

The Online Adventure of Amazeum YOU

For the past few months, the Scott Family Amazeum in Bentonville has had to reinvent itself to stay active in the community during the pandemic. While visitors were no longer allowed to physically access the museum, the Amazeum team made sure it was still interactive with its audience. And so began the museum's digital endeavors.

While the Amazeum's digital presence didn't become prominent until after the pandemic began, there was always a plan to expand its online movements. "[COVID-19] really set in motion an interesting turn of events for us. We decided that we would try and take much of our interactive, hands-on experiences onto an online platform," Amazeum marketing manager Paul Stolt said.

The museum introduced its online platform, Amazeum YOU, to its audience in an effort to continue to encourage an interactive experience. Amazeum YOU brings a live encounter to its viewers every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10 a.m. By utilizing the Facebook Live platform, Amazeum "fungineers" come face to face with viewers. The videos typically consist of the Amazeum play facilitators exhibiting a hands-on activity that can be done at home. According to Stolt, the activities only require common household items, so it is not difficult for viewers to engage with the live play facilitator.

"We try to make the activity as convenient, fun and educational as possible," Stolt said.

If, for some reason, a child misses a live show, Amazeum posts its previous live videos on its Facebook page. Amazeum YOU content is also available on its YouTube page.



Amazeum team members Abbigale and Miriam film an Amazeum YOU activity in the Hershey's Lab.



Amazeum YOU online "sheet fort project"



Emmie creating the "ice balloons" activity as provided by Amazeum YOU

"We were trying something that we had little experience in, but the response was really good," Stolt said. "There's really no time like the present. It may not have been the most well-produced content in the beginning, but we were sure going to give it a try. People are very forgiving right now about taking risks, and we always like to say we are a risk-taking organization that likes to be innovative in many ways, and this was a way to do that."

Since the Amazeum first began expanding its online presence, Stolt said its content has certainly improved as they have all gained more experience utilizing the online platforms. "It was pretty raggedy at the beginning, but we were committed to just giving it a try and learning as we go. It mirrors how we operate – we will take an idea and do a 'Yes, and...' process. We keep working the question, 'If we can do that, then can we do this?'" Stolt said. "We're all about taking those calculated risks – and learning from our mistakes."



Amazeum team member Adam prototypes bubble solutions with his sons.

Amazeum YOU aims to provide a fun resource for kids to have an educational experience, but the staff did not want it to be another school-like experience. The play facilitators structure the live video to just be an open-ended experience that allows viewers to have the freedom to learn without being assessed at the end. “We didn’t set out to be another school. We didn’t want to become another thing that a kid had to do,” Stolt said.

Although the online adventures of the Amazeum were initiated by the pandemic, the museum has taken the idea of using online platforms to boost its community involvement and applied it to its plan for when it is finally able to open its doors again.

“[The pandemic] has helped us to look at what it looks like to have our online interactions as an addition to people coming into the museum. We can now use Amazeum YOU as a content driver and up the authenticity to a different level because we’ll have the ability to capture the guest experience live and show it with video,” Stolt said.

Stolt said the organization is planning to use Amazeum YOU to connect with different audiences, such as older children who don’t typically interact with the museum.

The Amazeum has made it a priority to stay connected with the community during the pandemic, and its efforts have drawn in an audience both new and old. There is not yet a set date for its reopening, but the Amazeum will continue to bring amazing new discoveries and activities to its viewers online. ■

Visit www.amazeum.org for more information. The Amazeum brand of interactive, hands-on experience started when the museum opened on July 15, 2015. Be sure to check the website for activities in celebration of the museum’s 5th birthday and for reopening updates.

HEALTH SOLUTIONS

Beyond Traditional Medicine

Dr. Josh and Dr. Sarah Rowden

Family Wellness Center

- Chiropractic Care
- Pre and Post Natal Care
- Pediatrics
- Spinal Decompression Therapy
- Thyroid Disorders
- Cold Laser
- Food Sensitivity Testing
- Weight Loss Program
- Massage
- Acupuncture

5300 South Southern Hills Court, Suite 200, Rogers, AR 72758 • Exit 81 Pleasant Grove Road
479.636.1324 • nwahealthsolutions.com

FOR SALE & LEASE

3607 SE METRO PWKY - BENTONVILLE, AR

- **\$1,675,000**
- **7,788 SF**
- **1.65 ACRES**

Brennan Sharpe

c: (479) 530-3774
o: (479) 271-4161
brennan@arkrealestate.com