

Norwich Bulletin

Children explore police, fire vehicles at 'Touch a Truck Day' in Norwich

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Norwich, Conn. — Sirens wailed and the lights on fire trucks, an ambulance and a Norwich police cruiser flashed for a parking lot of Three Rivers Community College Saturday, but this was no emergency.

Instead, it was part of a four-year-old interactive event called “Touch a Truck Day,” sponsored by Children First Norwich.

Children got a chance to explore ladder trucks, a police mobile operations unit and several off-road emergency response vehicles, as well as farm and construction equipment, tractor-trailers, a school bus, motorcycles and city-owned repair trucks with

“Events like this help create an imagination in children,” said Sherry Filiatreault, coordinator of leadership program at Children First. “It’s to get parents and kids out together to have fun.”

Dozens of children enthusiastically jumped behind the wheel of the trucks, leaning on their horns or playing with dashboard instruments.

Eliza Simpson, 6, of Brooklyn, said the ambulance, which she called a “doctor truck” was her favorite because of its lights.

She also was enthralled by a large dump truck that had its own staging area and stairway leading into the driver’s cab.

“I like the platforms that they have,” she said.

Griswold’s Kuranda Ruggiero gingerly explored a Taftville fire engine with a ladder that rose to 100 feet.

Kuranda, 4, said she liked the trucks “because I get to go in them and see the firefighters.”

Among the biggest attractions was Kaiser, the Norwich Police Department’s police dog, who posed for pictures.

Filiatreault said giving children hands-on access makes it easier for them to learn about the roles each vehicle plays.

“Kids learn better when they can see or feel or taste something,” she said. “I think everybody is interested in the big event that creates memories.”

Nicole Kingsley, 10, said she’s exposed to the large fire trucks regularly because her parents work with the Norwich Police Department.

“I’m used to seeing all of them, but they’re really cool,” she said. “I like trucks because they’re fun to honk the horn and

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