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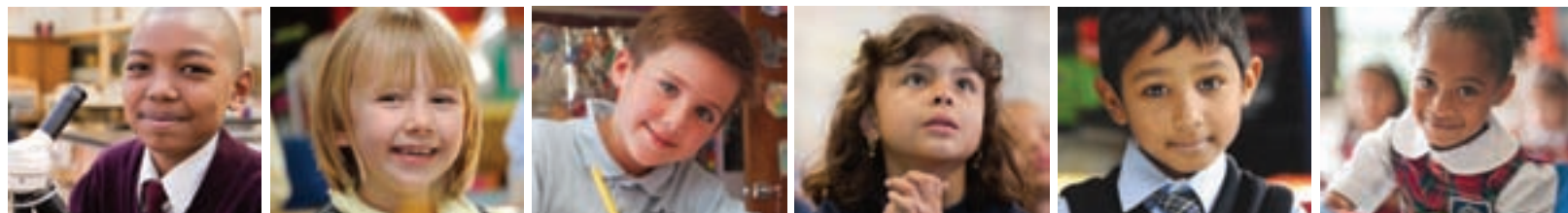


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Letter from the publisher

Call for love

A number of our columnists in this month's issue have turned their attention to this "thing" called love. Of course, it's February and the time of year when so much focus is on romance and expressions of tender feelings.



So what is love? How do we know it when we have it or find it? How do we avoid the pitfalls of love, the false alarms and wrong choices that break our hearts and waste our time?

These are the questions that parents wish so much to be able to answer when their tweens and teens face the inevitable break-ups or heartbreaks or unrequited love experiences. We recall as parents looking back on the hurts of our

own youth the disappointments and sorrows. If only we could have the formula to give our youngsters that would help them through the pathways of love and longing. But we can be bracing and understanding and comforting even when we hear things like, "If you loved me I wouldn't have to go to school", recently said to a member of our staff by her young son.

We need more love in this world, that's for sure. We need to love the ones who have no love, we need to spot the need for love in the unloved around us and help them feel secure, safe and untroubled. As parents we need to reach out for help for our children when and if we

recognize they are facing issues we are incapable of handling for them on our own. This is also a part of love. It is our responsibility to instill love and trust and security in those babies who come into our arms as brand new people and if they are in trouble, it is loveable to reach out for help.

In spite of horrible headlines from time to time, I believe we all are becoming more loveable. I see incredible changes sociologically with far less polarization, anger, revenge and separation. I see a growth in tolerance, understanding and acceptance and huge changes that make me know that many of us humans have come a long way. We are moving forward and there is progress on every front and that is because of love.

So we love our children, our pets,

our family, our friends, and if we're very fortunate, we get a partner to experience it all with that makes us less on our own. Some do and some don't. That's just the way it is. Not an easy thing to explain to one's children who are all hoping and dreaming of love everlasting and the bells and the banjos ringing.

Love is the answer. I say that every year and I mean it. We can't have enough. We must treasure every piece of it that comes our way.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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FLU

Learn how to stay safe

The flu has hit the city hard this year. Keep yourself and your family healthy

BY JAMIE LOBER

The flu has hit New York hard this year and has the city's parents talking.

Word out is that this season's vaccine is not as effective as it should be, making some patients hesitant about getting the flu shot for them and for their children. But doctors are stressing that getting the shot is better than nothing.

"Initially, patients refused flu vaccines because they were concerned about side effects and getting the flu from the vaccine, so it is important for people to know that it is not a live virus," said Dr. Nieca Goldberg, clinical associate professor of the Department of Medicine at Leon H. Charney Division of Cardiology, and director of the Joan H. Tisch Center for Women's Health at New York University Lagone Medical Center. "Although it is not 100-percent effective, it is 62-percent effective and that is better than nothing," said Goldberg.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the flu is a contagious respiratory illness that can infect the throat, nose, and lungs, causing





Regardless of your decision to get vaccinated, you should take proper precautions.

mild to severe illness.

For some people, the flu is more dangerous than for others.

"People who are particularly at risk for getting the flu are people with heart disease, lung disease, and illnesses that lower their immunity, like cancer," said Goldberg.

Scientists try to stay ahead of things by changing the vaccine each year depending on what the epidemiologists see as the trend.

"Last year's vaccine does not help you," said Goldberg.

Sometimes, people do not realize they have the flu at first.

"You start to feel achy all over, your muscles ache, you are very tired, and you may have a cough, diarrhea, or vomiting," said Goldberg. "Sometimes, the flu requires hospitalization. If you are dehydrated, not eating, dizzy, or feel like you are going to faint, you may be given intravenous fluids."

Symptoms are different in terms of intensity compared to your routine cold. It is important to remember that not everyone with the flu has a fever. Being prepared is the key to fighting the virus.

"A thermometer is a good piece of medical equipment to have in your house, and you should have acetaminophen on hand to take for muscle aches," advised Goldberg.

WebMD states that Americans are turning to cold and flu supplements in greater numbers this year. Instead of over-the-counter medications, people are considering natural remedies such as taking vitamin C, echinacea, and zinc, because the Food and Drug Administration has released reports about some over-the-counter cold and flu treatments being ineffective.

Studies show that while vitamin C can improve the immune system, it does not prevent colds when given in doses of one gram per day. But, it has proven to be beneficial as a treatment, reducing the duration of colds by as much as 24 to 36 hours.

Regardless of your decision to get vaccinated, you should take proper precautions. If you are exposed to someone who has the flu, you should talk to your doctor about antiviral drugs, which are typically between 70 and 90 percent effective at preventing you from getting sick. It is helpful to stay out of crowds and close quarters as best you can during flu season.

If you suspect you have the flu, take action.

"The fastest way to get rid of the flu, if you are having the most severe case, is to talk to your doctor so he can prescribe an antiviral medication known as Tamiflu, which shortens the course. The other thing you can do is stay home and rest," said Goldberg. If it seems to get worse instead of better, seek medical attention.

If you are feeling very sick, you should not go to work. If your child is sick, do not send her to school. Try to avoid sharing utensils, glasses, and personal items. Common surfaces like telephones, computer keyboards, and doorknobs should be wiped down regularly to decrease the spread of germs.

Washing your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water is also a good means of prevention. Even better, you can get your child in the habit of washing for the duration it takes to sing "Happy Birthday."

Lifestyle choices like managing stress, getting adequate sleep at night, eating a balanced diet, and staying hydrated can make a difference in your flu-fighting potential.

Do not think you are immune to this epidemic. Be safe rather than sorry by consulting your pediatrician or family doctor about what you can do today.

Jamie Lober, author of Pink Power (www.getpinkpower.com), is dedicated to providing information on women's and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at jamie@getpinkpower.com.

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Everyday love

Show love to
your children
with these
simple tips

BY KIKI BOCHI

Valentine's Day gets many people thinking about love. But in truth, love is something you show your children every day, through actions big and small.

Our actions speak more of love than all the candy, cards, and grand gestures in the world.

"While we mark holidays, children count every day as a reminder of how much they are valued, loved and respected," says Peter A. Gorski, MD, an advisor to the American Academy of Pediatrics' website, HealthyChildren.org. "Seemingly small efforts to give a child our full attention, to appreciate a child's interests, to acknowledge a child's genuine feelings — these have huge effects and rich rewards well beyond the moment."

Here, from the American Academy of Pediatrics, are some ideas on how to be a more loving parent. Better than a bouquet of roses, these dozen tips will bring smiles to your child's face all year long.

- Use plenty of positive words with your child. Try to avoid using sarcasm, as children often don't understand it, and if they do, it creates a negative interaction. Banish put-downs from your parenting vocabulary.

- Respond promptly and lovingly to your child's physical and emotional needs. Remember, there is amazing power in a simple hug.

- Make an extra effort to set a good example at home and in public. Use words like "I'm sorry," "please," and "thank you."

- Make plans to spend time alone with your child or teen doing something he enjoys. There is nothing more



valuable you can give your child than your time and undivided attention.

- When your child is angry, argumentative, or in a bad mood, give him a hug, or other gesture of affection. Don't escalate things by getting mad as well. A simple statement like, "I see you are feeling angry today" can help validate him and defuse the situation. When he calms down, talk with him about his feelings.

- Use non-violent forms of discipline. Structure, rules, and limits are important to all children. Punishments can include time-outs or suspending privileges, such as television time or other activities. Allowing children of any age to constantly break important rules without discipline only encourages more rule violations.

- Your child's health depends on the care and guidance you offer during the early years. By taking your child to the doctor regularly, keeping him safe from accidents, providing a nutritious diet, making sure he gets enough sleep, and encouraging exercise, you help protect and strengthen his body.

- Help your child foster positive relationships with friends, siblings, and members of the community. Encourage cooperation in your home rather than competition between siblings. Organize get-togethers with extended family, and make your child's friends feel welcome in your home.

Help your child connect with a larger community through sports and activity programs, community groups, or your church or synagogue.

- Mark family nights on your calendar so the entire family can be together. Put a different family member's name under each date, and have that person choose the game or activity for the evening. Choices can include board games, playing basketball, taking a walk together, or even doing a creative craft.

- Let your child cook with you to familiarize him with good food choices. Involve your child in the entire process, from planning the menus, to shopping for ingredients, to the actual food preparation and serving. Not only will your child eat better, but you will also turn a daily chore into a fun, shared experience.

