THEY CAME. THEY CREATED FUN. AND THEY CONQUERED. The Maker Faire Detroit fans, that is: especially the younger-set attendees and their families. Maker Faire Detroit, held Saturday and Sunday, July 28 and 29, 2012, at the Henry Ford Museum, saw College of Arts and Letters Creativity Exploratory Fellows and staff enjoy two full, sunny days of assisting kids and their parents in making customized buttons and stickers, and creating lots of other fun. The second consecutive Maker Faire held at the Henry Ford, the 2012 event showcased unconventional ingenuity, unbridled creativity, and a whole lot of forward thinking.

With a corner table location adjacent to the Lansing Makers Network’s incredible Megaoperation game, the Creativity Exploratory volunteer crew of Brooke Hawkins, Chelsea Kirksey, Sarah Matthews, Katie Pastor, Tatum Walker, Scott Schopieray, and Mike and Jan Jenkins had an extra draw throughout the Maker Faire event. Created by Brian Adams, specialist–curriculum developer with the College of Arts and Letters, and Lansing Makers Network president and founding member, Megaoperation is played just like the original Operation game and uses scaled-up body part pieces, as well as kitchen tongs for tweezers. Any wrong moves are detected by an Arduino, a single-board microcontroller, that reports them to a computer which displays time elapsed and other information. In addition to keeping score, the program keeps track of the fastest times, peak usage, and number of games played.

TINKER. HACK. INVENT. MAKE.

More than 400 makers brought their wares, ideas, inventions and solutions to the two-day Detroit-area festival, including everything from robots, flame shooters and animatronics to solar-powered mechanical sculptures and fashionable finds. The Henry Ford was also the location of the 2013 event, held July 27 and 28.

The official makerfaire.com history notes that “Maker Faire is The Greatest Show (and Tell) on Earth—a family-friendly festival of invention, creativity and resourcefulness, and a celebration of the Maker movement. Part science fair, part county fair, and part something entirely new, Maker Faire is an all-ages gathering of tech enthusiasts, crafters, educators, tinkerers, hobbyists, engineers, science clubs, authors, artists, students, and commercial exhibitors. All of these ‘makers’ come to Maker Faire to show what they have made and to share what they have learned.

“The launch of Maker Faire in the Bay Area in 2006 demonstrated the popularity of making and interest among legions of aspiring makers to participate in hands-on activities and learn new skills at the event. A record 165,000 people attended the two flagship Maker Faires in the Bay Area and New York in 2012, with 44% of attendees first-timers at the Bay Area event, and 61% in New York. A family event, the vast majority attend with children. In 2013, over 60 community-driven Mini Maker Faires are expected around the world, including Tokyo and Rome.

“Maker Faire is presented by Maker Media that publishes MAKE magazine, produces Maker Faire, and offers DIY electronics, tools, kits, and books through its online and pop-up Maker Shed stores.”