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onterey is home to a special place that is filled with children's joy and laughter. It's a place of exploration, imagination and learning. This little gem is known as MY Museum (Monterey Youth Museum). The woman behind all of this magic is executive director, Lauren Cohen.



Early on, Lauren was interested in the field of education and went to college with aspirations to become a teacher. Little did she know that one day her path would change and she would be a director of a children's museum. Lauren began working with MY Museum in 1998, back when it was a Junior League project. With her drive and ambition, she helped evolve this once small operation into a successful non-profit organization.

Although she is not a classroom teacher, MY Museum has allowed her to continue her dream of working in the field of education. Over the years, this job has taught her that learning never ends. With over 50 exhibits, children and parents alike can discover and explore all that the museum has to offer. This career has allowed her to develop children to become life-long learners.

As the executive director, the job does entail more than just fun and games. A lot of Lauren's time is spent fundraising for the museum and working as a community liaison. It is important that the organization remains a big part of the community, so Lauren's role is quite extensive. Of course, when you visit MY Museum, you will most likely see Lauren. She likes to be on site to keep the inspiration going and make sure that she is on top of any changes that need to be made.



This past year has been especially hard for MY Museum, during the Covid-19 crisis. It was a shock at the beginning, trying to figure out how to change and make things work during closure. With some brainstorming and collaboration, new ideas were created that would continue to provide wonderful learning experiences for children and families. The goal was to help families learn ways to remain safe when taking children from their home environment out into public places. The concept of "Shelter in Play" boxes was conceived, allowing community children to play and learn from the safety of their own homes.

When asked about advice for other business owners, Lauren said, "It is important to give ourselves grace during this time. Use the time to relax and rethink about your visions. Stay driven but also relax and let go because we have the opportunity to do that now." When the time comes for things to start up again, Lauren will be ready. For now, she continues to look for the silver lining.

