



Another fantastic Family Fun Day

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The town Recreation Department and Hi-Desert Nature Museum staff kept kids busy and happy at the Our Planet; Our Home Family Fun Day at the community center Saturday.



Both kids and adults enjoy the Mardi Gras photo booth at the Family Fun Day Saturday. From left in back are Leondra McClay, Jeanette Castro, Trinity Carroll, Arianna Johnson and, in front, Jessica Carroll.

All of the community center's rooms and the museum hosted educational activities, while a bounce house and snack bar were set up outside.

The staff moved a small sawdust "beach" into the Cholla Room so children could play a pick-up-trash game with grab sticks for little animal prizes. The kids learned what kind of beach debris should be left alone and what should be picked up.

The same room offered a Jungle Jenga game. Cardboard boxes about 3 feet long in the shape of Jenga blocks were stacked high and stuffed monkeys were placed on top. Kids had to remove the "blocks" without toppling the tower. "The idea is the boxes represent trees in rain forest and the point is not to knock them down and not kill the monkeys," recreation leader Brennalyne Cannavo explained. "It is a metaphor about deforestation."

Another display taught children about saving sea turtles. Fake jellyfish and plastic bags were floating in a fish tank. The idea was to demonstrate how the two things look very similar. The confused turtles eat the bags instead of the jellyfish and are killed.

The Mojave Desert Land Trust put up a display about identifying local animal scat.

A talented face painter quickly transformed children into cats, butterflies, cartoon characters and superheroes.

Inside the museum, kids were able to make rain sticks and beaded bracelets and necklaces at the arts and crafts stations.

But the main attraction was the petting zoo and animal show in the Yucca Room. Animal wranglers Randy German and Thomas Gaozerano with Mobile Zoo of Southern California brought a large supply of critters. German gave a short lecture on many of the animals and Gaozerano helped kids in and out of the petting zoo. Kids learned about Guinea pigs, chinchillas, desert tortoises, ball pythons, rabbits, Indian ring-necked parrots, tarantulas and iguanas.

"Did you know that Guinea pigs come from Peru?" German asked his audience. "And did you know that chinchillas clean themselves by taking dust baths at the edge of volcanoes?"

German then introduced Scooter to the kids. Scooter is a large desert tortoise. "Can anyone tell me the differences between a turtle and a tortoise?" he asked. The petting animals included goats, sheep, chickens, geese and many of the lecture animals too.