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Boy at work: Tyrese Jackson, 7, of Uniondale at the new museum at Mitchel Field

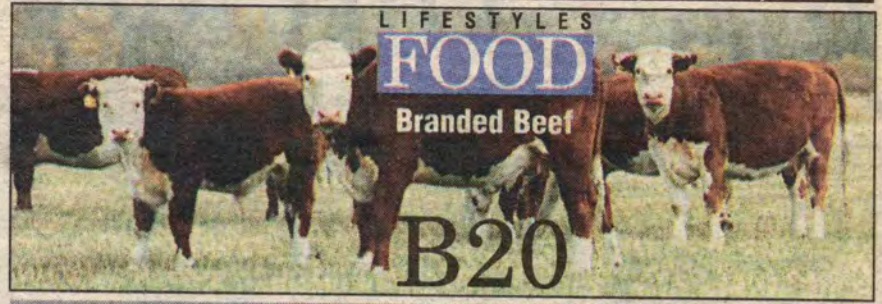
Newsday Photo / Ken Spencer

Hands-On Learning

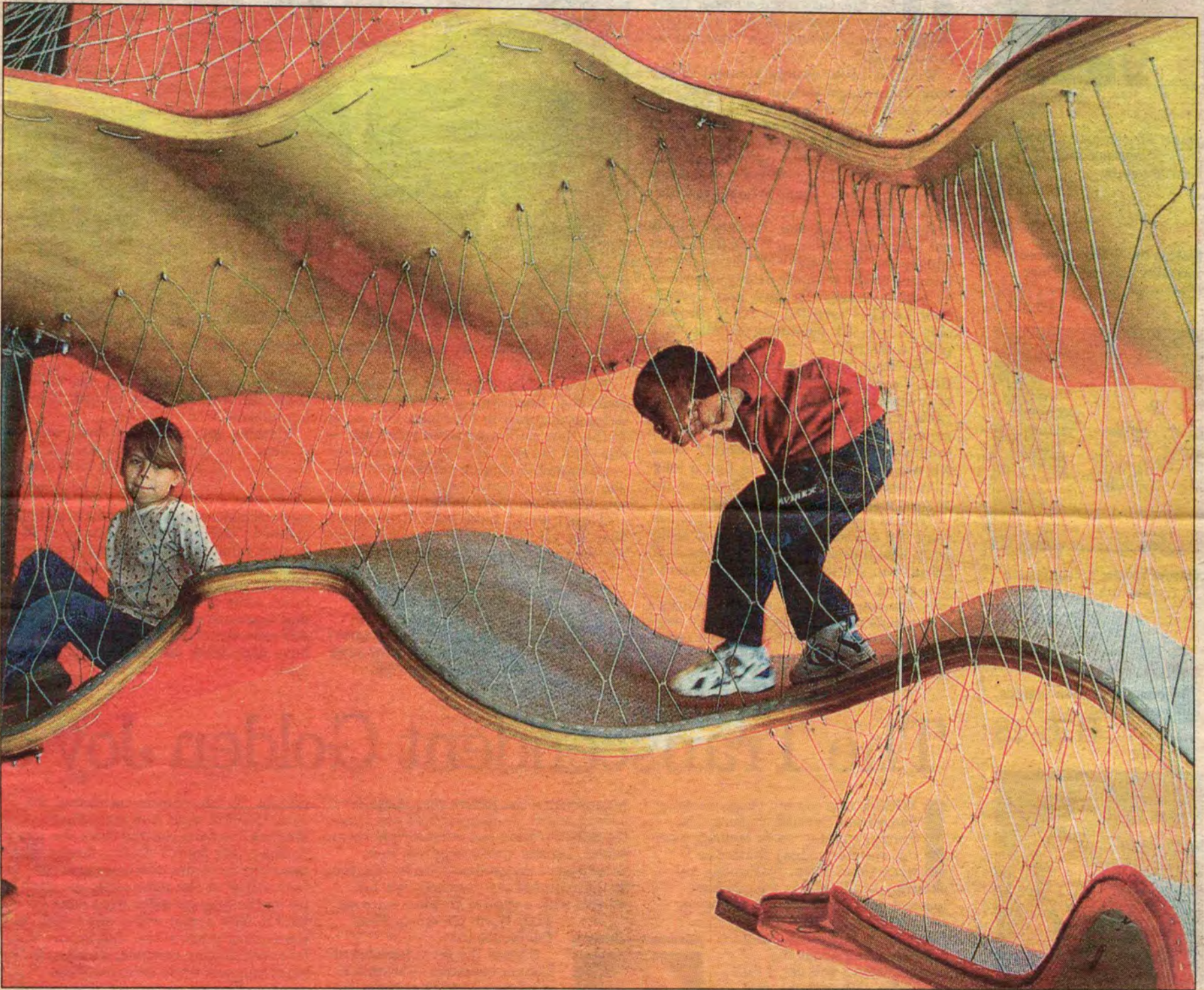
LI's New Children's Museum Opens Today;
The Early Reviews: Kids Love It / Story in Part 2



Part 2



A Beautiful Day for U2? B3



Kaitlyn Lissner, 8, and Jordan Chaulk, 5, test drive the Climb-It@LICM.

