The Library Inside the Museum

infoZone is an innovative experience that combines The Children's Museum's strength in sparking curiosity with the vast resources of the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library (IMCPL). It is a facility in which both institutions can explore the design and function of a shared resource. According to Chris Cairo, director of Project Development Services for IMCPL, "The museum's strength is our weakness and vice versa. Libraries don't engage

people well, while museums can't provide in-depth information. So we thought, 'What would happen if we bring these powerful educational institutions together?'"

Located on Level 2 of the Welcome Center, infoZone offers books, CDs, DVDs, learning kits, magazines, and Bunny Book Bags in an energetic, kids-oriented atmosphere. Visitors can access information from Web sites and databases in the techZone computer lab, while the youngest visitors can practice pre-reading skills using experience-based activities such as a magnetic activity wall, child-friendly computers created specifically for the pre-reader, and green-screen technology. Activities in the techZone computer lab are designed to teach digital skill sets and introduce the visitor to new and exciting technology under the guidance of skilled staff.

infoZone is a work in progress that will adapt as people use its services and provide feedback. It is an experiment that its creators hope will serve as a national model for providing opportunities to learn and practice using critical literacy skill sets for locating information productively and intelligently.

infoZone is a valuable, free resource for the community and the state. "In the museum's continued effort to serve the neighborhood, infoZone is a branch library that meets the needs of the residents of the museum district," says President and CEO Jeffrey H. Patchen. Both local and out-of-town Hoosiers can access infoZone without paying museum admission. All Indiana residents can check out resources with their library card and return them to their home library.