

The afternoon was warm. The sunshine bounced off the water and smiled up at the faces of spectators standing on the boardwalk. A tiny face smiled at the Dragon Boat floating past during the annual Harbor Days festivities.

"Ohhh," she sighed. "This looks like the storybook I am reading." Her smile widens as she watches the people rowing in a rhythm set by the leader standing in the front of the boat. Her fingers tighten hold of the railing as she looks over the guard rail, and imagines a drum beat as she captures the graceful dance on water.

"Come on girls," says a voice above her blond-haired head. "Let's go get ice cream." The older sister next to her dashes away, ready for the taste of a double-decker strawberry snack.

"Carlie, come on," says the voice. "Let's go."

"I can't," says the four-year-old book lover. "My eyes won't let me stop looking," she adds.

Eventually, the family is again strolling together as each wonder what flavor is ahead.

Insights of children is common if we pay attention to them.

"I just love ballerinas, admits this self-proclaimed 5-year-old soon-to-be kindergartener. She is standing at the art table in the Quilt Display Room during the local fair. She fingers the cotton fabric piece with the printed ballerina. She places it in the perfect place on her blue construction paper. Her collage grows into an artwork as she comments that her brother next to her is ten years old and likes to draw. She reaches for a fabric bunny and glues it next to the ballerina dancing in her art. "I love bunnies," she confesses. "They never leave their families. I am going to be a bunny and never leave my mommy and daddy." Her grandmother arrives at her side and asks if she wants to go around the room and see all the quilts hanging from the ceiling and artfully tacked onto the walls. Her eyes open wider and her smile lights up her face as she looks up at the colors waving in the breeze entering from the open doors. Grandma and she hold hands as they wonder through the colorful world surrounding them.

And then comes a younger boy slowly following a mommy who is following a husband who is saying to both, "Come on you two let's go." The mommy follows.

The boy slows his short steps and whispers, “WOW,” as his eyes stop to look at a large art quilt of a lion hanging on the wall, and then another “WOW” as his eyes focus on a larger red and green and purple design.

Daddy calls and the boy’s reluctant legs move a little faster.

Children notice life surrounding them. They like to be a part of their environment. Many of them find that it is difficult to allow their eyes to stop looking.

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