- Help your child develop self-esteem. Your child needs your steady support and encouragement to discover his strengths. He needs you to believe in him as he learns to believe in himself. Loving him, spending time with him, listening to him, and praising his accomplishments are all part of this process.

- Don't forget to say, "I love you," every day to children of all ages.

KiKi Bochi, an award-winning journalist, reads hundreds of reports monthly to bring readers the latest insights on family health and child development.

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Hover charge

‘Helicopter parents’ can keep their kids from taking off

BY LAURA J. VAROSCAK

Nancy was thrilled to receive an acceptance letter from her top-choice Ivy League school. For years, she researched the best college programs and studied how to produce a winning application package.

She hired one tutor to help with SAT preparation and another to help write a successful personal essay. She visited many campuses, touring and networking with deans, admissions directors, and professors. It was now time to share the good news with her son, Will — the one going off to college.

Will is among the thousands of young people, born between 1982 and 1995, who fall victim to a “helicopter parent.” The term first appeared in the 1990s to describe a specific group of baby boomers who hover over their children throughout every stage of their development. Despite good intentions, these parents do more harm than good.

This ineffective parenting style usually begins in preschool (with over-programmed kids attending karate, piano, ballet, yoga, gymnastics, swimming, art, and cooking classes after their regular school day) and escalates to college and beyond.

Lisa, a recent business school graduate, has always appreciated her father’s involvement in her life. A few months before graduation, he wrote her resume, embellishing it with impressive (albeit exaggerated) information, and spent big money on designer business cards. Now, he accompanies his 21-year-old daughter to career fairs and job interviews, often intervening when the delicate subject of salary comes up.

“She’s a bright girl, but I don’t want anyone taking advantage of her. I want her to start out comfortably.”

Lisa graciously accepts his help. “It’s nice to have someone who

cares so much about me and my future. I’m very lucky.”

It’s typical for parents to micromanage their young children. Babies rely on their caregivers to nourish and protect them. But for many parents, letting go becomes an emotional challenge — even when the child is ready for independence. As children grow older, they deserve opportunities to become more self-reliant and responsible. These are basic, but crucial, life skills. But helicopter parents interfere with every aspect of their child’s life, giving a very clear message: “You cannot succeed without me.”

They do not allow their kids to fail, or succeed, without their help. Children cannot learn to trust themselves if their parents do not trust them to handle their own affairs. Crossing the line from parental guidance to predominance can lead to negative consequences for the children by:

- Weakening their decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- Undermining their confidence
- Instilling a fear of failure.
- Encouraging dependence on parental approval.
- Increasing anxiety
- Decreasing self-motivation.
- Blurring the boundary between childhood and adulthood.
- Slowing social and emotional development.
- Fostering a negative self-image.
- Robbing them of valuable opportunities to learn from their own experiences.

Rise of the helicopter parents

Overprotective parents have existed since the beginning of time. However, with the rapid rise of technology, hovering has become much easier. Computers, e-mail, web cams, cellphones, and text messaging can collectively be called “the longest umbilical cord in the world.” They make it possible for parents and children to access each other around the

clock. The business of information technology is booming, and new products are being developed to target the helicopter parent population.

“These new products will significantly expand the monitoring and tracking capabilities of parents, enabling them to keep track of whom their children meet online, monitor kids’ movements and location, and keep tabs on their behavior and lifestyle,” according to senior analyst Kevin Osborn.

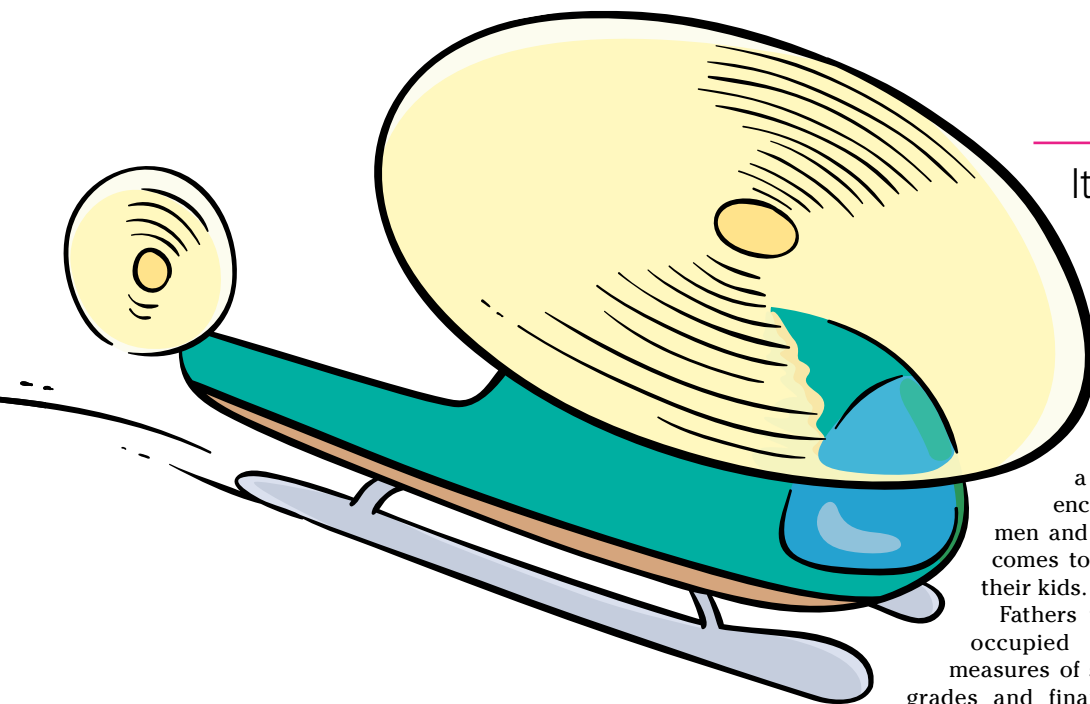
This growing trend may also be a result of today’s critical economic situation.

The uncertainty of the job market creates anxiety for both parents and their children. Desperately wanting their sons and daughters to land secure, well-paying jobs, helicopter parents may push too hard, especially during college years. Academic excellence is important, but it does not compare to the knowledge gained from living independently, which includes making mistakes and learning from them. That freedom is invaluable, because it enables young men and women to explore the entirety of what it means to be an adult.

Some helicopter parents encourage their children to attend prestigious universities, believing that the degree will result in a successful career, but then they strain to pay their child’s tuition. Parents can come to see their children as investments and believe they deserve to be involved.

Moms vs. dads

Helicopter parenting is prevalent among all racial and ethnic lines, as well as socioeconomic status. Recent studies indicate that nearly 70 percent of college students’ parents cross the line between supporting and controlling their children. Yet,



It's typical for parents to micromanage their young children. But for many parents, letting go becomes an emotional challenge — even when the child is ready for independence.

a marked difference exists between men and women when it comes to micromanaging their kids.

Fathers tend to be preoccupied with concrete measures of success such as grades and finances. They are more aggressive in their approach and go straight to the top to resolve problems.

Ben arranged for his daughter to attend a nearby university so she could live at home while taking classes.

Each night, he helps her with her homework, often re-writing papers for her. He carefully monitors her grades, expecting no less than a 3.08 average.

After she scored an 87 on a statistics exam, Ben visited the professor, demanding that the grade be changed. When the professor refused, he spoke with the head of the department and wrote a letter to the Dean until the grade was raised three points.

Mothers, on the other hand, tend to become more overly involved with their son's lives. Theirs is more of an emotional attachment, a desperate need to be needed.

Beverly drives more than two hours to her 20-year-old son's dormitory three times a week to cook him meals and do his laundry and housecleaning. She schedules his doctor's appointments and gets up early to give him a daily wake up call.

Whatever happened to autonomy — not to mention alarm clocks?

Common types of helicopter parents

The academic watchdogs: carefully monitor homework and grades, often completing assignments for their children; speak to teachers, professors, and administrators on behalf of their chil-

dren, often arguing over grades or deadlines.

The safety monitors: worry excessively about every aspect of their children's lives, including health, eating, and sleeping habits, living arrangements, relationships, exposure to sex, drugs, and alcohol; constantly keep tabs on children's whereabouts.

The enablers: provide unlimited money and domestic services, although their children are old enough, and capable enough, to take care of themselves.

The best friends: strive to maintain constant contact with their children, preventing independence and freedom; establishes no healthy boundaries.

The agents: organize, schedule, and sort out difficulties, while going to great lengths to give their children an advantage over their competition.

Stay grounded

As children develop, they need practice making their own decisions. Facing challenges builds self-esteem and confidence.

Too much parental participation can interfere with the development of autonomy, detrimental to self-reliance and independence.

A parent's duty is to respect her children's needs, while serving as a positive role model.

As tempting as it may be to jump in to prevent disappointment or failure, allow your children to learn from their mistakes. In the end, the lessons they learn will be invaluable.

By the time they reach their college years, young adults will be strong, ready to face the world with gusto.

Laura Varoscak-DeInnocentiis is a writer, educator and mom living in Brooklyn. A regular contributor to New York Parenting Media, she has won several editorial awards for her articles.



