

## OBITUARY | GEORGIA HEISE, 72

## Children's museum staff to honor first director

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Madison Children's Museum staff are remembering Georgia Heise, the first executive director of the Madison Children's Museum, who died Oct. 17 in Middlebury, Vermont, after a year-long struggle with glioblastoma. She was 72.

As the museum's founding director from 1985 to 1996, Heise "led the museum as it grew from a small space at the corner of North

Bedford Street and West Washington Avenue to its much larger presence occupying two floors at 100 State Street," staff shared in a statement.

"She helped set the museum on the creative, whimsical, and artistic path it has followed through to the present day."



Heise

Heise worked with Pleasant Rowland and the Mid-ton-based Pleasant Company to help start what is now called the American Girl Benefit Sale, which has raised millions of dollars to support the museum and other organizations serving children in Dane County. Heise was known to often wear a bright yellow rain slicker — a child's-large size version of the American Girl "Molly's" raincoat — that she had bought at a benefit sale in

the 1990s.

As the museum's first paid staff member, Heise lay the groundwork for the museum by developing a team of creatives, some of whom are still with the museum 30 years later. Three of the popular cows and Seymore the Giant Bluegill, currently on display inside and outside the museum, were part of exhibits developed during her tenure.

After her years in Madison, the Janesville native continued to

work in museums and arts education elsewhere, and in her later years became an accomplished milliner.

The museum plans to honor her at 4 p.m. Thursday outside 1 N. Bedford St., the first location of the museum, with stories and remembrances. At 5 p.m., the group will move to Ian's Pizza at 100 State St. to eat and share stories from Heise's time at the museum when it was located there. The public is welcome.

## Wonderground

From D1

## 'Awesome'

The Wonderground is awesome because there are two separate levels of the playground. The top level has a treehouse and a rope ladder to get to the bottom level. There is a winding staircase to get to the top level, or you can choose to climb the jumbled stick ladder instead. There are two hammock chairs that you can swing in. On the far wall of the playground there are logs attached to the wall that you can walk across, jumping from one log to another. I think that the Wonderground Playground is really cool.

— Paul Miller, 10,  
Lowell Elementary



## 'Freedom'

I enjoyed this play structure because of the freedom it gave me to play in the way I wanted to play and also the amount of climbing equipment that the structure has. I would recommend this for people under 10 because the bottom part of the structure is pretty small and might be harder for taller kids to fit in it. On a scale from 1 to 10, I would rate this about a 7 because it is really fun and lets kids figure out what they want to do and does not restrict them to only playing a certain game.

I also enjoyed the hanging swings and obstacle course that was more off to the side. One of my favorite things about the play structure was the giant bucket that had holes in the sides and cork circles that had different things on the back of them and a math equation on the back showing how many different things, such as kids and gallons of water, can fit in the bucket. The house that is in the back of the area is cool, too.

Finally, above on the balcony, there is a cool piece made of 3,700 plastic bottles, which looks really cool, especially when the sun is shining through it. I also learned that those 3,700 bottles represent the amount of plastic bottles used in Dane County in just 20 minutes.

— Lincoln Miller, 12,  
O'Keeffe Middle School



## 'Amazing'

I loved the way the cabin had all the things that you would find in a house when that kind of cabin was popular before there was electricity. I also thought it was intriguing how the structure was made from all wood and rope. It sort of looked like a tree that would be a fort for the lost boys from Neverland! I love all-natural materials.

I really think that this is a great addition to the children's museum. I personally think that this place was an amazing experience and I'm really excited to come back here.

— Will DeFour, 12,  
O'Keeffe Middle School



AMBER ARNOLD PHOTOS, STATE JOURNAL

Paul Miller, 10, scales a feature on the Wonderground playground. "The Wonderground is awesome because there are two separate levels of the playground," he wrote in his review of the latest exhibit at the Madison Children's Museum.



Lincoln Miller, 12, left, and Will DeFour, 12, try out the swings at the Wonderground, a favorite feature among our reviewers.

