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by Candy Webb

Welcome to Uville!

Hendersonville woman has invented a fun, safe, interactive web site geared entirely towards children

The technological explosion a few decades ago has taken mankind to heights never before imagined. Today, with the click of a mouse you can shop, manage stock portfolios, plan and pay for vacations and chat with friends from around the world. The Internet has provided many advantages to everyday life; however, with the advantages also come concerns. The Internet is here to stay, and children are accessing it for school work, social fun and games. While parents are concerned about Internet safety, they will be hard pressed to stop their children from becoming interested in getting online. Knowing this is what spurred Hendersonville resident Corrine Perry to develop an entire child friendly on-line experience called Uville.

At www.MyUville.com children will find an array of activities to keep them busy and develop life skills.



“I wanted it to be all about curiosity, creativity, and self expression,” said Perry. “There are so many sites that compete for our children’s attention that don’t always measure up to our standards as concerned parents. We built Uville to be a source of fun and interaction for children—with the added bonus of having their parents feel good about it. Parents will know exactly what their children are doing in cyberspace when they log into Uville. And the site even promotes and makes parent-child interaction fun through printable coloring pages, chore lists and other tools.”

The idea of Uville first began to form when Perry’s five-year-old daughter came home one day and jumped on the Internet without any hesitation. She knew how to navigate it and it made Perry think hard about how to handle the future.

“Of course we as parents can restrict our kids’ access at home,” she said. “But they go to visit friends, they visit relatives, they are at school. We can’t be with them every minute of the day.”

Perry decided the best thing to do was to invent a place where children would have so much fun that even when they got on the computer away from home, they would turn to that site.

“Uville isn’t just about being on the computer,” said Perry. “The activities are designed to promote responsibility when they turn the computer off.”

One example of that mindset is an activity that allows the user to choose one of the Uville characters and make that character perform chores around the living area. There is a chore list that helps the child understand the importance of chores and waiting to go out to play until the chores are complete.

“I want children to start thinking about how they can relate what they do in Uville to real life,” said Perry. “For example, a child who has been working with Bubbalo the bear and making him do chores from the list might wonder what kind of chore list they can make at home to help the family.”

In addition to characters doing chores there are approximately 40 games and other activities that the children online can take part in including personalizing their own Uville room. Decorating the room also teaches the importance of budgeting because the child earns virtual currency called Ubucks by going through certain activities and playing certain games. The Ubucks are stored in the “bank” and the child can go into his or her Uville room and pay to decorate it.

“We have a shopping catalog they can go on to find the things they want to use in their room,” said Perry. “They have a lot of fun with that.”

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A child who wants to buy a lamp for his Uville room clicks on the Uville catalog and can see all of the different lamps that are for sale and choose the one they like the most.

Each item has a price tag on it, which encourages the child to budget Ubucks wisely and save for the items that are out of his price range but that he would really like to have.

The Uville room stays the same when the computer is shut off so the child can come back to the chosen room again and again and change out the decorations or leave them there.

Another fun activity offered at Uville is the U-Book. In this activity the child fills out a questionnaire on the Uville site and then the parents can print out a book about that child. Questions include favorites, pets, likes and dislikes and is designed to help the child enjoy self expression.

While there are arcades, learn the states games and other educational activities on Uville, Perry made sure the site was designed with being off of the computer in mind as well.

“We want kids to get on line, have a good time and then walk away with ideas about what they can do in their off line life,” said Perry.

To that end there will be activities for children to improve the Uville community with the hope that the children will be able to translate that concept to coming up with things they can do in their own community to make things better.

There will also be encouragement to work together as a family to improve the community that the family lives in and promote family togetherness.

There are six main characters on the site that escape Ho-Hum Zoo and the child guides him through various levels of games that eventually lead him to Uville.

Once in Uville, the child gets a Uville room to personalize.

Characters include Burpoo the frog, GooGoo the monkey, KayDee Roo the kangaroo, Racoo the racoon, Bubbalo the bear and CooCoo the chicken.

There is a constantly expanding menu of educational games and activities for children to choose from so they never get to a point where they become disinterested in Uville.

In addition, the site provides certificates that can be printed off and given to friends inviting them to join Uville.

Finally, Perry knew that children might want the ability to chat like they see older people do on-line, so she created a chat tool from which they choose preset sayings to send to their Uville friends.

“It becomes interactive with others while staying safe,” said Perry.

Using the chat feature a child can invite a friend to play in Uville.

“One of the preset chat sayings is “Tag, you’re it” said Perry. “And then they can chase each other’s characters around Uville.”

Perry’s three children who are all under nine-years-old helped her develop the site.

“We’ve received a lot of input from our own kids about what they like to do online and the kinds of characters that evoke their curiosity and creativity,” said Perry. “We’ve worked hard to provide a great deal of variety with our content to appeal to the broad age range of our expected users.”

Members of Uville will also be asked to help decide Uville’s future including who the next characters will be and what new destinations will be provided.

Perry is proud of Uville which is up and running and will be promoted nationwide in the Spring.

Uville promotes a safe environment for children and is being created under the guidelines of Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU). Although users can set up friend lists and interact with others through a controlled, preset format, no free form typing is functional on site so no personal names or places can be shared. Uville is additionally working only with targeted, reputable children’s product manufacturers or their agencies, and links to other sites from MyUville.com will be entirely controlled and only granted between partnering sites.

An added feature of Uville is an agreement with Paramount Studios to provide trailers to children’s movies that Uville users can go to the virtual Uville theater to watch.

To check out the excitement and fun at Uville go to www.MyUville.com.