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Why romance is dead

What are we teaching our girls about love?

It was a fitful night at best. Colds and runny noses were running rampant among my brood and my youngest couldn't sleep.

So together, we retreated to the living room couches at 4 am hoping to rest while watching TV. As he settled onto the sofa and pulled his Super Mario blankie up to his face, I knew he had dozed off, so I grabbed the remote as fast as I could because those Cartoon Network voices were grating on my clogged ears.

Switching to the OWN Network, I'd hoped to catch a good Dr. Phil repeat or something else that would distract me before my day would officially begin an hour later. I tuned into "The Nate Berkus Show" with his guest "Millionaire Matchmaker" Patti Stanger.

Stanger dished out dating advice at a moment's notice, but grew visibly sullen when she was asked why she wasn't married and where her millionaire was. Interesting. If I were single, that would probably be a clue that I shouldn't follow her advice.

I noticed her tone and instructions were harsh. For example, one woman in the audience had been

out on a first date and it apparently went well until the guy

said he was interested in bird-watching. The

woman was evidently so horrified that she didn't know how to respond so she let him ramble about his sightings.

Stanger's advice: "Get up and say, 'I can tell this won't work, but if I find a friend who may be interested, I'll give them your number,' and then run away." Stanger said the young lady was "too hot and single" to listen about bird-watching.

Yikes.

Was I in bizarro land? What happened to meeting someone you found interesting and sharing a quick bite to eat or a coffee? Now, it's turned into abandon a person mid-meal if you don't like his hobby. If you met a friend, a colleague, hell, even an acquaintance for a meal, you'd give him more courtesy than what she was advising.

Speaking of "hot," in a mock-date improvement segment, one young man began his would-be date by telling her she was "hot" (after creepily staring her up and down). Mind you, this was the first thing he did and said.

I let out a quiet "eeew" in my darkened living room, but Stanger said, "Hot means sex, so he is looking at you sexually." Then the woman replied, "Thank you."

I couldn't watch much after that, as I scratched my head wondering if this is really the advice that young people are getting now. I will accept neither my daughter saying "thank you" for being called hot, nor my son using the word "hot" in the first sentence he utters to a girl (unless it's something like, "watch out, that pan is hot!").

People wonder why romance is dead, and maybe it's because so many of us have allowed common courtesy and decency to go by the wayside. Also, the fact remains that we teach people how to treat us, so if we settle for less, that is what we will get.

It reminds me of recent memo making the Internet rounds that says, "I often wonder if more girls were willing to be ladies, more guys would be challenged to be gentlemen."

The challenge lies for both genders, and I hope it's a challenge that we teach our next generation to take.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney's Babble.com. Find her on Facebook and Twitter @DanniSullWriter, or on her blog, www.justwritemom.com.



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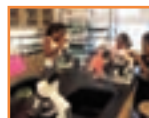
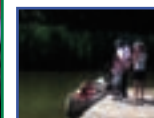
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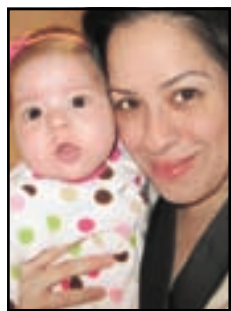
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MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SERADOVA

The terrible twos

I think the terrible twos have arrived early. My sweet little girl has developed a whole other side to her that's not so sweet.

A few months ago, a friend asked several other moms for tips on how to deal with her toddler who had taken a liking to repeatedly biting her. Most moms advised on biting him back! Understandably, she didn't want to do that, nor spank him. Eventually, she decided just to ignore him, although ignoring the bite marks was a lot more difficult.

Luckily, Olivia is not a mini-Dracula. She prefers whining, hitting, and throwing herself (I'm not sure which situation is worst).

There's a ton of parenting advice and tips on how to discipline toddlers — everything from spanking to time-out, to talking and encouraging positive behavior rather than punishing bad. I'm not against spanking. I think it can work and if you pick your battles, it may be very effective.

However, when I've attempted to spank Olivia, she does it in return or does it to the dog. It's sad to see my pit bull being bullied by my 1-year old. And isn't it counter-productive to punish my child for hitting by hitting her? At this stage, I don't think a time-out is very effective, she's too young to understand. She doesn't understand that she is being punished. To her, mommy is leaving her all by herself. No lesson learned.

I do talk and encourage positive behavior as much as I can, but what I've also found to be effective for temper tantrums, whining, frustration, and other annoying toddler behaviors is distracting her. I read somewhere that when your child is acting up, the best thing to do is to distract her. That sounded genius and when I tried it, it was! The next time I felt a tantrum coming on, I brought her attention to something else, my cellphone. I focused on the phone like it was the most intriguing thing ever, and she followed my lead. Sometimes when she's being fussy

I'll just tickle her, and as much as she wants to be upset, she can't help but laugh and forgets her frustration, or even better, tries to tickle me back.

Another tantrum-fighting tactic: singing and dancing.

When Olivia is being uncontrollably fussy and moody, I'll engage her in a song and dance. Sometimes it's a nursery rhyme and sometimes it's something I've just made up. The more upbeat and silly, the better.

I try to look at things from her point of view — although there are some things she can

communicate to me: bottle, book, eat, bath time (she's very smart), but there are other things she hasn't mastered yet and that must be frustrating. Trying to understand the toddler brain is not always so easy.

Fortunately, we haven't had any public tantrums yet, but I'm sure we will. If and when that happens, I'll be prepared to tickle my daughter and break out into a ridiculous dance in front of strangers.

I'm sure the other parents will be able to relate, and if I'm lucky, they might just join in.



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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

The science of love

Love protects us from loneliness, poor health, and even helps us live longer. This month, while love is in the air and people are doing their best to find and keep love, could their efforts be in vain?

After all, you can date as much as you like and meet a whole lot of people, but if the chemistry just is not there, you cannot force the attraction.

Maternal love, of course, is a whole other story. It's primitive and fierce. That unique bond between mother and child does not end with delivery. In fact, the change is life-lasting. Some moms feel that instinctively from the get-go. However, the change is not only emotional, it's biological. There is a real science behind the concept of love.

Here are three distinct ways love can be explained through science:

Pregnancy

Research performed by psychologist Laura M. Glynn of Chapman University and Curt A. Sandman at the University of California proposes that pregnancy hormones help prepare a woman's brain for the stresses of motherhood. This includes everything from giving her more patience and becoming more resilient to stress, to becoming fine-tuned to her baby's needs.

Brain change

During pregnancy, just as the mom passes oxygen and nutrients to her baby via the placenta, it seems that a baby can pass DNA to his mother. Recent research out of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle has discovered that male DNA has been found in the brains of mothers who have given birth to boys. This strange phenomenon is also believed to ward off certain types of cancer, such as bowel and skin cancer. One of the oldest women studied was a 93-year-old woman who was found to have male DNA in her brain after death.

Romantic love

When talking about romantic love, it is simply like a drug — some



say it's addictive. A study from the State University of New York at Stony Brook suggests you can crave the person you fall in love with much in the same way you would a drug. Author of the study, psychologist Arthur Aron, says the change occurs in the brain, not the heart.

"Intense passionate love uses the same system in the brain that gets activated when a person is addicted to drugs," he explains.

Whether we see love as purely emotional, wholly scientific, or a happy blend of both, love is a wonderful thing to have in our lives and a reason for celebration.

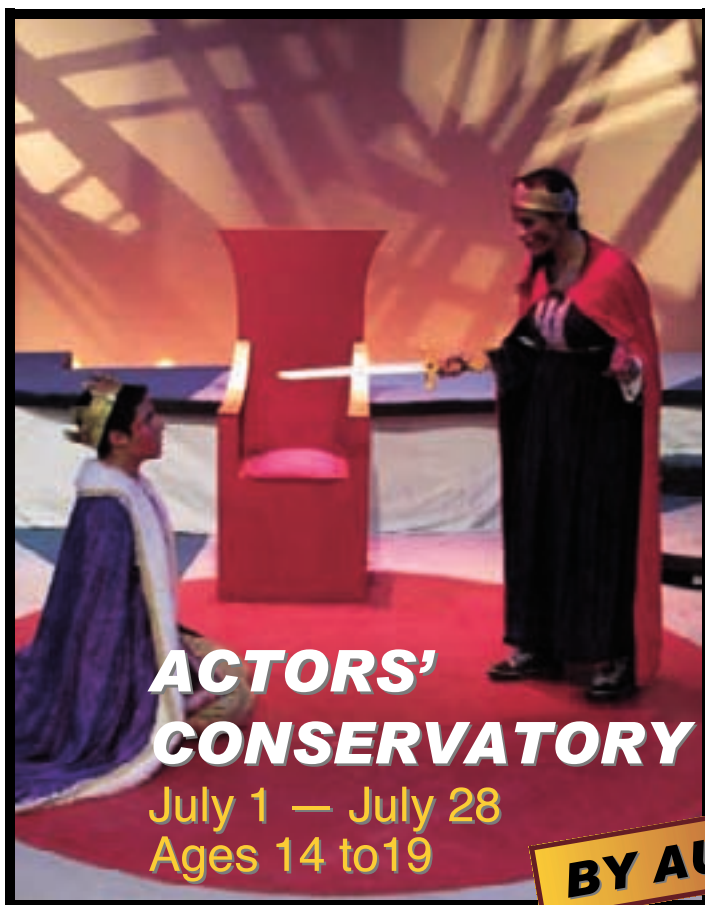
Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney's Babble.com. Find her on Facebook and Twitter @DanniSull-Writer, or on her blog, Just Write Mom.



