

Hands-On Science

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Imagine being able to be strong like Superman. It's possible at the Great Lakes Science Center in Cleveland, Ohio.

You can lift a crushed car with the help of some of today's technology.

This is just one of the 400 hands-on exhibits in the museum.

The center integrates fun into science by being one of America's largest interactive science museums. With so much to do in the 165,000-square-foot museum, it's hard to know where to begin; fun can be found on each floor.

The Science Phenomena floor of the museum includes an indoor tornado, the Bridge of Fire and the Shadow Room.

Not only can you observe an 8-foot tall simulated twister, you can even touch it without being hurt or blown away. A climb onto the Bridge of Fire is sure to make your hair stand on end, with a static generator generating 200,000 volts of electric current. Inside the Shadow Room, you can experience the science of glowing in the dark. In another exhibit, vehicles lighter than air have their own visitor controls that you can maneuver to float around the exhibit area.

A full-sized MRI is in the Science Center's Medical & Bio-Technology Gallery. InfoTech will keep your attention with interactive examples of how information technologies affect life.

The Analog to Digital exhibit allows you to strangely manipulate your picture and voice, as well as change typed words into speech. A sound stage exhibit lets you take the stage and play the drums, keyboard or harp

either freestyle or along with existing songs.

In another hands-on activity at the center, a virtual hang glider lets you fly through computer-generated adventures.

One part of the Great Lakes Science Center's mission is to emphasize environmental activities in the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes Story exhibit informs you of the characteristics that make the Great Lakes unique.

One of the center's most popular areas is the Polymer Funhouse, which is an outdoor section that is geared for children age seven and younger and their parents. The Polymer Funhouse includes more than 90 exhibits and activities.

Port Polymer is located on the second level outdoor deck. A paddle-wheel steamship called Polymer II is constructed primarily of recycled polymer-based materials. Children can climb aboard and have hours of fun playing with a variety of interactive exhibits.

Port Polymer features over 38 hands-on exhibits that provide fun learning lessons on topics such as balance, buoyancy and pressure.

Hands-on exhibits are not the only activities for visitors to explore at the center. There are also daily demonstrations and many educational programs that focus on how science is used throughout the Midwest.

The Situation Room consists of 24 state-of-the-art computer stations connected to a video wall. The computers provide users and audience members with presentations about the Great Lakes region.

A presentation called "Electricity: The Shocking Truth" will shock you – although not literally – with the power of electrical energy that you'll witness first-hand. You will watch volts of electric current light up the stage, experiencing the electrical world in a way that is fun and safe.

The center's OMNI-MAX theatre plays educational videos to captivate the audience while teaching about the environment, among other things.

After making your way through the museum, you can stop at the Science Store. There's always something new and interesting at the store – from books to games and puzzles.

The Great Lakes Science Center is open daily from 9:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. More information about the center is at www.greatscience.com.