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The Children's Museum of Oswego: Where Imaginations Can Grow

By Grace Barraco, English and Adolescence Education Double Major

Tucked away in the historic Buckhout-Jones Building at the corner of First and Bridge Street is the Children's Museum of Oswego (CMOO), an institution that may not be on the radar of many SUNY Oswego students, but it's a significant part of the community that more people should be aware of. SUNY Oswego intern Cristiana Graniero, has been collaborating with the museum for a little over a month, working in conjunction with supervisor Shannon Reals.

Cristiana and Shannon took the time to speak to me about the amazing impact this establishment has had on the community, and more importantly, the impact it has had on the lives of the children of Oswego. In a town that is home to generations of families, as well as new families who come for work at the university or local industry, visible, accessible resources for children are vital — that's where CMOO comes in. According to Cristiana, "It's not just a place to bring your kids to have fun, but they are also learning so many skills that they're going to apply to life later on that they're gonna have forever." This can be crucial in the development of children, something that Cristiana knows all too well, as she is studying in hopes to become a mental health counselor for children. She states, "It's interesting to apply what I've learned to what I'm observing. It allows me to take a lot of notes; it is just really interesting to apply everything to my prior knowledge, and I think there are a lot of things that go unnoticed with how children learn, because this is such a prime year of learning in their lives."

The relationship between SUNY Oswego and CMOO is beautiful. Cristiana explained that the sense of community that has been created since she began her time at CMOO has made Oswego seem more like home to her. "My hometown is very similar to Oswego... It's a very tight-knit community, which I do like. I like running into 'oh, you *know* this person.' So, I definitely like places like this where everyone can come together as a community. I think a lot of people here just want to see each other grow."

Through speaking with Shannon Reals I learned that the museum is a non-profit organization established to help children expand their horizons through learning and play. It's really become a cornerstone of the Oswego community.

"I think with businesses like these, you have to be a certain type of person to work in this field," Shannon said. "You have to be a very compassionate person, and very understanding. These people have shown me nothing but that; they're very caring people, and I think that the community can see that, especially coming in. I think everyone here has kind faces, and, honestly, I think it has to do with how good of a reputation they have gained within the community. People come here and they know this place so well. Families come here every week. They know what this place is about, and I think that's an awesome thing. Especially for kids so young they have a place that they can call their second home."

Overall, the Children's Museum of Oswego may seem unassuming from the outside, and, to the average Oswego student, unimportant, but the impact that CMOO has had on the community tells a very different story.



The Children's Museum of Oswego and SUNY Oswego

Cristiana Graniero, Human Development Major
Shannon Reals, The Children's Museum of Oswego