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Isobella Jade's son Phoenix is learning the importance of reading from a young age.

Babies & books

New York mom
Isobella Jade
supports early
reading

BY JAMIE LOBER

Isobella Jade is a self-described author, model, and new mom who claims to have both beauty and brains to make her a total package.

She instigated a new baby book blog called Phoenix Baby Book Club, where she features her son Phoenix's reading adventures and encourages new parents to start

reading early — even in the womb. Jade, known in New York City's fashion world as a petite model at 5-feet-2 inches, says her career took off when she wrote her first book at the Apple store when she did not have a computer.

"After I shared my underdog story I started getting a following and it grew from there," says Jade, who went on to write three more books, and claims she is not quit-

ting anytime soon.

She quickly learned that talking about how to get ahead as a shorter model was just one way she could reach out to young adults. She found that keeping things interesting and inspiring helped maintain her following. Instead of just being discovered as a model, she was starting to discover herself and wanted to teach young girls the lessons she had learned.

"It is not about if they are looking at every page, but they are listening and engaged."

"I gave them an awareness of being careful and talking to their parents about what they are doing," says Jade.

Her lessons grew more serious after she had a baby boy, who is now 2 ½ months-old and already working with a modeling agency in the city. Not only is he attractive, he is a wise little man.

"We share the books we are reading together with others, and since my mom was a reading teacher, reading is a common nature to me," says Jade.

When parents like to read, their children pick up on it.

"It is the best part of my day when I read to Phoenix, which is in the morning and before dinner time," says Jade.

She considers it a special moment when she can introduce her son to the beauty of the world.

"He gets to hear words he might not have heard in everyday life, see pictures, ignite his senses, and see colors," she says. If you fear your toddler may not be able to sit still long enough to read a book, don't try to fight it, but rather, try to set aside 10 minutes a day, she advises.

"Parents can make it fun. I make noises myself and am animated but humanistic," says Jade, adding she talks to her son like he is 4 years old instead of treating him like a baby.

Jade suggests that parents find teachable moments when reading to their children.

"We have paintings on our walls so I go through the colors and tell him to look at red, white, green, and go through the rainbow," she says. You may find you get a positive response from your child. "I make him giggle and it is fun, but you have to have the right attitude so it is a good experience."

The key is to acknowledge the world around you and not be afraid to be yourself, she says.

"It is weird reading to him because I am not sure if he under-

stands me and he probably does not understand every word, but he does understand my expressions and the way I move my mouth," says Jade.

Parents can also get their children involved by making reading interactive.

"Notice what is going on on the page that you can talk about, like the clouds, cool motorcycle, or owl, so it is more fun than just reading the sentence," says Jade. Use household items as you narrate. "If you have a stuffed animal or cool truck to incorporate — or other things in your room that are a color from the book, like a lampshade or couch — talk about it."

The more you practice reading aloud, the better you will feel about it.

"You have to bring your positivity, excitement, and positive voice to it," says the mom. Try to gauge how your child is feeling. "I talk to him and ask how he is doing, and he will smile and hear my tone of voice and pitch go up when I am happy or excited."

And make sure to give your baby credit where it is due.

"They pay attention and are so smart, and that can be taken for granted," says Jade.

Each child's interest level varies, but all seem to care in their own way.

"It is not about if they are looking at every page, but they are listening and engaged," she says.

While the key is to start young, literacy matters for all ages.

"I love advocating for everyone to read so they can keep their wonder and imagination going, take a moment to escape, appreciate the story of someone else, learn so much, and appreciate the world and their own life and others better," states Jade.

She says she is most proud of how she is raising and portraying her family.

"It is one thing to be admired and liked for how you look, but it is another to have a perspective, opinion, be observant and appreciated," she says. "I am glad people think Phoenix is cute, but I love it when people say Phoenix is smart."

Jamie Lober, author of "Pink Power" (www.getpinkpower.com), is dedicated to providing information on women's and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at jamie@getpinkpower.com.

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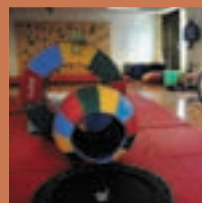
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Calling young

There's lots to explore at the Children's Museum of Art

BY MARIE HUESTON

Charlton Street between Hudson and Greenwich streets is an unassuming Manhattan block, populated by parked cars and passersby. But step inside the Children's Museum of the Arts, and you are transported to a world of bright color and boundless energy. There, you'll find kids of all ages looking at art, learning about art, making their own art, and bouncing gleefully on giant rubber balls.

Clearly, this is no ordinary museum.

It has been just more than a year since the archive moved to its new location at 103 Charlton St. from its previous home on Lafayette Street. Having nearly triple the amount of space has allowed the curatorial and educational staffs — as well as their young visitors — to really spread their wings.

"It was a great opportunity for us to be able to design a new space to meet all our imperatives," says Lucy Ofiesh, the museum's director of Development. "We were able to expand and update our exhibition space, and add classrooms to offer more after school and weekend workshops."

Enter the museum to find a 2,000-square-foot exhibition space, where artwork is just as likely to be suspended from the ceiling as it is hung on the walls. This month, for example, 26 sculptural "Letter Racers" by legendary graffiti artist RAMMELLZEE float overhead, while his found-object figurines fill a display case and his large-scale paintings line the walls.

The imaginative RAMMELLZEE



Photo by Junenore Mitchell

Galaxseum is on view through Feb. 3, and will be followed on Feb. 7 by Face to Face, an exploration of children's self-portraits from around the world. The main gallery will be closed from Feb. 4 to 6 for installation of the new show, with an opening reception on Thursday, Feb. 7, from 4 to 6 pm, during the museum's pay-as-you-wish hours.

As with all of the museum's exhibitions, interactive stations invite children to try their hand at the media they see around them. After viewing Face to Face, children will be able to take pictures of themselves in the Media Lab to be projected onto the wall, or they can stop by the self-portrait table, where different kinds of mirrors offer different perspectives of facial features: realistic, cubist, and abstract.

"What's special for kids visiting our museum is that it's about more than just looking at art," observes Valerie Kharchenko, manager of Ed-

ucation Programs. "It's about looking and then making their own creations based on what they have seen, and learning that their art is just as important as what's in the exhibits."

Open workshops held during museum hours in the light-filled Fine Art Studio let kids experiment further with a variety of materials. Professional artists are on hand to teach techniques and offer guidance. A Clay Bar offers yet another opportunity for hands-on learning with tactile materials. Children 5 and under will want to stop by the WEE Arts Studio, where tables and chairs are scaled specifically for them, and projects and materials are better suited for tiny hands.

Parents of children with special needs will find a number of inclusive programs at the museum, including Stripes, for children on the autism spectrum. Held three Saturdays a month from 9:30 to 11 am (before the museum's regular — and more

February events at the Children's Museum of the Arts

Lunar New Year Festival, Feb. 2 and 3 from 10 am to 5 pm. Ring in the Year of the Snake with special art demonstrations, music, and performances, including the classic Chinese Lion Dance.

ARTY Gras, Feb. 16 from 10 am to 5 pm. Enjoy the festive sounds of a New Orleans jazz band and construct fanciful masks, costumes, and noisemakers — then show off the creations in a parade!

artists!



hectic! — hours), Stripes helps improve motor skills while offering an outlet for self-expression. Inclusive weekend classes, held most Sundays from 1 to 3 pm, invite physically challenged kids and their siblings or friends to make art in a social setting. This month's themes are Stop-Motion Animation: Quiet Winter World on Feb. 10 and Sculpt It: Clay Works on Feb. 17. ARTogether invites families receiving preventive care, or in the foster care system working toward reunification, to bond and play in a safe, fun environment. Appointments for ARTogether are made on an individual basis, so anyone interesting in participating can contact the museum directly.

"Our aim is to provide an immersive experience to young artists of all backgrounds and abilities," Lucy Ofiesh points out.

The museum also has a wide range of classes taught by working artists. WEE Arts attracts the 5 and under set with morning and afternoon classes that frequently incorporate music and storytelling. There is a drop-in option for WEE Arts as well, allowing parents and caregivers greater flexibility. After-school classes for kids 5 to 12 are held from 4 to 5:30 pm on Monday through



Thursday. Illustration, Exploring Media Lab, and Drawing and Sculpture are a sampling of the spring 2013 schedule. The At 5 Program for 13- to 15-year-olds meets on Monday evenings from 5 to 7 pm.

During school breaks and summer vacation, the museum offers "Art Colony" Day Camp, with themes that change from week to week. For the upcoming private school spring break (March 18 to 22) kids 6 to 12 can choose between Claymation and Bookmaking. Animated Shorts



Photo by Hannah Sawhney

focusing intently on colorful exhibitions and creative projects. Each hour, the Ball Pond is divided into three 20-minute intervals, grouping children by age for safety. Children 4 and under bounce at the top of the hour, followed by 5 to 7, and finally ages 8 and up enjoy the final 20 minutes.

