

# DISCOVERY EXPO FIELD TRIP DAY

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Three students explore an interactive exhibit at the Ingersoll Wonders of Physics Museum, looking curious and amazed. (Ueda Photography)

On Tuesday, October 15th, UW-Madison's Discovery Building was transformed into a dynamic science wonderland for the annual Discovery Building Expo – Field Trip Day, presented by the Morgridge Institute for Research. This exciting event welcomed school groups from across Wisconsin to explore dozens of interactive, hands-on STEAM activities. Spanning everything from virtual reality to chemistry experiments and physics demonstrations, the Discovery Expo Field Trip Day brought science to life in ways designed to capture the imagination of young learners. Students from 3rd through 8th grade had the chance to engage with scientists and STEAM students, providing a unique blend of learning and adventure.



A group of students learning about how fungi can help forests adapt to climate change, with a scientist showing them samples under a microscope. (Morgan Ramsey)

## An exciting start to the day

As buses began to pull up to the Discovery Building early in the morning, you could feel the excitement in the air. Teachers and students alike were buzzing with anticipation, ready to explore a world of scientific discovery right on UW-Madison's campus. Upon entering the building, students were greeted by friendly volunteers who handed out bright orange Wisconsin Science Festival drawstring backpacks and stacked hundreds of packed lunches, ready to be enjoyed later in the day to fuel curious minds. The day's schedule allowed students to explore each station at their own pace, making for a relaxed yet engaging learning environment. In addition to all the hands-on stations in the building, students were also able to sign up for field trip experiences throughout UW-Madison's campus providing an even better opportunity to explore this land-grant university.



A group of students watching a science experiment with smoke or vapor in an indoor space, creating a fun and curious atmosphere. (Morgan Ramsey)

## A STEAM playground in the heart of Madison

The Discovery Building transformed into a playground of science and exploration for the day, offering dozens of interactive stations where students could immerse themselves in different STEAM fields. From virtual reality demonstrations to chemistry experiments and physics showcases, the Expo provided a vibrant environment that encouraged learning through experience. These hands-on stations let students explore the principles of science in a personal and unforgettable way, moving from curiosity to discovery at their own pace.

The chemistry station was another favorite for students who love to see reactions and transformations happen right before their eyes. Here, they could participate in simple experiments, seeing liquids change color, foaming reactions, and even safe explosions. These hands-on activities didn't just look cool—they were carefully designed to show students the basic principles of chemistry in a fun and unforgettable way.



