building uses. Garber donated the former Garber Buick Building on Genesee in Saginaw to give the museum a home. Hemminger is highly praised by volunteer colleagues as being the visionary who thought "what if...?" first.*

And, there is even more fun at hand. Kids can dress up and perform on stage. You can also rent rooms or the whole facility for educational programs or birthday parties. Family and business memberships are available along with discounts for groups and organizations. Bring your lunch. Peruse the gift shop. Play and make a day of it.

"What's best for kids is a place where they have free rein to explore, touch, and try. What's best for parents is a place where kids can learn as they explore," explains Angela Barris, the museum's president and CEO. The Mid-Michigan Children's Museum accomplishes both. Kids and adults are sure to join together in celebration of their newest community attraction and leave with smiles on their faces. Chances are it won't be long until they are back for more.

For more information, news of the museum's opening, and days and hours of operation, visit [www.midmicm.org](http://www.midmicm.org) or call 989-399-6626.



*photo courtesy of MMCM*