If all of this isn't enough to convince you to visit the Children's Museum of the Arts, consider the reviews given by my own children during their first trip to the museum last month.

My 9-year-old son, Ian, summed it up in a word: "Awesome!" His 5-year-old sister, Sage, while happily smudging pastels in the style of Mark Rothko, proclaimed, "Ian, isn't this so fun?"

The Children's Museum of the Arts [103 Charlton St. between Greenwich and Hudson streets in Manhattan, (212) 274-0986; cmny.org]. Admission \$11; free members, infants, and ages 65 and older. Pay-as-you-wish Thursday, from 4 to 6 pm.

Marie Hueston is a freelance writer who lives in Brooklyn.

and Printmaking will be taught during public and private school spring break (March 25 to 29). Week-long summer sessions are held from June 10 to Aug. 30, both at the museum, for children 6 to 13, and on Governor's Island, for kids 8 to 15. Ceramics, Fashion Design, Fairy-Tale Films, Landscape Painting, and Origami are just a few of the subjects to be covered.

And what about those giant rubber balls? You'll find them in the museum's popular "Ball Pond," a great place for kids to burn off energy after

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Continued on page 24



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Catholic Schools

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 22

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212-283-4848 or www.saintmarkschool.org

St. Mark the Evangelist School was founded in 1912 as the first Catholic school in New York City dedicated to educating children of African descent. One hundred years later, St. Mark's offers a range of academic, arts, sports, and music programs that allow the school to offer a holistic education that is academically fulfilling, shaped by Catholic values, and is attentive to the heritage of African-Americans. The school also features an extended school day until 4:00 p.m. and after-school programs until 6:00 p.m. Financial Aid is available for eligible families. For more information please call the school or visit our website.



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Sparkling smiles

How to
protect and
promote your
child's dental
health

BY KIKI BOCHI

Could there be anything more precious than your child's smile?

Preserving and protecting that smile should be on the top of your list of priorities, yet oral health is often overlooked by many parents. It's understandable — you have so many things to deal with, and worrying about preventing cavities just seems to get away from you. Besides, they're just baby teeth, right?

Wrong.

Even baby teeth are important. Baby teeth serve as spacers to maintain the proper alignment for permanent teeth. And that's not all: children with healthy mouths chew more easily and gain more nutrients from the foods they eat. They learn to speak more quickly and clearly. Plus, a healthy mouth is more attractive, giving children confidence in their appearance.

If you're not taking the best care of your child's teeth, you are certainly not alone. For the first time in 40 years, dentists are seeing an increased number of children with multiple cavities, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Along with this alarming trend is an increased number of children who require hospital admittance and general anesthesia to treat their extensive cavities and tooth decay.

Teaching your child proper oral care at a young age is an investment in his health. To mark Children's Dental Health Month in February, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry offers this advice:

- Set a good example. Taking good care of your own teeth sends a message that oral health is important. In addition, cavity-causing germs can be transmitted through contact — like when your baby puts his hands in your mouth and then in his own mouth, or if you share cups or utensils. That's why it's so important to keep your own teeth and gums healthy.

- Be smart at bedtime. Do not nurse a young child to sleep or put him to bed with a bottle of milk, formula, juice, or any sweetened liquid. As a child sleeps, any unswallowed liquid in the mouth feeds bacteria that produce acids and attack the teeth. Protect your child from severe tooth decay by putting him to bed with nothing more than a bottle of water or a pacifier. And never dip a pacifier in sugar or honey — day or night.

- Attack plaque. Plaque is a sticky film of germs that forms on teeth and gums after eating or drinking,

which is why brushing twice a day is so important. To ensure children's teeth are properly brushed, parents of toddlers should do it for them with a soft brush by using a circular or wiggling motion on all tooth surfaces, especially where the tooth meets the gum line. Even once kids are old enough to do their own brushing, parents should watch over the process until children are at least 8 years old.

- Use the right tools. Clean a baby's gums regularly with a clean gauze pad even before any teeth have erupted. This will accustom your baby to an oral care routine, plus reduce the bacteria in your child's mouth. For toddlers, use a small, soft-bristled brush with only a smear of toothpaste so that they don't swallow it. Once children can spit, use a pea-sized portion of toothpaste so they don't absorb too much fluoride. Remember to replace toothbrushes every three to four months — and even sooner if the bristles are worn out, or if your children have been sick.

- Floss daily. It is important to remove plaque from between the teeth and under the gum line before it can harden into tartar. Flossing removes food and plaque between teeth that brushing misses. You should floss for your children beginning at age 4. By the time they reach age 8, most kids can begin flossing for themselves.

- Eat well. Children must have a balanced diet for their teeth and gums to develop properly. Equally important is a diet high in certain kinds of carbohydrates. Other foods, such as sugar and starches, may place your child at dental risk. Limit starchy or sugary foods, which produce plaque acids that cause tooth decay.

Choose wisely. Use dental products that contain fluoride, including toothpaste, and visit a dentist regularly.

KiKiBochi, an award-winning journalist, reads hundreds of reports monthly to bring readers the latest insights on family health and child development.



Wrapping up loose ends

In "The Wrap-Up List," a new novel by Steven Arntson, there's a way of cheating death for 16-year-old Gabriela Rivera.

In Gabriela's modern-day suburban town, Deaths — eight-foot-tall, silver-gray creatures — send a letter to whomever is chosen for a departure, telling them to wrap up their lives and do the things they always wanted to do before they have to depart.

Gabriela never thought about her own mortality, even though there were Death sightings everywhere, and a portrait of her late grandfather hung in her bedroom. Between school and hanging out with Iris, Sarena, and Raahi, life was full. She'd never com-



THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

pletely get used to having Deaths wandering around close-by, but she never really gave them much thought, either.

Then she found the red envelope in the mail.

"You've been chosen for departure," it said, and Gabriela's blood ran cold.

When someone was contacted by a Death, he was told how many days he had left, with scant room for negotiation. The days allowed for tying up loose ends,

saying goodbye, planning the leaving, and making a wrap-up list of things to do before he departed. Nobody knew why Deaths selected certain people, and the only way to escape departure was to find that

Death's Noble Weakness — learn from the clues, and the Death could be cheated.

Once Gabriela understood that she would be departing with her Death, Hercule, she made her wrap-up list: helping her friends and herself get their first kisses.

There are a lot of things to like about "The Wrap-Up List," starting with the sharp main character.

Arntson's Gabriela is loyal and kind-hearted, good to her parents, and smart, but with enough self-doubt to make her believable. I liked the way she faced her own Death; how she befriended him and....well, I can't tell you any more without ruining everything.

The other great part about this book is that it forces you to think about what you'd do if you'd been picked for departure. The answer, and the world in which the question is asked, is the other part of

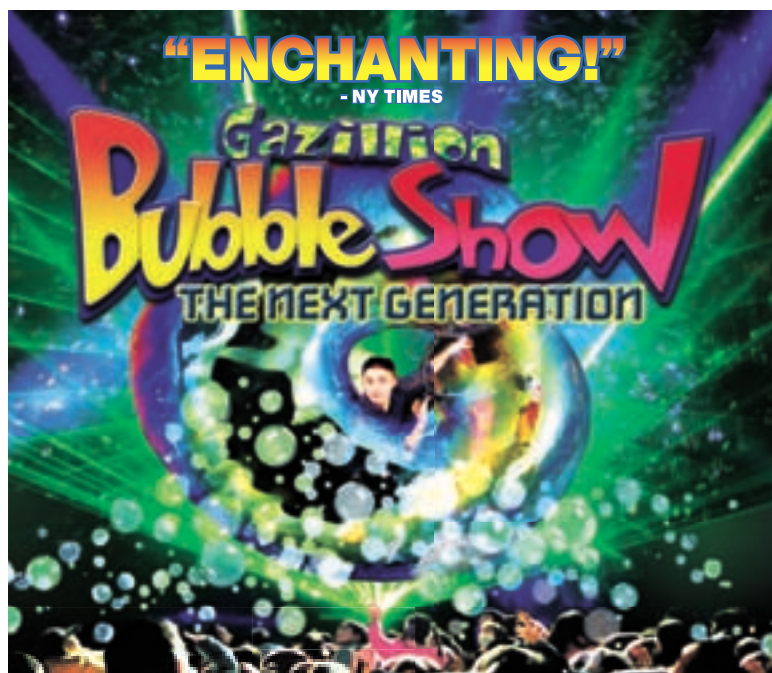


Arntson's most excellent, creepy, sweetly created story, and I really liked it.

I'd say this book is appropriate for anyone ages 12 and up.

"The Wrap-Up List," by Steven Arntson [240 pages, 2013, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$15.99].

Terri Schlichenmeyer has been reading since she was 3 years old, and she never goes anywhere without a book. She lives on a hill with two dogs and 12,000 books.



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Photo by Jim Avondio

(Above) Spend some quality time with your sweetie at Oasis Day Spa. (At left) Light up your love with a trip to the Top of the Rock at night.

Local romance

New York City
is the perfect
backdrop for
Valentine's Day

BY STACEY ZABLE

Call the grandparents or babysitter to take care of your children this Valentine's Day and plan a getaway for just you and your significant other. And since we live in one of the most romantic cities in the world, the alone time can take place close to home.

