

## He's Curious, by George

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Curious George was in the house. The Hormel Historic Home, that is.

The mischievous monkey known to kids through children's books and a television show on PBS stopped by for a visit Wednesday for Curious George Story Time.

"I hope it made the day a little more fun for the kids," said Eric Olson, KSMQ president. "It's just a fun thing to be able to do."

The event was presented through a collaboration of the Hormel Historic Home, Austin Public Library and KSMQ Public Television. Kids and families were able to do a little coloring, meet George, have pictures taken with him and hear Curious George stories read by children's librarian Kari Oanes.

Curious George, and educational children's programming in general, is a huge part of PBS. Children's programming is what the station was built on, Olson said, so why not promote it?

"We also are promoting the reading of the Curious George books," Olson said. "Any way we can help kids learn and read, we're happy to help."

George was popular with a lot of the kids, but some weren't too sure about the 5 foot, 1 inch monkey, who they're used to seeing only in pictures or through their TV screens.

"It's always fun to see how the kids are going to react to real-life Curious George," Oanes said, who read the original Curious George book and "Curious George at the Baseball Game."

Austin resident Barb Erstad brought her three granddaughters, ages 2 1/2, 2 and 6 months, to see George, since they already have read the books at home. The girls were a little leery of getting up close with George.

"They like him from a distance," Erstad said.

Heather Johnson was able to get a quick photo with George while she held her younger son, Gavin, 1 1/2 years. Her older son Ian, 3, stayed further away and waited for the photo opp to end. Johnson said the boys like George and watch the TV show, adding she was surprised Ian was afraid of the monkey.

One girl who couldn't seem to get enough of George was Connie Hoveland's granddaughter Clara, who is 3 years old.

"I wonder if I'll ever get her out of here," Hoveland said. "She loves Curious George."

Clara doesn't go to school without watching the Curious George TV show each morning.

As it was time to go for many kids, they had one last thing to do before leaving after enjoying the stories and coloring. They made it a point to greet the monkey one more time.

"Bye George!"