



FREDERIK MEIJER Gardens & Sculpture Park

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CONTACT

Amy Sawade
Public Relations Specialist
616-975-3155
asawade@meijergardens.org

MEIJER GARDENS CELEBRATES THE FIFTH BIRTHDAY OF CHILDREN'S GARDEN

*Birthday celebration on June 20 at 1-4 PM
Summer activities for the whole family*

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., — June 1, 2009 — Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the world's most significant sculpture and botanic experiences, commemorates the fifth anniversary of the Lena Meijer Children's Garden with a birthday celebration and fun-filled family activities all summer-long.

The celebration centers around the Fifth Birthday Party on June 20 at 1-4 PM. Activities for kids of all ages include acrobatic demonstrations, juggling, making birthday hats, birthday games, face painting, costumed characters, a search-and-find treasure hunt and much more. Complimentary cupcakes and Quaker Chewy granola bars will be given out. The Fifth Birthday Party is free with paid admission to Meijer Gardens.

The birthday fanfare will continue all summer. Appearing throughout the Children's Garden are larger-than-life topiaries shaped like gift boxes, a giant birthday cake, a fanciful carousel and the "un-birthday" table from "Alice in Wonderland." Beginning June 8, birthday activities will occur daily until August 30. Daily challenge activities will be held weekdays and weekends at 11 AM-12 PM. Weekday story times will be held at 10:30 AM and 1:30 PM. A more detailed schedule of events is included below.

The Lena Meijer Children's Garden is one of the largest in the nation and one of Meijer Gardens' most popular attractions. Since opening in June 2004, more than a half-million visitors of all ages have explored its ten thematic areas. The areas include the Kid-Sense Garden, Great Lakes Garden, Wooded Wetland, Rock Quarry, Log Cabin, Story Telling Garden, Tree House Village, Butterfly Maze, Labyrinth and Sculpture Walk. Each area offers a unique educational experience for guests.

"The Lena Meijer Children's Garden is a place where nature, art and education all hold hands," said David Hooker, President and CEO of Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. "It is where our mission is best presented in one fun, engaging and interactive experience."

"The Children's Garden encourages exploration and promotes fun so thoroughly that visitors don't even realize how much they've learned," said Linda Thompson, Director of Education at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. "We want to spark curiosity and engage all ages without traditional signage. Our garden is child-friendly while still getting across big ideas."

The Michigan theme is evident throughout the Children's Garden. The Great Lakes Garden is a small-scale version of the state's waterways and teaches visitors how boats travel between the lakes. In the Rock Quarry, children can dig under the sand for pre-historic Michigan fossils and polish Petoskey stones. An enormous beaver topiary in the Wooded Wetland represents the actual size of prehistoric beavers in Michigan. The sculpture walk features a collection by Michigan artists such as Marshall Fredericks.

The Lena Meijer Children's Garden is not only a place for education, exploration and family fun; it's also a garden. Visitors will find a rich garden, full of texture, color, fragrance and pattern.

“Our children’s garden is unique because it successfully accomplishes two goals: it sparks a natural curiosity in our visitors and it’s an ever-changing beautiful garden,” said Steve LaWarre, Director of Horticulture at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. “Open year-round, it features plants that provide color and interest throughout all four seasons.”

Unique plants intrigue visitors with names like bears breeches, elephant head amaranth and monkey puzzle. In the Kid-Sense Garden, the five senses are represented with plantings like peppermint and cinnamon basil for smell; zinnias and tulips for sight; trumpet vine and fiddle leaf fig for sound; silk plants and cotton wool for touch; and licorice and chocolate mint for taste.

The Children’s Garden is completely ADA and stroller accessible. It opened on Father’s Day, June 20, 2004 after six years of planning and two years of construction. Namesake Lena Meijer and her husband Fred were the lead donors among many to raise five million dollars to create the garden.

Quaker Chewy is the 2009 sponsor of the Lena Meijer Children’s Garden.

Summer-long Fun in the Children’s Garden

Daily Challenge Activities

June 8 – August 30, 11 AM – 12 PM

- **Mondays: Outdoor Artists’ Studio**
Observe professional artists drawing, painting and sculpting with clay. Learn how they use the materials, then join the fun and make your own art.
- **Tuesdays: Birthday Party Games**
Participate in a hula hoop contest at the “Five Rings” sculpture, a bean bag toss at the “Juggler” and “Acrobat Clown” sculptures, then make your own party hat.
- **Wednesdays: Fish Out of Water**
Find five fish in fifty seconds. It’s harder than you think (they’re cleverly hidden). Ready, set, go!
- **Thursdays: Alice in the Children’s Garden Wonderland**
Enjoy a unique version of “Alice in Wonderland,” with actress Laura Fisher. From the white rabbit and the talking flowers to the un-birthday party, have fun with Alice.
- **Fridays: Music in the Maze**
Experience music and sound with educator, entertainer and trumpet player John Robinson. Participate in activities based on sounds from nature, sculpture and people.
- **Saturdays and Sundays: Weekend Surprise**
Enjoy popular daily challenges including a worm hunt, Tinker Toy bridge-building, weaving on a loom or a family checkers tournament.

Daily Story-Time

Weekdays, June 8 – August 30, 10:30 AM and 1:30 PM

Come down to the Story Telling Garden and experience books, finger puppets and props. Enjoy favorites such as “Diary of a Worm,” “Turtle’s Race with Beaver” and “The Very Busy Spider.” Also, celebrate our fifth birthday with stories “The Birthday Box” and “The Secret Birthday Message.”

Areas within the Lena Meijer Children’s Garden

- **Kid-Sense Garden:** Experience how plants affect all five senses and interactive with five giant sense symbols and a “go-find-it” spinner.
- **Great Lakes Garden:** Float boats in this water garden as you learn about the shape, size, elevation and depth of the Great Lakes.
- **Wooded Wetland:** Look through spotting scopes for things that live and grow in wetlands then go inside a simulated beaver lodge.

- **Rock Quarry:** Dig for quarry factoids under the sand and learn about fossils, glacial boulders and many other rocks.
- **Log Cabin:** Experience a log cabin made out of white pine logs and have fun with old-fashioned toys and activities.
- **Story Telling Garden:** Participate in story-time presentations everyday in this cozy, child-sized amphitheater garden. Or, put on a performance of your own.
- **Tree House Village:** Enjoy five tree houses about birds, insects, trees, woodland wildlife and your own imagination.
- **Butterfly Maze:** Navigate through a living maze shaped like a butterfly. An overlook is provided for parents to help children along.
- **Labyrinth:** Follow the brick patterns round and round until you reach the center.
- **Sculpture Walk:** Look for 22 child-friendly from “The Friendly Dragons” to “Family of Wolves.”

About Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

One of the nation’s most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park serves more than a half-million visitors annually. The 132-acre grounds feature Michigan's largest tropical conservatory; one of the largest children’s gardens in the country; arid and Victorian gardens; a carnivorous plant house; outdoor gardens; and a 1750-seat outdoor amphitheater, featuring an eclectic mix of world-renowned musicians every summer. The internationally acclaimed Sculpture Park features a permanent collection including works by Rodin, Oldenburg, Moore, Bourgeois and Plensa among others. Indoor galleries host changing sculpture exhibitions with recent exhibitions by Picasso, Degas, di Suvero, Plensa and Borofsky. For additional information, please visit www.meijergardens.org.

Contact

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