

THE EXPRESS

MAGAZINE

July 2025



ANNIVERSARY | SOMETHING NEW

A Birthday Party for CMEE

Celebrating 20 years, the Children's Museum of the East End unveils its new outdoor park

BY
JULIANNE MOSHER

If it wasn't for seven founding mothers and their initiative to create a warm, welcoming, educational and fun space for families, the Children's Museum of the East End wouldn't be here, today.

According to Lara Sweeney, co-president of the museum, CMEE started around a kitchen table in Amagansett with a couple of local moms who were disappointed with the limited children's programming on the East End.

"They came together and decided they wanted to create more educational and play opportunities for themselves and other East End families," she said. ▶



ON JUNE 22, CMEE WILL UNVEIL ITS NEW PLAYGROUND, OPPOSITE. PUZZLE TABLES, ABOVE, ARE JUST ONE OF MANY EXPERIENCES CHILDREN ENJOY AT CMEE.

IMAGES COURTESY OF CMEE



IMAGE COURTESY OF CMEE

THE NEW PLAYGROUND AT THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF THE EAST END.

CMEE at 20

The mothers soon launched a pilot pop-up exhibit to gauge community interest in a local children's museum. The exhibit was built with the volunteer efforts of many talented carpenters, artists, and educators and the support of local businesses and families.

During the pop-up style program that would show up periodically at Guild Hall or in a church basement, more than 5,000 people visited. This prompted the group to buckle down and spearhead a campaign to open its own location. In 2005, the museum opened its permanent home in Bridgehampton, at 376 Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike.

"Twenty years later, we're still here," Sweeney said. "Kids can come and learn through play."

She added that multiple, various studies have shown that kids who play regularly have better outcomes in life.

"They learn to self-regulate," she said. "And all of that can happen through the power of play."

With over 7,000 square feet of exhibition and program space designed by Lee Skolnick Architecture + Design Partnership, CMEE soon became one of the most visited museums in Eastern Long Island bringing in nearly 75,000 visitors annually.

CMEE has a little bit of everything; parent and me classes, music programming, dancing, yoga, cooking classes, block building and

more. They offer space for birthday parties, field trips and even have a food pantry for families in need. The museum space, itself, has different exhibits for families to enjoy like a legacy tree gallery, a large indoor ship, a play farm stand and a windmill where kids can explore the "Bernoulli effect" using air to lift objects into the air.

Sweeney said the CMEE team is especially excited this year because for CMEE's birthday they are unveiling a new outdoor park exhibit. The 9,000-square-foot park is set to open on June 22.

"Some of the thinking behind it is that people think of us as a rainy-day destination," she said. "I wanted people to think of us on sunny days, too."

The park space is based on core values of nature adventure, outdoor exploration and everything one can associate with a playground. It will feature different sections for different age groups including a 2-to-5 space and 5-to-7 area.

CMEE is open Monday through Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and Friday through Sunday, 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. It is closed Thursday. Tickets are \$19 for the museum. Museum memberships are available for purchase.

"Come see us because we are really a trusted community partner and a safe space for families to come, play and be together, and meet other families," Sweeney said. "We'll take care of you." ■