A key part of this amorous adventure is an overnight stay in the right property. Fresh from a \$10-million renovation, Manhattan's **Hotel Chandler** oozes boutique elegance, with the warmth and coziness that you might find at a larger New England bed and breakfast — but it's located on East 31st Street. With only 125 guest rooms and suites, the Hotel Chandler is able to offer something many New York City properties don't: intimacy. Guests are greeted with genuine smiles and “hellos” from staff, while the hotel's lovely library room and bar make for excellent areas to simply relax. A new high-end organic restaurant, Juni, by Executive Chef Shaun Hergatt, is set to open shortly and is sure to add to the romantic feel of the property.

Guest rooms boast classic bay windows and pampering touches such as Frette Italian linens and Molton Brown bathroom amenities.

The neighborhood location is quiet, despite being only a few blocks from one of the city's most romantic icons, the **Empire State Building**. Purchase

the “Chandler Refresh Package,” and you can get all of Hotel Chandler's romantic elements wrapped up together including late check-out, complimentary cocktails, breakfast, and tickets to the Empire State Building. Rates vary by time of year, so call or go online to check your dates.

Hotel Chandler [12 E. 31st St. between Madison and Fifth avenues, (866) 627-7847; hotelchandler.com].

Using Hotel Chandler as your base, the city has many Valentine's Day week-specific events and anytime-fun for two. For another incredible view, the **Top of the Rock Observation Deck** at Rockefeller Center will host its Winter Starlight Music Series from Feb. 2 to 23, with a special Valentine's Day performance. Also on Valentine's Day, you can explore the Metropolitan Museum of Art and end your day with a three-course, prix-fixe meal, including a glass of sparkling wine, for \$60 per person at the museum's Petrie Court Cafe and Wine Bar.

Top of the Rock Observation Deck (30 Rockefeller Plaza between West 50th and West 49th streets, topoftherocknyc.com).

Metropolitan Museum of Art [1000 Fifth Ave. at East 82nd Street, (212) 570-3964].

Many restaurants will be offering special Valentine's Day menus, but why not skip the meal altogether and go straight to the decadent desserts? The **Valentine's Sweetheart's Sugartooth Tour** is a two-hour escapade

featuring a minimum of six stops to enjoy delicious sweets. The tour is available on multiple dates in February, including Feb. 14. Cost is \$52.74 per person, plus tour guide gratuity.

Valentine's Sweetheart's Sugartooth Tour (Meet at 1471 Broadway at West 42nd Street, sugartoothtours.com).

Pair your chocolate with wine, beer, tastings, and music at “**Cheers for Chocolate: A Party for Chocolate Lovers**” on Feb. 9 from noon to 2:30 pm and 4 to 6:30 pm at Hudson Terrace on West 46th Street between 11th and 12th avenues. The Chocolate Lovers Ticket includes admission with five chocolate tastes and one glass of wine or craft beer for \$45. The event is being sponsored by iAdventure.com, where you can buy tickets online.

Before or after the chocolate, enjoy a “**Side-by-Side Massage**” at Oasis Day Spa on Park Avenue, a short walk from Hotel Chandler. It costs \$240 for 60 minutes of pampering and is the perfect way to start or finish a day focused on the two of you.

Oasis Day Spa (1 Park Ave. between East 32nd and East 33rd Streets; oasis-dayspanyc.com).

Stacey Zable is an award-winning veteran travel writer and family travel expert. Her favorite trips are those that she shares with her husband and two daughters. Send travel questions and comments to Stacey at info@familytravel-trails.com.



FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN

Get your Cupid on this Valentine's Day

Ah, Valentine's Day: the day of love, sweetness, and chocolate. While not a major holiday, per se, this special day in February can be a little gem of a celebration that brings much happiness ... if you treat it as such!

It's often thought of as a day to be set apart strictly for couple bonding, but kids can celebrate Valentine's Day, too. I remember being thrilled when my grade-school peers would bring in little valentines, boxes of chocolate or Sweethearts candies! So, send the kids into school on the big day with little goodies for their teachers and classmates (and make sure there is enough for every kid).

You can also have the "sweetest" time at one of these two incredible chocolate stores, notorious for their unique varieties and DeLyssconscious treats: Jacques Torres Chocolate on Water Street near Dock Street in Brooklyn's DUMBO neighborhood and MarieBelle on Broome Street between West Broadway and Wooster Street in SoHo. Take the kids to help pick out some chocolate for dad, a little something for themselves, and you.

For that classic, romantic V-Day meal with your love, go big and go to Daniel on East 65th Street between Madison and Park avenues in Lenox Hill. It has a quiet, romantic atmosphere that is perfect for the loving couple — and not for the kids. Being one of the only restaurants in Manhattan holding the New York Times' coveted, four-star rating, Daniel accepts reservations up to a month in advance. So, get dialing, men!

Another beyond-perfect Valentine's Day restaurant that's not to be forgotten is Felice, an Italian ristorante with an eco-friendly wine list on First Avenue and East 83rd Street on the Upper East Side. Felice's featured wineries are all sustainable, organic, and biodynamic. The restaurant's seating is unique and comfortable and, overall, the ambiance is a perfect mix of upscale and relaxing.

Another Valentine's Day thrill is a shopping expedition at the famous Agent Provocateur on Madison Avenue between East 62nd and East 61st streets in Lenox Hill; the lingerie collections are absolutely beautiful and a must-have for any woman to feel her sexiest on the most romantic day of the year. Agent Provocateur brings together the finest French laces and silk satins with its signature classic colors: black, cream, and — of course — scarlet and pink, perfect for V-Day!

For those couples who haven't gotten their portrait

taken since their wedding, schedule a romantic photography session. Heidi Green takes absolutely beautiful photos of couples, and her gallery is impressive. She's also known for her portraits of children, so if you want the kids in on the shoot, that'll work too!

Manhattan isn't exactly like living on a beach, but we do have some gorgeous sunsets. Take the time to watch the sun set with your loved one — even if it's on your terrace or out your window while your kids are eating dinner. It's sure to evoke some romantic emotions appropriate for Valentine's Day — and may just lead to a perfect Valentine's night, even if you're stuck at home!

If you're fortunate enough to have the time, take a dance class! In my grandparents' era, couples could dance fluidly and effortlessly at any occasion. Let's bring that sweet skill back! Dancing with your husband is a sensual, bonding activity — and, even if you're both horrible and klutzy, you'll have fun laughing together. Dance Manhattan Dance Studios on West 19th Street, between Sixth and Fifth avenues, offers some great deals on classes and special events involving couples dance.

But if you're both in dire need of putting your feet up, schedule a couple's massage at the Caudalie Spa at the Plaza Hotel on West 58th Street and Fifth Avenue in Midtown. The spa offers phenomenal massages. Remember, you and your spouse deserve to relax and unwind side-by-side after the hard work you put in as parents.

I hope your Valentine's Day is amazing, and remember ladies: Charles M. Schulz once said, "All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt."

Contact Heidi Green Photography at info@heidigreen.com or (212) 545-5304; www.heidigreen.com.

Lyss Stern is the founder of DivaLyssconscious Moms (www.divamoms.com) and co-author of "If You Give A Mom A Martini ... 100 Ways To Find 10 Blissful Minutes For Yourself."



Find some delicious treats this Valentine's Day at Jacques Torres Chocolate.



**DEATH BY
CHILDREN**
CHRIS GARLINGTON

How to fold ... your daughter's thong?

Being a home dad has its advantages. I watch TV while I work, I listen to the stereo real loud, and there are sandwiches and beer. The downside is the long-suffered horror all moms have shared through the ages: there are no secrets.

You go through everyone's drawers. You wash their clothes. You sweep under their bed. You fold their underwear.

You fold your daughter's thong. You fold your daughter's — AAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!

Look, I'm a ninja-level pop. I will go into Walgreens and loudly inquire as to the location of the heavy flow pads. Long ago, I suffered through the horror of my daughter's emergent boobs. These days I'll look right at them, up to my elbows in sink water, and tell her she's not leaving the house until she's dressed less like a transvestite and more like a nun. But a thong in the laundry is a new horror.

My first impression was "ooh, la la — go mom!" Mere seconds later I

realized my voluptuous wife couldn't get this minuscule strap around her foot, much less up to her OH MY GOD! My second impression was OH MY GOD!

Unlike a bra, which, no matter how much black lace or pink ribbons it has, is still structurally important, a thong has no practical use except as a way to say to the world, "I am legally not naked," which only happens in situations where someone else is OH MY GOD!

We dads can work our minds around most daughter stuff. We plan ahead for puberty (beer), driving lessons (beer), and boyfriends (show the kid your study wall: deer head, deer head, space, deer head. Point to the empty space. I'm saving that one for the first guy who breaks her heart).

But we forget our little princesses are exploding out of puberty into an unparalleled womanhood. Never in the history of man have women been so unfettered and free. They are the fortunate great grandchildren of women's rights. They don't know why Mr. Mom is ironic. They grew up in a world of equality, highly paid women CEOs, Oprah, and porn for girls. When I was her age, a thong was porn. For my daughter, a thong is just a thing.

Thank God for my golf skills. Using a seven iron (yes, a seven iron; clearly a nine iron would slice them off into the heating vent), I carried my daughter's thong upstairs toward her room, like a dead rat on a skewer.

