

Museum's new exhibits feature Charleston through a child's eyes, with more on way

- By Megan Fernandes mfernandes@postandcourier.com
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The Children's Museum of the Lowcountry unveils its new Shem Creek play exhibit.

- Provided



A new entrance is proposed for for the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry on Ann Street in downtown Charleston.

- Liollo Architecture/Provided rendering

Amid a \$4 million interior renovation, the **Children's Museum of the Lowcountry** is rolling out new exhibits in downtown Charleston, on the heels of unveiling its [St. George satellite location](#) in May.

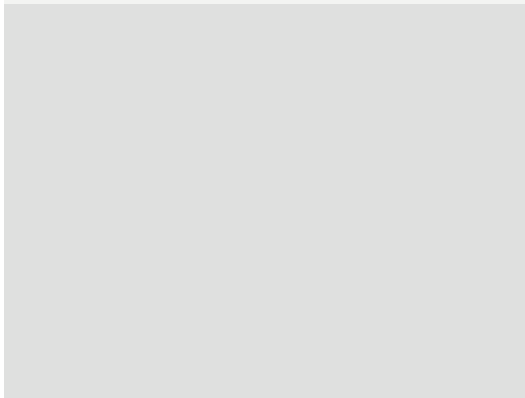
Since the museum can't expand beyond the walls of the historic former train depot it occupies, officials have been trying to make the most out of the existing space.

That has included rethinking some aspects, like a pirate ship feature that was cut in half, repainted, relocated and recast as a shrimping vessel as part of a pint-

sized **Shem Creek**, where children can pretend to helm the boat, cook and serve a seafood dinner or drive the harbor tug.

Executive Director **Karen Coltrane** said the goal of the renovation has been to make exhibits cohesively “Charleston from a child’s eyes.”

“Kids love pretend play, because that’s how they learn about the world,” Coltrane said. “All the exhibits will reflect the Lowcountry and Charleston, similar to the way the exhibits in St. George reflect that community. Theming allows parents to make connections beyond the walls of the museum.”



The Children’s Museum of the Lowcountry’s new Publix mini shopping mall for kids.

Provided

As part of the renovation, a new **Publix** miniature grocery store was revamped, a **Rainbow Row**-inspired play area was added and a mock TV news station exhibit opens July 20.

While interior work is underway, the museum plans to apply for exterior work, which must clear a city review.

Coltrane said that while the Charleston museum has a small physical footprint, it doesn’t limit the impact it can make. The primary location on Ann Street serves roughly 130,000 visitors annually on top of its educational outreach programming with local schools.

The museum has long had plans to relocate and build a more accessible entrance. It gained a preliminary signoff from the **Board of Architectural Review** on July 10, the first of three approvals needs from the BAR.

The railing along the ramp and side fence were designed to be a canvas for a future **David Boatwright** mural, which will also need to be approved. Coltrane said the proposed themes for the work are bubbles and butterflies, which she sees as a “fun and whimsical visual as you walk up to the museum.”