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Lake Villa wants to bring children's museum to village

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—Greta Berna, a member of Lake Villa's parks and recreation committee>

Lake Villa is working to bring a children's museum to the village.

The village is negotiating with Busy Brains Children's Museum, started by Alison Price and Kathy Goers who created traveling exhibits to provide a hands-on math and science experience for children.

"Our goal is to create an educational resource for schools and families, and entertaining to enhance the Lake County area," Goers said.

Two years ago, they began to pursue a permanent museum. Planning to either move into an existing space or build one, Price and Goers received offers across Lake County. Lake Villa approached them one year ago, Price said.

"They are passionate to offer a children's museum. Even with or without us, they would do one," Price said.

Greta Berna, a member of Lake Villa's parks and recreation committee, said Lake County needs a traditional children's museum that is interactive and educational.

"We believe it would be a great asset not only to the Lake Villa parks building but also to the county as a whole," she said. "Lake Villa is centrally located, making it an ideal place for this type of museum."

The preliminary plan would be for the museum to sit inside the new Lake Villa parks and recreation building adjacent to the Lehmann Mansion. The property is north of Grand Avenue on Route 83.

"They want to make it a recreation destination for families in Lake County," Price said. "We want to be a part of it."

Because the building would be near forest preserves, Price said, Busy Brains could take advantage of outdoor educational possibilities.

While the museum would feature five permanent exhibits, Goers said, Busy Brains would continue to offer traveling exhibits to schools that cannot afford to visit the museum.

Price said Busy Brains' goal is to open the museum in 2008.

"Between fundraising and getting the exhibits designed, it will be a couple years of hard

work," Goers said.

Busy Brains plans to launch a \$3 million fundraising campaign that will pay for exhibits, start-up expenses and three-year reserve, Price said.

Goers said the key to making progress is getting input from the community, including teachers and families. Volunteer committees continue to address exhibits, fundraising, marketing and grant writing.

"The more people we get involved and passionate about this project, the better it will be," Price said.

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