Newsday Photo / Ken Spencer

LEARNING ANNEX

At the new Long Island Children's Museum, opening today, kids will never notice they're doing math and science and social studies. They'll be having way too much fun.

B6-7

MUSEUM-QUALITY PLAY

Part 2 ★



Newsday Photos / Ken Spencer

By Beth Whitehouse
STAFF WRITER

AT HOME, who gets to climb all over the furniture? Blow sloppy, sudsy bubbles the size of basketballs inside the house? Bang on drums with gusto?

Not 8-year-old Darrell Hayes, who pointed that out after scrambling around on the new Long Island Children's Museum's enormous, two-story climbing structure, complete with magic carpet-like walkways. "I don't usually get to climb things at my house," said Darrell. "The only thing I get to climb in my house is a pole."

Not 8-year-old Amber Gumbs, who plunged her hands into a soapy mixture and blew bubbles through a triangle she made of her fingers. "I'm not allowed to blow bubbles in the house. I might make a mess. I always have to do it on the porch."

Or 7-year-old Amy Stubblefield, who rapped on drums in the music room and later yelled when she thought she might fall off the climbing sculpture. "I was screaming. Nobody told me to be quiet."

The three first- and sec-



Museum "explainer" Jessica Krumerman plays with Melanie Allen, 10. At right, explainer A.J. Garavuso listens in with Gabrielle Batson, 10.

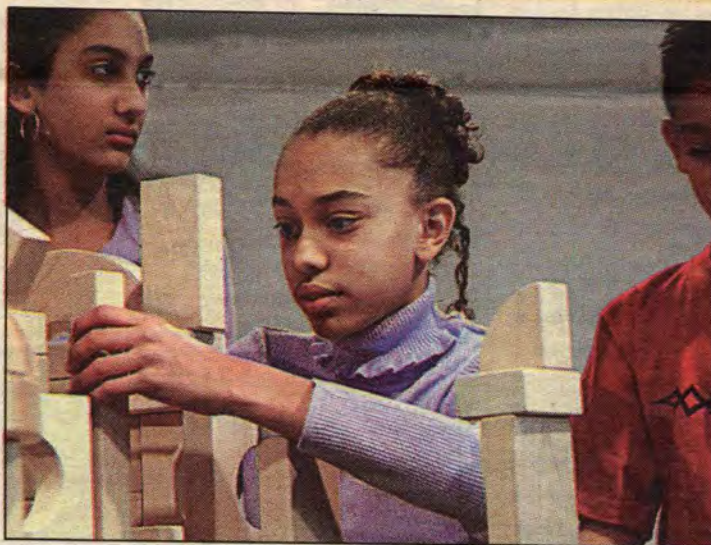


In a former hangar at Mitchel Field, a place for young imaginations to soar

ond-graders were among 18 children from the Uniondale school district invited by Newsday to a sneak preview of the museum last week. It opens to the public today.

The mammoth building with bright yellow windows is housed in a converted airplane hangar at Mitchel Field, just west of Nassau Community College. The new space, which can accommodate 10 times more visitors than the former museum in Garden City, is more colorful, more spacious — well, just *more* everything.

This morning's opening ceremony will include a "ribbon cutting" — schoolchil-



Michelle Allen, 12, builds a structure out of blocks.

your legs disappear.)

- Type out a message in Morse code to a friend across the room. ("Figure it out, Mommy," yelled 10-year-old Alex McManus, as he typed out four dots for "H" and two dots for "I.")

- Lie on a bed designed for a deaf person that wakes the sleeper with an alarm clock that makes the entire bed vibrate.

"I didn't know people in wheelchairs could drive," said Melanie after visiting Changes & Challenges, one of the museum's 12 galleries. Changes & Challenges teaches how people with disabilities use special equipment and methods to live normal lives. It includes a van customized for a wheelchair that visitors can climb inside.

The other galleries include Bricks & Sticks, where visitors build with wood blocks and colorful plastic pieces; Bubbles; Communication Station; It's Alive, which explains the way things grow, eat and move; mUSic; Pattern Studio, which explores patterns in art and nature; Tool-Box, which offers tools from around the world; Sandy Island; Climb-It@LICM; TotSpot, where tots up to age 4 can crawl or wiggle or slide; and the ever-changing KaleidoZone. The museum also has a 150-seat theater, a vending-machine cafeteria, and employees called "explainers" who help visitors interpret the exhibits.

