

Glow Town emerges from trash

By KAREN BOSSICK

Pogo might have said: "We've seen the future, and it includes cities with Pokemon centers"—if he had been around to see the towns that 70 Wood River Valley youngsters built Saturday, that is.

Some 70 children turned out for morning and afternoon Glow Town building sessions at The Community Library. And, by the time they left, they had built an opera house, a beach with beach chairs and a lifeguard stand and even a torture apparatus hanging from a skyscraper.

The construction supervisor was Sharon Loudon, a Yale University School of Art graduate who has taught art at the National Academy of Art in New York City.

Loudon, whose own work has been exhibited at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the National Gallery of Art, created the first Glow Town in 1999 at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Connecticut and has presided over a couple of others each year since.

She was brought to Ketchum by her friend, Julie Ward.

Loudon looked over a room full of expectant youngsters seated around tables on chairs that had been covered with black plastic garbage bags. Then she pointed to the stage where empty toilet paper rolls, egg cartons, pinecones, plastic plates and bowls, cotton balls, wine corks, tongue dispensers, straws, coffee filters and plastic packing popcorn awaited.

"You may be looking from your tables and saying, 'That's a bunch of trash,'" she told the kids. "But you can make fabulous art out of anything using your imagination. The challenge for you is to make a town of this and have it light up at night. And think about what it would look like if you were looking down from a plane."

The kids needed no encouragement. After meeting with table mates to decide what to call their towns, each gathered an armful of material and proceeded to create something on a foot-square piece of cardboard.

No two squares looked alike.

Nine-year-old Woodside Elementary student Sarah Feltman created a Pokemon Center where the Pokemons of the world could have their health restored, while her twin sister Maren Feltman created a beach with coconut drinks and umbrellas.

Thirteen-year-old Wood River Middle School student Aaron Martin built a skyscraper four feet tall with a slide connected to the pool his 11-year-old sister Dovie was building atop a house.

Twelve-year-old Sage School student Alex Gilman built a Trojan horse for his table's city of Troy.

And nine-year-old Hailey Elementary student David Rau created a two-foot bridge complete with acorn-topped lights to allow the residents of his town access to the space needle that his friend—Montessori student Evan Smith—was building.

"I think it's awesome that you can make stuff out of anything," Rau said. "I'm so glad I came. This is the first time I've ever built stuff out of junk. It's really



David Rau holds together his drawbridge, which features acorn-shaded lights.

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fun."

Ward pointed out how each of the children worked as individuals on their own squares but also worked as part of a team.

"This teaches the children to use the resources at hand and it teaches teamwork," she said.

David Rau's mother, Mary Rau, agreed: "This is a fantastic opportunity. They're learning how to work together and they're learning about possibilities."

When each block had been built, the kids dabbed their creations with glow-in-the-dark

paint.

Then they joined all the blocks together, turned the lights out and oohed and ahed as neon green lights similar to that of the aurora borealis emerged.

But the brighter glow was on the faces of the children.

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RIGHT: Sophia Bernbaum, a 10-year-old Hemingway student, shows off her contribution to her table's town, which includes huts, a bonfire and a park full of trees and rocks.

