

?Happy Days? exhibit at Museum of Dufferin explores nostalgia of childhood

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The Museum of Dufferin (MoD) is taking visitors on a nostalgic trip back to their childhood with a new exhibit.

The Museum of Dufferin will be launching its new exhibit titled, ?Happy Days?, on Feb. 17 (Family Day) in the main gallery space of the museum. The exhibit explores the nostalgia of childhood through a curated collection of toys, games, and photographs.

?We've been planning this exhibit for over a year now and we thought about how we could make an exhibit that talks to a lot of different generations. Everyone, of course, has been a kid at some point so we explore the different stages of childhood, but also the nostalgia and joy that you get from being a kid,? said Jasmine Proteau, manager of the Museum of Dufferin.

Visitors to the ?Happy Days? exhibit have the opportunity to walk through and see a variety of different toys through the decades, many of which they may recognize from their own childhoods.

?One of the things that we look at when we're trying to create an exhibit is what can we show from our collection to tell a story,? explained Proteau. ?We have a lot of these really cute toys that I think people either remember playing with as a kid or that have endured until now.?

The collection of toys spans from the 1950s to the current day but also includes a few pieces dating as far back as the 1800s. Some of the pieces that may look familiar to visitors include: Lite Bright, Trolls, Cabbage Patch Kids, Hot Rod Cars, Pac-Man, Tamagotchi, and friendship bracelets.

?There are toys that people might not remember, but will spark deep memories they forgot they had as a kid,? said Proteau.

The exhibit also highlights the history of toy making within the community by sharing photos and interviews from residents who worked at or had family members working at the Fisher-Price factory. The toy manufacturer opened its factory doors in Orangeville in 1964 but closed the doors for good just four years later in 1968.

?Not a lot of people know that there's a history with the toy manufacturing business in Dufferin County,? said Proteau.

While the exhibit reminisces on the nostalgia of childhood, it also explores larger themes within it such as workers' rights and women's rights.

In one particular instance, the exhibit shares the story of how workers of the Fisher-Price factory in Orangeville, who were primarily women, chose to go on strike to protest their low wages. Instead of negotiating with them or changing their wages, Fisher Price ultimately decided to close the factory and remove themselves from the area.

?There's fun elements to the exhibition, but there's also another underlying story that's deeper,? said Proteau.

With the launch of the new exhibit falling on Family Day, the Museum of Dufferin is incorporating hands-on activities for children including friendship bracelet making and a scavenger hunt. The event will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and has free admission.

To learn more about the ?Happy Days? exhibit or to register for the Family Day activities at the Museum of Dufferin, visit www.dufferinmuseum.com.