

Carousel Museum enjoying uptick in visitors this summer thanks to state program

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BRISTOL – One of the city’s hidden gems is seeing a lot of new faces this summer, thanks to a statewide initiative.

The Connecticut Tourism Office’s Summer at the Museum program has brought an influx of new and returning visitors to the New England Carousel Museum at 95 Riverside Ave.

Children and one accompanying adult receive free admission from July 1 to Sept. 5 at hundreds of participating museums throughout the state.

This marks the program’s second summer running.

“Last year we had a lot of people take advantage of it and this year it’s already taking off the same way,” Carousel Museum Executive Director Morgan Uργο told the Press Sunday. “It’s benefiting institutions that are struggling and CT residents at the same time,” she added. “It’s brilliant.”

The museum’s parking lot was nearly full over the weekend, despite nice weather both days.

In addition to the galleries begin open and special events on the weekends, there are drop-in art activities for kids Weds.-Fri. and Lego challenges on Fridays.

Last Thursday the museum saw upwards of 250 visitors, according to Uργο.

“I would say probably about 75% of our summer visitation is related to this program,” she said. “If we had the funding to be free all the time we would do it.”

A grant from the Main Street Community Foundation allows staff to provide all art materials to families free of charge as well.

“It’s great to be able to share the museum with Connecticut residents and also Bristol residents who have never been here before,” Uργο pointed out.

Other participating organizations in Bristol include the American Clock & Watch Museum, the Bristol Historical Society, Imagine Nation and the Memorial Military Museum. A full list of all participants can be found at ctsummermuseums.com.



Erica Drzewiecki | Staff -- A peek inside the New England Carousel Museum in Bristol.

CT Summer at the Museum is being funded by the American Rescue Plan Act and administered by the CT Department of Economic and Community Development in partnership with CT Humanities.

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