Spark's Mission is to enrich the lives of young learners by creating shared, interactive experiences that engage people of all ages in the joy of play, the power of learning, and a sense of community.
2020 has been anything but business as usual. Despite these challenges Spark has emerged triumphant, opening the doors of a fresh new facility, and have matured into an independent and impactful family service organization.

This success is a direct testament to our stakeholders who strongly believe that play is the work of our children. Despite the obstacles, we were able to realize our dream of creating a brand-new, highly accessible resource featuring innovative exhibits, a state-of-the-art maker space, classroom, climber with much more coming in 2021. We are extremely proud of the new space and all cleaning protocols we have put into place to provide a safe place for everyone to play!

We are thankful to the Minnesota Children’s Museum for their guidance and for giving us the wings to do this important work on our own, intentionally tailoring the facility to meet the needs of the Rochester community and the surrounding region for years to come. Programming, communications, fundraising, and operations are also revitalized, and we look forward to a busier than ever 2021 in this beautiful space, intentionally designed to ignite curiosity, celebrate diversity, and cultivate the most memorable family experiences possible.

-Jennifer Staley,
Executive Director
Our World Bazaar features a stage area with costumes, tailor, market, kitchen and restaurant and library seating area all highlighting more than 53 different cultures. H2OH what a blast the kids have in this area learning about the power of water. The Little Sparks area provides a safe play area for the littlest sparks with soft places to crawl, mirror triangle and a light table to discover. The green screen creates backgrounds and unique videos or try your hand at being a reporter. Our Helix is a safe, artistic crawl space for kids of all ages to climb and explore. Stay tuned as plans are now underway for our Smarter Cities Exhibit opening in late 2021.

HANDS-ON EXHIBITS

Each day new crafts, projects and hands-on creativity is encouraged in this imaginative space. The makerspace is a place where individuals and groups can create and learn in a safe hands-on environment.

IMAGINATION STATION, MAKERS SPACE, PRIVATE PARTY ROOM

INCLUSIVITY & PARTNERSHIPS

Spark partners with organizations to ensure access to children in area Community Schools and through local programs. Sensory accommodation bags are also available for use for children with special needs.
SPARK CONNECTED

Over 19 countries

13,000 people served

1,200 members

1,200 members
COMMUNITY FOCUSED

Discovery Play
Thanks to the generosity of the Rochester Area Foundation, we are excited to welcome Discovery Play to Spark! Spark welcomes children and families of all abilities, on our Discovery Play night families and children impacted by a special need can explore Spark on their own terms while caregivers have the opportunity to connect with other families in the community. Music sessions with a licensed music therapist, storytelling, and specialized programming will be offered. Information from local supportive organizations will be available.

Free Sundays
According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, across a child’s lifetime, children in poverty experience a 6,000-hour learning difference compared to children who have economic stability. It is said that the early years of childhood are pivotal for later success and recognition of foundational skills, especially those children who fall below the poverty threshold. Thanks to Minnwest Bank, Spark is accessible to all families once a month, regardless of financial barriers!

Learning through the ages
Establishing intergenerational relationships allows both groups to learn about each other’s differences and similarities while building relational capacity and a sense of fulfillment. Thanks to Benedictine Living Community-Rochester, grandparents can play FREE at Spark every Tuesday for the entire year!
"We had a blast at Spark today. There were so many things for my kids to do. We spent 4 hours there and they were still playing hard. The staff was great and very friendly. Thanks for making this a great experience. I would recommend checking this place out if you have young children."

-Patrick E.
"I couldn't say enough good things about Spark! Their new space inside Apache Mall is absolutely beautiful. It is vibrant in color from floor to ceiling, very clean, and is welcoming the second you walk through their doors."
-Audrey H.

MORE THAN 100 PROGRAMS AND EVENTS WITH OVER 50 COMMUNITY PARTNERS!
OUR GENEROUS DONORS

$500,000 and Above
Harper Family Foundation

$100,000 - $499,999
Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund
Brookfield Properties
Bowman Tool & Machining
Mayo Clinic
Rochester Athletic Club
Think Mutual Bank

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Bradley and Rebecca Nuss
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Minnesota Department of Education
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The Hubbard Broadcasting Foundation/ABC 6 News

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Melissa Brinkman
Merchants Bank
Midwest Floor Solutions
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North Sky Health Consulting
Olmsted Medical Center
Palmer Soderberg
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Tom Kadlec Honda
WA Group
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Al and MaryAnn Moschner
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Fagan Studios
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