


EXPLORING YOUR LOCAL University

TOUR BEAUTIFUL GARDENS, VISIT A MUSEUM,
SEE A SHOW, GO TO A GAME. FIND ALL THIS
AND MUCH MORE AT A CAMPUS NEAR YOU.

BY JULIE COLLINS PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETE KRUMHARDT



When Connie Hubbard and her family went out for supper on a chilly evening last November, they walked the four blocks from their home to the Black Hills State University student union in Spearfish, South Dakota. When they arrived, Connie, her husband Todd, and daughter Elizabeth, 9, were served a simple portion of rice and beans. Meanwhile, son Toby, 12, was served a gourmet meal of chicken cordon bleu, French bread, and cheesecake.

No, Toby wasn't receiving a reward while the others got a meager dinner. The family was participating in the Oxfam Hunger Banquet, an event sponsored by United Ministries to illustrate the unequal distribution of food throughout the world. The Oxfam Hunger Banquet is only one way the Hubbards are involved at Black Hills State. In fact, in Spearfish (population 8,606), many family activities revolve around the campus. "I think a university in a small town like ours is great

Universities offer many benefits to communities that surround them. Residents of Ames, for example, enjoy the idyllic grounds of Iowa State University as well as the many events at Jack Trice Stadium (left).



WEEKEND FUN >> from 160

for family activities,” Connie says. “The community and university are so dependent on each other.”

Seppy Basili, author of *The Unofficial, Unbiased Guide to the 328 Most Interesting Colleges*, touts universities as more than just a place for college students and academics. “Local universities bring in all kinds of cultural events that might not otherwise come to their area,” Basili says. Your family, too, can reap some unexpected benefits of higher education by discovering the untapped resources available at a local university.

A UNIVERSITY OF CHOICES

Inspect all of the opportunities and facilities available on campus the next time you’re looking for inspiration for a family outing. You never know where you might stumble upon a valuable learning experience or an enjoyable event. Here’s a sampling of the range of activities you and your family may find.

Reiman Gardens at Iowa State University in Ames is home to the glass-walled Christina Reiman Butterfly Wing, a magical place filled with exotic butterflies from six continents. The 14 acres of Reiman Gardens make it the largest public garden in Iowa.

TAKE A FRONT-ROW SEAT. Follow the sounds of musical instruments or stirring vocal performances to your university’s performing arts center for high-quality entertainment that won’t break the bank. Every year, the University of Minnesota’s Twin Cities campus, for example, provides more than 100 free public concerts, many featuring nationally acclaimed performers. You’ll also find classic and experimental theater, and dance performances of all styles.

Many schools offer discounted prices for popular or independent movies on campus. At the University of Minnesota, the Bell Museum Auditorium shows international and independent films seven days a week (\$6 for adults, \$5 for students). And the theater in the basement of Stamp Student Union at the University of Maryland in College Park offers matinee showings of recently released films for \$2.50.

EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS. You can discover a whole new world—or even a terrific collection of teeth (yes, teeth) or handmade puppets—at campus museums, galleries, and exhibits.

University art museums often feature impressive collections that rival—or surpass—those contained in city museums. For instance, the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University in Atlanta boasts the largest collection of ancient art in the Southeast. Other university museum collections range from topics such as archaeology and natural history to unexpected items that are bound to rouse your curiosity. Puppets take on a new meaning at the University of Connecticut’s >> on 164

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Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry in Storrs, where you can view handcrafted dolls collected from all over the world. Peruse displays of Civil War-era dental tools at the Sindecuse Museum of Dentistry at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

CHECK OUT MORE THAN BOOKS. University libraries are often open to the public as well as students. For instance, visitors are welcome at Purdue University's libraries in West Lafayette, Indiana, and may be eligible for visitor privilege cards for borrowing books. Beyond checking out books, some libraries host surprising collections.

For a peek at the life of the famous crooner Bing Crosby, visitors can view the largest collection of his memorabilia at the Foley Center Library at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington. Or you might head to the basement

People who live in the greater Atlanta area can see ancient works of art from Greece, Rome, Egypt, and the Americas at the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University. Special exhibitions rotate through the world-class facility.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MICHAEL C. CARLOS MUSEUM

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of Dartmouth College's Baker Library in Hanover, New Hampshire, to view frescos by Jose Clemente Orozco that transform a reserve book room into a display of 24 vivid panels depicting American civilization. At the Syracuse University Library's Belfer Audio Archive in New York, you can view an exhibit of early recording devices and listen to some of more than 340,000 recordings, including popular music dating back to the 19th century, early radio broadcasts, and the voices of such historical figures as Thomas Edison, Amelia Earhardt, and Albert Einstein.