## I'll be back

I explored the new exhibit at the Children's Museum. There is a cabin and it reminded me of Laura Ingalls Wilder. I think the kids will like the cabin and I think they will play house in it. There is also a super cool swing made of fabric. It felt very relaxing to be in it. I think they will love the swing because kids like all swings!

There is also a climbing net and a wood climbing wall made of branches. Under the stairs there is a small door and it reminded me of Harry Potter. I really liked to go through it. I am looking forward to going there again and I am probably going to play in the cabin again. It was awesome!

— Margaret Krueger-Hayes, 8, Lowell Elementary School



## All good

My favorite part of the playground was probably the house. It had good detail and a fluffy bed. The tree hut was also pretty good and I liked how the playground had so many areas and ways to get on to the structure. The rope and wood wall were good, and that branch of the web that had a rope was amazing.

It was cool how in the bucket you could run up the walls and there were so many good games for the play structure. The balance beam where you could jump to those hammock seats was really cool. On a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is the best and 1 is the worst, it is ... drum roll please ... 9. I mean, it was over expectations. I thought it was going to be like 6 or 7, but it surprised me so much.

But it could have been improved. Like what if (the spider web) had the log rope on it attached to the playground? And what if it went at a slant? But still, it was great and I'm happy it was in my life.

— Daniel DeFour, 8,  
Lowell Elementary School



Margaret Krueger-Hayes, 8, right, and Will DeFour, 12, explore the inside of the restored historic log cabin at the Wonderground playground at the Madison Children's Museum.

## Overall? Fun

I spent 45 minutes at the new Wonderground play exhibit at the Madison Children's Museum last weekend after they closed. My favorite thing to do was play groundies with my friends on the main wooden climbing structure. The many entrances, and how tall it was, made it challenging. The old settler-style cottage was pretty cool, too. It had a bed with a quilt and pillow, a fireplace with a heater, and a cabinet full of bonnets and aprons. I set up a safety bunker with a friend under the entrance stairs to hide during a game, but that only lasted a little while before it was found.

Another thing I liked was the fabric basket swings and also, the treehouse on top of the previously mentioned structure. Overall, I think the Wonderground is fun, with new and creative things for a very wide age range, and it will be very successful.

— Olivia Krueger-Hayes, 12, O'Keeffe Middle School



## Cool indeed

The Wonderground playground is maybe one of the coolest playgrounds I have ever been on. I love the uniqueness of all the structures and the kind of whimsical assortments of items around them. I love how when you think you've seen pretty much everything, you look around a corner and say, "Hey, look! More cool stuff to play with!"

The Wonderground is very interactive and exciting, and I think the name Wonderground suits it quite well, as it is very wonderful (and makes you wonder how anything could be better!). I would definitely recommend playing here.

My favorite part of the playground was probably the log cabin. It is very cool that it is an actual log cabin from Wisconsin from a really long time ago, and it makes the whole play area special and authentic. The log cabin is also very interactive and almost makes you feel like you were back in the 1800s. I like the mix of recognizable things like pans and dresses, and the different things like the bellows and yoke.

I don't think I would change anything about the Wonderground except maybe a bigger slide from the treehouse to the ground would be nice (it's kind of hard to go down the smaller one for my size or bigger). Overall, I think the Wonderground is an awesome experience and is super fun to play on. It is a great playground for all ages and it was really fun to visit it. Again, I would definitely play here if you get the chance.

— Maggie Hinterthuer, 10,  
Lowell Elementary School



## 5 Best Facts ...

... about the Wonderground:

1. There are a lot of ropes that are great to climb.
2. Everything is made out of recycled things.
3. It is super fun to play games on the playground.
4. There is a bathtub and a sink.
5. There is a huge stump.

— Ivy Ruzicka-Grether, 8,  
Lowell Elementary School



## If you go

**In person:** Admission to the Madison Children's Museum (\$12 adults/children over age 1; \$11 grandparents; \$1 family access members; free for museum members) includes entry to the Wonderground. The museum is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Sunday. More information: madisonchildrensmuseum.org

**Online:** Watch our team of junior reporters explore the Wonderground in our video at madison.com