



LITTLES

MINI MAKERS

An art studio for kids is buzzing at the Rochester Public Market

BY CARLIE FISHGOLD

Up the groaning stairs of #50 Public Market on a Saturday morning, Small Fry Art Studio is abuzz with children bounding from a glittery smorgasbord of pony beads and pompoms to their paintings at the makeshift easel wall. Easily as chaotic as the second-story view of the bustling, boomerang-shaped A Shed in the Rochester Public Market, the studio is a refuge for mini-market goers, most of whom are ages 3 to 8.

Small Fry proprietors Courtney and Chad Barbe have been going to the Public Market every Saturday since the birth of their daughter, Emmi.

“My husband and I are really passionate about sharing our love for Rochester with Emmi and [son], Everett, and what better

way to do that than to open our studio within such a quintessential Rochester landmark?”

Their love for the flow and the diversity and the culture of the market “naturally lends itself to a creative space,” she says.

On even the idlest, most frigid Market day, round any corner is the ritual, ephemeral art of displaying produce and sundry wares. In the studio, materials are as various as vendors’ offerings: Crayola crayon colors like Laser Lemon, Macaroni and Cheese, and Jazzberry Jam roll around on the tables; smocks are sauced with Day-Glo smears; Popsicle sticks drip with juicy paints; and confectioners jars hold gumball-like puffs of varying hues.

Since November of last year,

Small Fry has been a destination for the Rochester area’s littlest community members, who might not otherwise have met. The Barbés are developing new collaborative classes—all of which are either drop-in or pre-registered—featuring yoga, music, science, and even engineering programming. Whereas weekdays offer structured classes with a thematic project, Saturday mornings are Open Studio time.

The artist constructs his or her own visual art, sometimes collaborating with caretakers, friends, or each other. Of course, sometimes parents are just latte-sipping art collectors waiting in the wings, taking in the morning before reentering the market maelstrom. smallfryart.studio

