

Lego and llamas at the library



Event co-ordinator Louise Villeneuve speaks with parents about the cognitive and fine-motor benefits of Lego engineering at the Bancroft Public Library, as Kaitlyn and Clara get down to building. SARAH VANCE Special To This Week

By Sarah Vance

It was all about engineering, as imaginations ran wild at the Bancroft Public Library on Saturday, Jan. 30.

It began as tubs of Lego were overturned onto the soft carpets of the children's area, and families got down on their hands and knees, sorting through the elements and collaborating on designs.

"I am really good at Lego because I am experienced in Minecraft," said Kaitlyn, who built an elaborate theme park with her friend Clara.

The park included sets of numbered stairs, a slide, and court yards with pizza shops and a pool. The girls piloted several supporting beams to stop the slide from collapsing, before the structure became sound.

All over the room, you could hear the sounds of fingers sorting Lego elements and excited laughter as children moved around to find the pieces they needed to plan out their designs.

"There are multiple interlocking sets to my design," said Reuben, a young builder who made an executive home with his parents and sister, with windows and doors that open, a swimming pool, and a car in the garage.

Lily, a Grade 4 student from York River Public School, designed a helicopter with a moving propeller, and then built a house with a balcony and pillars.

Stephie and Laura, both kindergarten students, built trains, and used them to haul cargo such as Lego pizzas and windows to other kids in the room.

"I love Lego," said five-year-old Abby who attended the program with her grandmother.

There were several cars built, with axle and steering systems and many structures as diverse as the children who brought them to life.

Literacy through Lego is an ongoing project presented by the Bancroft, Carlow-Mayo, and Hastings-Highlands libraries. The project is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

"We have at least four large tubs of blocks that have not been opened yet," said Louise Villeneuve, library events co-ordinator.

?Lego is amazing because it has been around for so long and it continues to bring so much learning to each new generation.? Villeneuve continues to engage local children with weekly programs that are free of charge and dynamic in nature, with take-away gifts and structured activities.

?Plans are underway to run daily children's program over the March Break, and we are busy planning activities,? said Villeneuve. Villeneuve has brought new directions to the library, building on the many successful existing programs. Her popular adult colouring class is amongst the first in the area.

Villeneuve, who raises llamas and creates different types of wool from their fibres, will also provide a spinning demonstration in February. Drop spindles will be available for people who would like to try their hand at it. Patrons are invited to explore this artisanal process in the warm intimate setting of the Bancroft Public Library on Feb. 16, from 6 to 7 p.m.