

Families find fun in Riverfront Park festival

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Smiling faces and positive vibes filled the atmosphere at Riverfront Park Family Fest on Saturday.

Hundreds of children and their parents came to enjoy activities and lunch hosted by Family Building Blocks in the South Meadow section of the park.

Vendors had hands-on activities that specifically reached out to the children.

Kid's Zumba — part salsa dance, part aerobic workout — seemed to be the favorite at the event. Catchy children's dance music played as families exercised and learned new dance moves at the event hosted by the YMCA.

While some people boogied, others ventured to the Create a Memory activity booth, which allowed participants to paint their own pottery and make their own hand prints on tile.

"These tile pieces are going on the Hands Are Not for Hurting wall in our new studio," said Dwayne Flemmings, manager of Create a Memory.

Sarah Northrop, 30, and her daughter Hannah Saphir, 3, of Salem stood in line to get their hand prints put on a tile piece.

"The stuff they set up for the kids is really neat. Hannah is really into the balloons," Sarah said.

Hannah wore bright green sunglasses and held a balloon while she tugged on her mom's arm to move closer to the front of the line.

Safety Town and Cautious Kids demonstrated bicycle safety. Children were shown how to properly wear helmets, look both ways before crossing the street and be wary of moving vehicles.

Other vendors included the Boys & Girls Club, Family YMCA of Marion & Polk Counties, Salem Police Department and the Humane Society of the Willamette Valley.



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Christopher Shadden (left) begins to make a balloon animal in the CWerks booth for Bodie Estaep, 10, of Boise, Idaho, during the Riverfront Family Fest.

Online

Family Building Blocks has many opportunities that anyone could be included in.

To volunteer, or for more information call (503)566-2132 or go to www.familybuildingblocks.org.

Family Building Blocks is a child abuse prevention program that helps keep children safe and families together.

The nonprofit organization began in 1997 and was modeled after a relief nursery in Eugene. Its clients include parents who were abused as children and parents who have a history of drug or alcohol abuse or mental illness.

Its mission is to break the generational cycle of abuse.

Last year it served more 550 children and 1,200 individuals volunteered to help support children and families.

"It's a good opportunity to bring families together," Said Sarah Martin, 30, a teacher and volunteer for Family Building Blocks.

"It's nice to see that everyone is connecting and having a good time."

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