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Touch a Truck brings out the kids, and the 'kid' in some adults

BY KAREN BUTERA Staff Writer

Horns blared, as the fourth annual Children First Norwich School Readiness Council Touch a Truck event got under way. The April 17 event is popular in Norwich and the surrounding towns, and many came out to enjoy the free family day festivities. Trucks of all shapes and sizes were there; fire apparatus, tractors, trailers, bucket trucks, public utility trucks and even Tilly, a remote-control mini van that could talk. All were set up on display, to the delight of the spectators.

Coordinator of Children First Norwich, Sherry Filiatreault, said, "I thought we should do this for the Week of the Young Child." The idea is to bring out kids, both young and old, especially dads and their sons and daughters.

"We wanted to involve dads and their children together," said Anne Jerone of the School Readiness Council. "What better way to get dads involved than with trucks," she said.

Many of the local child-related agencies set up booths to let parents know they are out there in the community, and what their function is.

Jerone said, "We are promoting literacy, and things that parents can do with their kids to help teach them. It is a lot of fun for parents to interact with their children."

Along with the informational booths, there were games, face painting, and other fun things to do. Also, scavenger hunt clues were given out throughout the day.

Michele O'Neill of Colchester came out with her son. "I thought it was something my son would enjoy, because he loves trucks."

Her son, AJ, watched in awe, as the Tazmanian Tree Devil bucket rose to 70 feet in the air, but he was a bit concerned, however, when the bucket got too close for comfort, as it came down close to the tractor he was sitting on.

Three-year-old Elijah was surprised when a Public Utility Company remotecontrolled mini-van named Tilly drove up to him. The van was larger than he was. Elijah was minding his own business, when it stopped and asked him his name, age and where he went to school.



AJ enjoys the tractors at Touch a Truck. Photos by Karen Butera.



Malachi tests an RTV for comfort.



Three-year-old Elijah talks with Tilly, the talking remote-control van.