

Young Henry and His Machines

(June 17 through August 18)

Big Idea

Henry Ford changed the world. His innovative processes and ideas are relevant today. Henry Ford's 150th birthday is a way to unify new and old programming and exhibits into a cohesive statement to our guests that supports the relevance of our mission and is an appropriate way to pay tribute to The Henry Ford's founder.

Guest Experience

Guests approaching Miller School will notice that the building is abuzz with new activity. In the schoolyard, a presenter will tell stories of Henry's time at Miller School and the basic principles he learned by informal, hands-on experiences. Guests will then be invited into the school to tinker with simple machines: the pulleys, levers, wheel and axles, and inclined planes that form the basis of all other mechanical technology. As a group, guests will use their new knowledge to put together a clock, just like Henry did as a child. In addition to machines, Henry was interested in power. Steam, one of the most useful and exciting power sources, could be used to make farm work easier. Guests will share in Henry's excitement by watching a model steam engine run under its own power. Finally, guests will be invited to return at select times for a live demonstration of Henry's first gasoline engine: the product of his early experiments.

Presentation Priorities

1. Inventors need to be curious, willing to fail and observant. They must understand how things work and what previous inventors have learned from their own experiments.
2. When Henry Ford was a boy, he liked taking things apart and putting them back together in order to see how they worked. During these activities, he learned how simple machines worked together to make something useful, such as a clock, a wind-up toy or tools.
3. Steam was the newest source of power available to inventors when Henry Ford was a boy in the 1860s and 70s. He believed that steam and machines could replace animal and human power to make everyone's lives easier.

Visitor Takeaway and Relevancy

Like many of us, Henry learned best by doing. As a boy, he liked to play with intricate machines at his disposal. His familiarity with the "high-tech" objects of his day helped him think about how he could make things work better. We call this innovation. What inspires you? Where could your interests go from here?