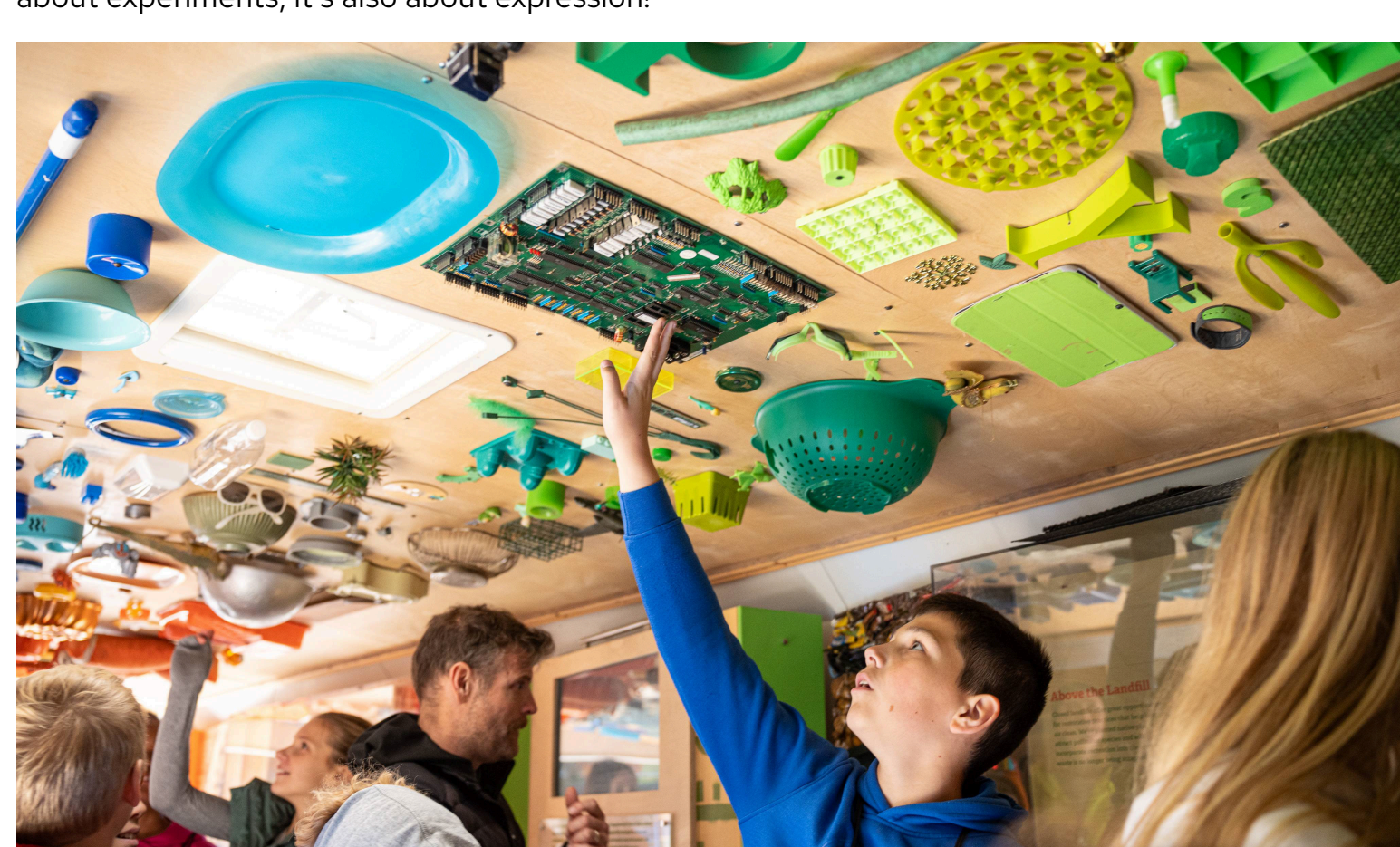
Students engage with agriculture and horticulture research, learning about different potato varieties. (Ueda Photography)

## Babcock Dairy: How It's Made in Wisconsin Tours

For students in grades 3-8, nothing beats the delicious world of ice cream! The Babcock Dairy tour offers a unique chance to explore how ice cream, milk, and cheese are made right from the source. Get ready to step onto the observation deck and witness the dairy-making process up close. With two tour options available—one at the Babcock Dairy Plant and the other at the Dairy Store—students enjoyed a journey through the fascinating world of dairy production and enjoyed samples of this locally made product.

## Chazen Museum of Art: Where art meets science

Art and science come together beautifully at the Chazen Art Museum, welcoming K-12 students to explore the intersection of these two disciplines. Through a self-guided activity booklet available at the welcome desk, students can engage with art while considering its scientific context. This experience encourages creativity and critical thinking, showing students that science isn't just about experiments; it's also about expression!



Students explore the Dane County Trash Lab, a mobile exhibit exploring waste and sustainability. (Ueda Photography)

## Meet the experts: scientists, STEAM professionals, and students

Beyond the activities themselves, students had the chance to interact with scientists, researchers, and students from UW-Madison and beyond, bringing a personal dimension to the science they explored. These professionals and STEAM students not only explained the science behind each station but also shared stories about their own journeys in the field, inspiring young minds to consider careers in science and technology.

As one student researcher shared, "it was such a wonderful experience to interact with the community and share our knowledge of archaeology. I loved seeing the excitement on kids' faces as they handled artifacts and learned about what archaeologists do." The excitement of handling real artifacts and learning directly from experts brought a unique hands-on element to the Expo, making learning both real and relevant for the students.

## Inspiring the next generation of innovators

At the end of the day, the Discovery Expo wasn't just about teaching facts—it was about inspiring students to think, explore, and discover. Each student left with something new, whether it was knowledge of how the body works or a passion for STEAM. This hands-on event brought science into the real world for young learners, showing them that science is not just something they learn in school but something that impacts every part of life. For these young explorers, the Discovery Building became more than just a campus landmark—it became a place where curiosity is celebrated and where futures in STEAM begin.