

STEAM PARK at Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum Debuts in August

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ANN ARBOR, Mich. (August 18, 2021) – Imagine discovering the inner workings of a 17th century time switch clock or gazing at a 16-foot-tall ball maze within a beautiful arched window in Ann Arbor’s original firehouse. This two-story gallery with the inner workings of engineering concepts and more awaits exploration this August at the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum’s debut of STEAM PARK.

STEAM PARK is a gallery consisting of 23 individual exhibits created in collaboration with Toyota engineers in Ann Arbor. The exhibits are designed for hands-on engagement that reveal through clear plexiglass the mechanical marvels normally hidden from sight. Exhibits explore simple machines, structures, aerodynamics, mechanical movement and more.

“STEAM PARK provides multiple moments of discovery for visitors of all ages, revealing the awe and wonder of science, technology, engineering and math through arts-inspired hands-on experiences,” said Mel Drumm, president and CEO of the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum. “Through an immersive and interactive experience, we hope to spark interest and inspire youth to explore the engineered world.”

STEAM PARK was made possible by grants from the Toyota USA Foundation and Toyota Motor North America totaling \$1.5 million. For nearly two decades, Toyota’s Research & Development located in Michigan has collaborated on several initiatives with Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum, which serves close to 400,000 visitors annually across the state. This long-standing collaboration underscores Toyota’s commitment to the communities it serves while inspiring the next generation towards STEAM.

“As Toyota transitions to a mobility company, we think that the STEAM Park really aligns with our fundamentals,” said Jeff Makarewicz, group vice president and Toyota USA Foundation director. “Through new connected, automated and electrification technologies, we are trying to solve some of the world’s most critical problems, but we can’t do it alone. We need to inspire the next generation of innovators and problem solvers, and that is what STEAM Park does.”

In addition to opening STEAM PARK, the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum is working to refresh the popular preschool gallery. Toyota’s funding will support its renovation, which will be called STEAM PLAY, and the creation of new preschool exhibits.

STEAM PARK exhibits include:

- **Time Switch Cuckoo Clock:** A unique art piece, this exhibit invites exploration and interaction with a range of mechanical and electric technologies that span over 500 years from the first mechanical clocks of the late Middle Ages to the current electronic technologies we depend upon today.
- **Roulette Curves:** The world’s first-of-its-kind digital logarithmic spiral drawing tool machine. Visitors create beautiful repeating patterns by picking from an array of colored line widths.
- **Propeller Chair:** Visitors work to hoist themselves in a chair up to the ceiling and slowly propel down to experience the slow decent with gravity.

STEAM PARK is included with regular admission to the museum. Admission is \$16 per person, free for members and \$3 each (for up to 6 people) for those holding EBT cards. Special discount membership packages will be available on opening weekend, and for a special discounted weekend in September. Normal Museum hours are Tuesday through Thursday, and Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

To learn more about the development of the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum STEAM Park, click here: [Toyota Sparks Interest in STEAM With a Hands-on Experience](#).