

From the field to the factory to the museum

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Furmano's CEO Chad Geise and his son London Geise demonstrate the Lewisburg Children's Museum's 'Field to Factory' exhibit's activities at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

LEWISBURG — Imagine stepping into the shoes of a farmer, a factory worker and a supply chain manager all in one afternoon. That's exactly what children will experience at the new "Field to Factory" exhibit, which opened Thursday evening at the Lewisburg Children's Museum (LCM).

Members of the community, board members of the LCM as well as Furmano's executives and family members attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the exhibit.

Sponsored by Furmano's and the Lewisburg Children's Museum, this \$28,000 hands-on exhibit offers young visitors an immersive journey from farm to plate, allowing them to explore the processes behind food production, harvesting and logistics in ways that are both fun and educational.

The exhibit features a dynamic conveyor belt system where kids can simulate the transportation of tomatoes from the field to a processing plant. Visitors can operate horizontal and vertical conveyor belts, mirroring the process of harvesting, before sending the tomatoes through various stages, including turning them into products like diced tomatoes and pizza sauce.

A video display further enhances the experience, showing real-life footage of the farming and canning process.

Mary Beth Harris, the museum's executive director, described the exhibit's goal as "an immersive hands-on experience for kids to learn about the process of food moving from a field all the way to their plate."

Independence Design Group, a fabricator based in Mifflinburg, played a pivotal role in bringing the exhibit to life. According to Harris, the partnership with the studio was essential for crafting a truly interactive, custom exhibit.

The group specializes in parks and recreation equipment, and they were eager to collaborate with the museum on this unique project. Harris highlighted the importance of working with a local partner, noting that having such close relationships allowed for a more hands-on and tailored approach.

Furmano's CEO Chad Geise said the company had been aspiring for an exhibit as interactive as this one since its partnership with the museum at its founding.

"It's really cool to think about the kids that play here, being able to think about how food comes to the grocery store," he said.

Beyond the educational elements, the exhibit places a strong emphasis on collaboration. Harris stated the interactive features of the exhibit require children to work together, either with their parents or peers, to fully operate the various components.

"There are multiple turnstiles for children to operate, so they need to collaborate either with their grown-up or with another child in order to fully operate the exhibit," she said.

Geise also reflected on Furmano's deep ties to the local community. As a fourth-generation family business, the company's involvement in the exhibit is part of a long-standing commitment to supporting the region.

“It’s really a blessing to be able to bless others,” Geise said.

Harris added that in the past week-and-a-half since the exhibit’s soft opening, she’s heard “so many wows and squeals of delight” as children have watched the tomatoes cascade down the truck.

As the exhibit opens to the public, both Harris and Geise are hopeful it will inspire children to understand the complexities behind the food they consume.

“We really want them to learn and think about how their food gets to the table,” Geise said. “It’s about giving them an experience that blends fun with education.”

The exhibit is now part of the museum’s general admission and is expected to be a lasting attraction for young learners in the community.



Furmano’s family members gather to cut the ribbon of the Lewisburg Children’s Musuem’s latest exhibit, ‘Field to Factory,’ at the museum.



Mary Beth Harris, the Lewisburg Children's Museum's executive director, introduces the museum's 'Field to Factory' exhibit ribbon-cutting ceremony.

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