

Mom's Inspiration Launches Imagination Building Blocks



Sometimes the greatest inspirations comes just by watching kids play. This was Marjorie Chayette's flash of insight a little while back, when watching one of her young sons playing with blocks at a birthday one day.

"They were playing with the blocks at a birthday party and I was fascinated to see what they did with them. They did a lot of group things with the blocks, and I liked how they used their imaginations," said Ms. Chayette, who used this inspiration to go on to create CitiBlocs, a

company producing sets of uniform length natural wooden construction plank blocks, with measurements of 4.5 x .75 x .25 inches.

Ms. Chayette, the owner and principal of CitiBlocs, said, "What I really like about the size is that it just really grows with the kids and they can make more versatile, complicated, and taller structures as they get older. It's not like a square unit block that they can outgrow."



The company's website, CitiBlocs.com, has a gallery of images to provide building ideas such as ships, land vehicles, towers, and castles. These images range from simple to extremely sophisticated.

The blocks can currently be used at a hands on exhibit at the Daniel Burnham Centennial commemoration at Millennium Park in Chicago.

Observing children of various ages playing with the blocks at exhibit, Ms. Chayette remarked that, "It's interesting that the first thing everybody wants to do is build tall. The younger children use the flat side. They build tall, but they don't stand the blocks up, and instead use the safest side to build up flat.

"The older children stand the blocks up, which is more fragile, but they can build taller faster. The older children take more risks."

Ms. Chayette also comments on the value of the blocks are facilitators of discussions between adults and children in the areas of history, science, and math.

"Children can build a lot of different monuments from around the world that adults can talk with them about. It really goes back to the history of art and architecture of those particular places where those monuments were built.

"The blocks also provide children with opportunities to practice counting, measuring, and geometry, as well as explore physics concepts like balance and gravity. For example, on a ball structure, you can pull out a lot of blocks before it crumbles. On a tower, if you pull out just one, it crumbles," she said.

Ms. Chayette further expressed her enthusiasm for the product, saying, "I love all of the creativity that is involved, and I love that all children can be successful at it."

Adding to the creative possibilities, Ms. Chayette expects to introduce additional block sizes and colors to the company's product line in 2010.

Currently, CitiBlocs products can be found in locations such as museum shops like the Cedarhurst Museum, specialty stores such as West Side Kids, and online at websites like glammatoy.com, and of course, the CitiBlocs site.