GET IN ON THE ACTION. Take in university athletic events to glimpse the country's best athletes before they make it big. "Kids gain an understanding of who the players are and feel excitement to see them play," Basili says.

When their son Christopher was young, >> on 166

One of the most popular exhibits at the Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University is the collection of coffins and mummies from ancient Egypt. A recent addition to this collection is the mummy of the Lady Tahat, a high-ranking temple singer.



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Jennifer Barth and her husband, Patrick, often took him to sporting events and other activities at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana. Now that Christopher is grown and attending Indiana State University, the Barths still bring groups of children to Notre Dame women's basketball games.

"The women's games are often kid-oriented, with people making balloon hats, face-painting, and even giving away prizes," Jennifer says.

Many college sporting events are often reasonably priced or have no admittance fee. Catch men's and women's lacrosse, fencing, and tennis competitions at Notre Dame for free. Or attend soccer games, which only cost \$5 for adults and \$3 for children.

Some schools provide activities for kids to hone their athletic skills. Connie's children participate on the Black Hills Gold swim team, play indoor soccer games, shoot hoops, and run around the track at the Donald E. Young Sports and Fitness Center, which caters to Black Hills State and the community.

FIND FRESH-AIR FUN. Cultivate an appreciation for nature by visiting botanical centers or public gardens, such as Iowa State University's Reiman Gardens in Ames. There you'll see the Christina Reiman Butterfly Wing, with more than 800 butterflies fluttering among tropical plants. On a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean at the University of California, Santa Cruz, lend a hand on the organic farm.

"It's amazing to watch a 6-year-old who wouldn't eat tomatoes work for a few hours and want to try the fruits of his work. That's exploration," Basili says.

CHOOSE WITH CARE. Of course, not everything on a college campus is kid-friendly. Connie says there are some events she doesn't allow her children to attend: "Sometimes

they have bands come in and play at the student union and sometimes the students get rowdier than I'd like to have my kids around, plus it's late at night." She also says she won't take her children to all of the plays on campus. "Some of them have material and subject matter that may not be interesting to kids—or may not be appropriate for them."

As with any activity you take your child to, consider the age of your child as well as your child's interests. Exposing kids to the educational and cultural offerings of a local college is a fabulous idea, but if your 3-year-old isn't going to glean anything from a museum exhibit (and will spend the entire time shrieking in boredom), it's not the best bet.

TAKE A PEEK INTO THE FUTURE. In addition to providing opportunities for fun, learning, and family bonding, spending time at your local university also allows kids a glimpse at what they may be doing in a few years. "The earlier you expose kids to school the better, because they'll look forward to attending, says Basili.

For Connie, who grew up in a small university town in South Dakota, there's nothing like the opportunity Black Hills State provides for her family and community. "I just think this university is the icing on the cake," she says. "It adds that extra amount of activities and resources that would be sad to do without."

SCOURING THE CAMPUS

The first step to taking advantage of the opportunities on campuses is finding them. Here's where to look.

- Local newspapers often detail community-related events at universities, and some feature extended coverage of universities' goings on.
- Campus publications, such as student-produced newspapers, are good sources of information, and most of them are free to the public.
- Some university Web sites list links on their home page for visitors or community members. Checking sections of university Web sites devoted to alumni or prospective students can also help you glean information about campus events and activities. Other great resources include online versions of student publications or events calendars.
- Contact the university's alumni or public affairs office. Often they'll add you to the mailing list for a specific event. Or ask to receive an alumni newsletter. Most universities will gladly send out information to friends of the college. ☺

MAKE AN EVENT

Hunting for a mummy rumored to be tucked in the basement of a small campus museum is a prime example of university lore waiting to be tracked down. Whether such tales are true or not, why not play detective with your children and set out on an adventure of your own?

Try a scavenger hunt of sorts (see who can find the most references around campus to a famous scholar or founder of the university, for instance) or search for an object or place unique to the university (such as the campanile at the University of Kansas. Tradition dictates entering freshmen must walk up through the campanile and graduating seniors must walk down through it). Or pack a picnic, find a quiet spot for lunch, then set off on a campus tour.

Regardless of what you do, make certain you're not disturbing any classes or studying students. Even in the summer or on the weekends, when the university is a prime recreation area for families, many people are hard at work.

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