I was halfway across the living room when she walked in.

At this juncture, the highly educated father would employ a sports maneuver that snatched the panties out of sight before either of us needed to acknowledge them.

Most.

"You dropped your floss."

"Father, why are you hoisting my unmentionables into the air like a flag?"

"I'm surrendering."



SHORT STUFF



Puppy love

Pets and the health of your baby

BY KIKI BOCHI

New parents often wonder whether the arrival of a baby should prompt the exit of pets from the house, partly because of fears that living in close proximity with cats and dogs will increase the risk their child will become allergic.

There's no need to kick out Fido or Fluffy. A study published in the journal *Clinical & Experimental Allergy* revealed that keeping a dog or cat in the house, especially in a baby's first year, may actually reduce the risk of developing allergies.

As part of the study, researchers from the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit followed a group of children from birth until adulthood. Periodic contact was made with the families to collect information about exposure

to cats and dogs. At age 18, 565 study participants supplied blood samples to the researchers, who measured antibodies to dog and cat allergens.

The results? Being exposed to a specific animal in the first year of life appeared protective, rather than risky.

According to the study, young men whose families kept an indoor dog during the subject's first year of life had about half the risk of becoming sensitized to dogs, compared to those whose families did not keep a dog. And both men and women were about half as likely to be sensitized to cats if they had lived with a cat in the first year of life.

KiKi Bochi, an award-winning journalist, reads hundreds of reports monthly to bring readers the latest insights on family health and child development.

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Tax changes for '13

Do you need to change or update your estate planning documents in light of the "fiscal cliff" tax changes?

Much talk and press was devoted at the end of last year to the "fiscal cliff." On Jan. 2, President Obama signed into law the "American Taxpayer Relief Act." It will be left to each individual American taxpayer to determine if he is, in fact, relieved by the outcome.

The act makes several (supposedly) permanent changes to the tax code, impacting both federal income and estate taxes. Some of the estate tax changes implemented are:

- A \$5 million estate, gift, and generation-skipping tax exemption to each individual, indexed for inflation. The exemption for 2013 is \$5.25 million (up from \$5.12 million per individual in 2012).

- A 40 percent maximum estate tax rate for all assets transferred at death or during lifetime in excess of the federal exemption.

- "Portability" between U.S. spouses was made permanent. That is, a spouse who dies with less than the \$5 million plus federal exemption may "carry over" the excess to the surviving spouse, subject to some conditions on the surviving spouse's remarriage. In other words, U.S. spouses have a combined exemption of \$10.50 million in 2013.

It is critical to keep in mind that New York State has "decoupled" from the federal estate tax regime and maintains only a \$1 million estate tax exemption. There is an unlimited marital deduction (i.e., you can leave an unlimited amount of assets to a spouse), but there is no "portability" in the New York State estate tax system.

The new tax laws make aggressive lifetime planning less of a priority for individuals with less than \$5 million and couples with less than \$10 million in assets, but tax planning is still important in light



of the comparatively low New York State exemption. This type of planning, however, is usually accomplished with lifetime transfers of assets at the death of the surviving spouse.

Second, the new tax laws may diminish the need for a credit shelter trust because of the portability exemption. A credit shelter trust allows a spouse to provide for a surviving spouse by placing assets in a trust that, literally, shelters the tax exemption credit and allows those assets to bypass the estate of the surviving spouse, thereby avoiding some estate taxes at the death of the surviving spouse.

Portability diminishes the need for that aspect of the trust, but a credit shelter trust still offers many

benefits like creditor protection, subsequent appreciation, protection from state estate taxes, and assurances that the assets will pass to the children of the first marriage if the surviving spouse remarries.

As with all legal matters, it is critical to consult an attorney to assess how changes in the law impact the facts and circumstances of your individual situation.

Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the Law Offices of Alison Arden Besunder P.C., where she assists new and not-so-new parents with their estate planning needs. Her firm assists clients in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties. You can find Besunder on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at www.besunderlaw.com.

Disclaimer: This column is provided by the Law Offices of Alison Arden Besunder P.C. and New York Parenting Media as a public service to inform readers of legal issues. It is not intended to advise. Since legal issues vary with an individual's situation and needs, one should consult with an attorney. It is impossible to cover all aspects of the law in an article. Please be advised that the laws are constantly changing. The content in this article reflects the current law. Nothing contained in this article is intended as advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship between the reader and the firm. Individual consultation with an attorney is required to determine the specific facts and circumstances of any particular situation. A written retainer agreement between you and the firm is required before any attorney-client relationship may be created. Circular 230 Disclosure Notice: To ensure compliance with Treasury Department rules governing tax practice, we inform you that any advice contained herein (including in any attachment) (1) was not written and is not intended to be used, and cannot be used, for the purpose of avoiding any federal tax penalty that may be imposed on the taxpayer, and (2) may not be used in connection with promoting, marketing or recommending to another person any transaction or matter addressed herein.

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DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

How to build up your child's confidence

Dear Dr. Karyn,

Is self-esteem learned or genetic? And if we do learn it, how can I build my daughter's self-esteem? I've read several articles about why it's important and I'm terribly concerned that my daughter will suffer from low self-esteem, the way that I did growing up. Can you please offer some practical tips?

a high probability that they will learn it from us! While some people get excited with this information, others honestly feel a little daunted, thinking "Oh, no, so it's all up to me!" But think about it logically — wouldn't you rather be the most influential person in your child's life on this issue versus one of her friends or the media? This really is great news! If you are already feeling confident and you model this consistently, great! She will likely learn this automatically from you (it's like picking up a language as a child) without you ever having to talk about it! But if you or your spouse struggle with confidence, my number one suggestion is that you get coaching to fix this. This is 100 percent a fixable problem!

Understand it

If you were to read hundreds of articles and journals about this popular topic, you'd learn that self-esteem comes down to one word — "Attitude." How we think (attitude) impacts how we feel (emotions), which impacts what we do (behavior). If your 10-year-old daughter tells herself "I am too fat" (thought) she will feel "insecure, self conscious, guilty, etc." (emotions) and this will highly impact her decision making in that she may count calories, weigh herself daily, or be overly obsessive about how she looks (behavior).

If your spouse tells himself "I am worthy only if I make this amount of money this year" (thought) he may feel anxious, overwhelmed, stressed (emotions), which will impact his decision-making. He may become a workaholic (since his self-worth is connected to his net-worth), he may be edgy with your kids and you, or he may find it difficult to relax (behavior). The truth is that emotions are always logical (emotions will feel whatever we tell them), but our thoughts that impact how we feel are NOT always logical (it depends on what we tell ourselves). Experts call these thoughts "internal dialogue" and it's incredibly powerful!

The two examples above are il-

logical thoughts (when we examine them objectively). However, as long as people tell themselves these kinds of thoughts, they will always feel insecure and anxious. To fix and build confidence we need to change how we think. A healthy, confident person does not tell herself conditional statements ("I am ok if _____" (ex. I get this position, make this amount of money, date this person, reach this weight)). Instead, she tells herself, "I am worthy as I am. If I get this goal, that's great, but my self-worth does not depend on it").

Just think about your kids. Can you imagine telling them a conditional statement such as "I love you if _____" — it's absurd! Loving parents do not put conditions on their love towards their kids. Similarly, someone who has healthy confidence does not put conditions on her self-worth. This internal dialogue is so powerful, and research demonstrates that when people have a genuine healthy confidence they are more likely to set goals and get them because they are fearless, take more risks, and have the guts and courage to charge after their ambition! When we unlock the dialogue in our head and challenge "toxic thinking," we unleash a powerful force! Just ask yourself — if you were fully confident, did not fear failure, rejection or what others thought — what would you do for 2013?

Affirm character

Your children desperately need to know that you are proud of them. So look for opportunities to affirm them — but focus specifically on their character.

We all hear a lot of talk about praising kids from different experts, and while some people think it gives kids a big head or false self-esteem, I couldn't disagree more.

The key is that you need to make sure you are affirming the right way, or it may backfire, in addition to giving regular constructive feedback so that it's not all praise and no substance.

Dear Parent,

The great news is that self-esteem and confidence are 100 percent learned! Some people think it is genetic, but that is a myth! So how can we help to develop it in our kids? For this month I'm going to give extra information so parents have a clear idea what they can do! Here are three tips:

Model it

The truth is that we learn confidence from a variety of places (culture, media, peers), but after practicing for 16 years, I would say that the best predictor for what kind of confidence our kids will have is what has been modeled by the same-gendered parent. So, fathers to sons, mothers to daughters: pay attention!

We are the most influential teachers on this topic for our kids. Obviously, there are exceptions to this rule, but the great news is that if we are modeling it for our kids, there is





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Calendar

FEBRUARY



Set sail for adventure

Children get ready to set sail on a great adventure during Kids Week aboard the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum, Feb. 16 through Feb. 24.

This year's themed days include Under the Big Top Weekend on Feb. 16 and 17. Children get hands-on advice and practice time to polish up their circus skills in the Circus Zone.

Science Meets Science Fiction on Feb. 18 is a day of sci-fi fun with Star Wars characters and the delightful science of bubbles.

On Broadway on Feb. 19 brings the best of Broadway to the Intrepid and presents exciting exclusive performances.