Parents were hooked on the museum as well. "This is the nicest children's museum we've ever been to, and we've

dren with safety scissors will cut through a colorful paper chain strung across the lobby, said Robert Lemle, president of the museum's board of trustees and one of the museum's founders. The museum will be open to the public Wednesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; admission is \$8 for children and adults (babies under 1 are free; senior citizens pay \$7).

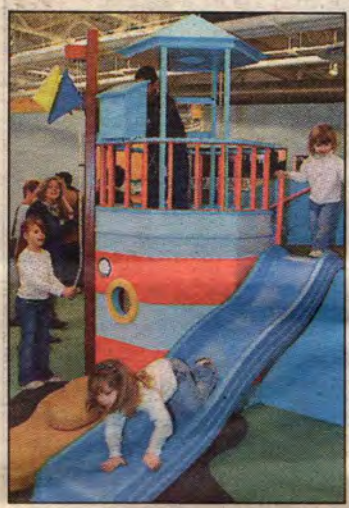
The consensus among the young critics who visited last week was clear: The museum is a place to do all kinds of outrageous things:

- Become a television weather personality hosting a true-to-life broadcast. (Melanie Allen, 10, learned why wearing green pants is a no-no when you're on TV. Hint — they tend to make



Lanie Lissner, 15 months, and Kim Stubblefield and her son, Patrick, 8, make bubbles.

Y

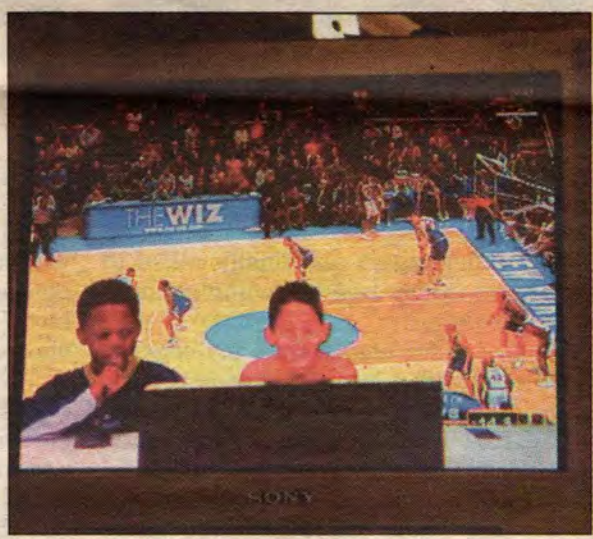


Above, sliding in the TotSpot. At right, Victoria Pickney, 9, concentrates on a face that is divided into three sections that rotate to mix and match.

been to a lot," said Kim Stubblefield, ticking off some other children's museums she has visited — in Houston, San Diego and Richmond, Va.

"You take them to a museum, and they can't touch. Everything here is hands-on, and that makes a big difference. I have a feeling I'm going to be here a lot," said Antoinette Cook, mom to Darrell Hayes.

"It's an extension of their learning in school," said RoseAnn Zarou, who has a 9-year-old son, Edmund, and a 12-year-old daughter, Veronica. "When they come here, they don't realize that they're learning because it is so much fun. I love it. I can't wait to come back — you never stop learning."



Joshua Baker and Edmund Zarou anchor the sports desk. At right, "explainer" Audrey O'Malley conducts Darrell Hayes in a mUSIC room.

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WITNESS Alex, who stood in front of a glass case on a wall in the Sandy Island gallery, moving a handle to make waves wash up on a beach, which, in turn, caused the sand to wash away.

"I never actually got to do this except for on a computer," Alex said, explaining how his third-grade teacher taught them about erosion last year. "This shows how sand erodes and how waves bring it back down into the ocean."

Nearby, Edmund was examining shells and egg cases in some sand. "This is cool," he said. "You can find what

different animals live in the ocean and in the sand." That's the kind of excitement the museum's board and staff are hoping visitors to the museum will feel. Lisa Greene, a founder and vice president of the museum's board, said she hopes visiting parents and children will realize potential "teachable moments" exist all over Long Island and will be inspired to pursue them. "I will be so happy if parents on a trip to the beach, instead of just a shovel, will bring a magnet and a magnifying glass," Greene said.

That may very well happen, judging from the museum's initial reviews. "This was very, very, very fun," said Darrell. And, said 7-year-old Tyrese Jackson: "I'm going to come back here again." ■

The museum's Web site, www.licm.org gives directions.



In an exhibit about disabilities, Amy Stubblefield, 7, tries out a wheelchair.



To see a video of the Children's Museum and the activities there, log on to www.newsday.com/entertainment.