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Children's educational programs on creating valentines, interacting with reptiles, exploring music and attracting backyard birds will be highlighted during the Spring 2011 Children's Museum season that started on Feb. 5.

The Children's Museum offers interactive, hands-on educational experiences in an environment where Cortland community parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, college students, youth and young children can be inspired to play and learn together.

Presented by faculty and students in SUNY Cortland's Childhood/Early Childhood Education Department, the programs run on selected Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m., unless otherwise noted, and are open to community families and their children. The programs will take place at the Children's Museum, located on the ground floor of O'Heron Newman Hall at 8 Calvert St. in Cortland. Admission is free but donations are gladly accepted.

**Lin Lin** and Shufang Shi, assistant professors, will present "Happy Chinese New Year" on Feb. 5. The children will experience Chinese Lunar New Year culture through learning about new year traditions in China, making origami projects, coloring/decorating paper lanterns, and exchanging "Happy New Year" greetings in Mandarin Chinese. Children and adults also will make and eat Chinese dumplings.

On Feb. 12, Instructor Judith Schillo and early childhood students will help children and their adult family members create valentine decorations and cards using a variety of art materials including pink and red paint.

Dan the Snake Man joins Assistant Professor Susan Stratton on March 5. Dan's shows are created to educate people of all ages about reptiles. Through informative displays and interactions, the presentations help the

audience better understand and appreciate the special nature of these animals and their importance to the environment. The program offers a unique opportunity to experience many species of exotic reptiles. The audience is invited to interact with the animals on an up-close and personal level; viewing, touching, and asking questions are highly encouraged.

Associate Professor Emilie Kudela will bring together several different musical activities and musical performers during the March 26 "Music for All" program. Participants are invited to bring their musical talents to share. Children will make musical instruments and all who attend will make music together.

On April 2, Assistant Professor Orvil White invites families and children to come for some summer fun and take a bit of the beach home. Participants will use sand, seashells and a little sea salt to build their own summer beach snow globes. Once completed, globes can be shaken and the sand and ocean waves uncover the shells for a summer memory to last a lifetime.

Assistant Professor Kimberly Rombach will offer "Attracting Backyard Birds" on April 9. Children will explore the wonders of our backyard birds. Children will see pictures and hear recorded songs of some of the birds commonly found in the Cortland area. Participants will learn how to use everyday household materials to make a bird feeder and they'll create one to take home.

To reach the museum entrance, follow O'Heron Newman Hall's driveway. Parking is not permitted in the driveway but is available in the parking lot of the Dowd Fine Arts Center at the corner of Prospect Terrace and Graham Avenue.

For more information, contact **Kudela** at (607) 753-5525 or **Stratton** at (607) 753-2467, or visit the **Children's Museum website**.

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