Ports of Call on Feb. 20 and Feb. 22 allows children to travel the world without ever leaving the city. Visit each of USS Intrepid's ports of call and complete the challenge.

Winding up the week, on Feb. 23 and Feb. 24, children get physical with the Rangers, Mets, Jets, and more. Yippee!

There will also be interactive education demonstrations throughout each day, provided by the staff of the Intrepid Education Department.

The Intrepid is open from 10 am to 5 pm each day. General admission, which may be purchased at www.intrepidmuseum.org, is \$22 for adults; \$18 for seniors and college students; \$17 for youth 7 to 17 years old; \$15 for veterans and \$10 for children 3 to 6 years old. Active military, retired military and children under 3 years old are free.

Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum complex (Pier 86th Street, 46th St. and 12th Avenue; www.intrepidmuseum.org/).

Calendar

Submit a listing

Going Places is dedicated to bringing our readers the most comprehensive events calendar in your area. But to do so, we need your help!

Send your listing request to manhattancalendar@cnglocal.com — and we'll take care of the rest. Please e-mail requests more than three weeks prior to the event to ensure we have enough time to get it in. And best of all, it's FREE!

THURS, JAN. 31

Mural Wall Painting: Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway, (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org; noon; \$11 admission fee.

Children 4 and younger mix paint on the PlayWorks Mural Wall.

Crayon Creations: Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway, (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org; 2:30 pm; \$11 admission fee.

Children 4 and younger make squiggles, lines, and dots with colorful crayons on paper.

FRI, FEB. 1

Breastfeeding Support Group: 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street, (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 11:15 am–12:30 pm; \$20 per session.

Meet with other moms, babies, and a lactation specialist in this drop-in class to discuss topics such as the emotional ups and downs of breastfeeding, what happens when your milk supply is weak, how to juggle breastfeeding and work, and whether and how to supplement.

Stroller Tours: Whitney Museum of American Art, 945 Madison Ave. between E. 74th and 74th streets, (212) 671-1846; whitney.org; noon–1 pm; \$25 per adult.

Parents enjoy the museum alongside their children in strollers.

SAT, FEB. 2

Whitney Wees: Whitney Museum of American Art, 945 Madison Ave. between E. 74th and 74th streets, (212) 671-1846; whitney.org; 10:30–11:30 am; \$10 per family.

Families with kids ages 4–5 can dot, dash, smudge, and stroke. Bring the little ones to discover how different artists make their mark on canvas, paper, metal, or wood in American Legends and throughout the museum.



Find your beat

“Who’s Got The Beat?” You do when you visit the Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College on Feb. 9 and Feb. 10.

Children 3 years and older will join in with Bang, Buzz the Bee, Toot the Bird, and Bow the Panda

as they explore the greatest city in the world — the Big Apple — finding that the beat is everywhere. From the pulse of the city to the pulse of our bodies, the beat goes on and on. “Who’s Got The Beat” is presented by the little Orchestra Society and stars the Lolli-Pops.

“Who’s Got the Beat,” Sat. Feb. 9 at 10 and 11:30 am, and Sun. Feb. 10 at 1 and 2:30 pm. Single tickets start at \$15.

Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College, [695 Park Ave. between 68th and 69th streets in Manhattan, (212) 772-4448; www.littleorchestra.org].

Family Fun Picturing People:

Whitney Museum of American Art, 945 Madison Ave. between E. 74th and 74th streets, (212) 671-1846; whitney.org; 10:30 am–12:30 pm; \$10 per family.

Families with kids ages 6–10 can explore American Legends and Sinister Pop to learn about different styles of portraiture.

Lucky Diaz and the Family Jam Band:

Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street, (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$13–\$20.

A hip-shaking, head-bopping morning of music from award-winning singer-songwriter Lucky Diaz.

Open Studio American Legends:

Whitney Museum of American Art, 945

Madison Ave. between E. 74th and 74th streets, (212) 671-1846; whitney.org; 2–4 pm; \$18 museum admission; children are free.

Alexander Calder created imaginative and whimsical sculptures out of a range of materials including wire, sheet metal, wood, paint and glass. Families drop in to make their own Calder-inspired artworks.

SUN, FEB. 3

Groundhog Day: New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street, (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 11:30 am; \$15 admission; kids ages 7-13, \$10.

In this Sunday Story Time, children

ages 4 to 7 enjoy a heartwarming tale about self-confidence and friendship between Punxsutawney Phil and Staten Island Chuck.

I Love “Harriet the Spy”: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street, (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 1 pm; \$15.

Kirsten Miller, author of *Kiki Strike*, leads a group of mysterious writers in a lively discussion of a spunky kid sleuth, perfect for kids and parents who love “Harriet the Spy.”

Save the Planet Brigade: Bank Street Bookstore, 610 W. 112 St. at 112th Street and Broadway, (212) 687-1654; bankstreetbooks.com; 2 pm; free.

Kids of all ages will save the planet

Continued on page 40

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Continued from page 39

the fun way by participating in arts and crafts projects enriched by a world of books, and led by Bookstore staff and visiting artists.

Family Concert: 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street, (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 3pm; \$18.

Join musicians Steven Isserlis (cello) and Jeremy Denk (piano) for an exciting new musical journey.

MON, FEB. 4

Preschool Storytime: Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, Children's Center, 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue; www.nyppl.org; 4:30 pm; free.

Stories, songs and participation activities for children ages 3-5.

TUES, FEB. 5

Julie Andrews Children's Book Reading: Bank Street Bookstore, 610 W. 112 St. at 112th Street and Broadway, (212) 687-1654; bankstreetbooks.com; 3:30 pm; free.

World-reknowned actress Dame Julie Andrews and daughter and co-author Emma Walton Hamilton sign their latest book in the "Very Fairy Princess" series, "The Very Fairy Princess Follows Her Heart." Reserve your ticket now. First come, first serve.

WED, FEB. 6

Stroller Tours: The Morgan Library & Museum, 225 Madison Ave. between W. 36th and W. 37th streets, (212) 685-0008; www.themorgan.org; 10:30 am-noon; \$15, \$10 children.

In this tour for new parents and caregivers and their children, the rich array of graphic techniques found in the works on view in Drawing Surrealism — including automatic drawing, collage, decalomania, fumage, exquisite corpse, and frottage — will be explored.

New Parent Get-Togethers: 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street, (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 11:15 am-12:30 pm; \$10/session.

For new parents of babies ages newborn-12 months, this weekly discussion group is a great way for new parents to share experiences, learn from one another and make friends.

THURS, FEB. 7

Raising Caring, Capable Kids with Habits of Mind: Bank Street Bookstore, 610 W. 112 St. at 112th Street and Broadway, (212) 687-1654; bankstreetbooks.com; 7 pm; free.

Join authors Lauren A. Carner, PhD and Angela Iadavai-Cox for this informative workshop for parents, teachers, and other care-givers based on their



Photo by Fred Porter

Join Scooby and the gang

Scooby-Dooby-Do, where are you? We got some work to do now!

Zoinks — Scooby and friends will solve a mystery at the Beacon Theatre, Feb. 22 through Feb. 24.

Scooby, Shaggy, Fred, Velma, and Daphne pile into the Mystery Machine van to track the criminals

and crack the case. Crazy ghosts, perplexing puzzles and a whole lot of Scooby snacks will be on hand. Come and sing along to the original groovy tune, plus meet new wacky characters as the gang romps through this live performance full of Scooby shenanigans and riotous antics. You'll laugh until you cry!

"Scooby-Doo Live" performances: Feb. 22, 11 am and 5 pm; Feb. 23, 11 am, 2 and 5 pm; and Feb. 24, 11 am, 2 and 5 pm. Tickets are \$40 to \$75.

Beacon Theater [2124 Broadway at W. 74th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 465-6500; www.beacontheatre.com].

book of same name.

FRI, FEB. 8

The Mark of Zorro: The New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues; (646) 223-3010; www.newvictory.org; various times; \$9-\$38.

A magnetic trio of actors performs every role in this timeless tale about a mysterious masked avenger, conjuring up all the fast-paced drama, sharp wit and nail-biting suspense of an action flick, for ages 7 and up.

"The African Drum": The National Black Theatre, 2031-33 Fifth Ave., (212) 724-0677; www.shadowboxtheatre.org; 10 and 11:30 am; \$15.

Presented by the Shadowbox Theater. Puppets bring the wit, wisdom, and humor of African folk tales to life. Families learn how the turtle got it's shell and hear about the adventures of Kijana and her animal friends.

Shababa Bakery: 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street, (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 10:15-11 am; free.

Children squish, roll and braid their very own challah bread, and can even take it home to bake.

Breastfeeding Support Group: 11:15 am-12:30 pm; 92nd Street Y. See Friday, Feb. 1.

SAT, FEB. 9

Who's Got The Beat?: Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College, 695 Park Ave. between 68th and 69th streets, (212) 772-4448; www.littleorchestra.org; 10 and 11:30 am; \$15-\$99.

Children join Bang, Buzz the Bee, Toot the Bird, and Bow the Panda as they explore New York, finding that the beat is everywhere — in the pulse of the city and in the pulse of our bodies, presented by The Little Orchestra Society.

Winterfest: PS/MS165, W. 109th St. between Broadway and Amsterdam, (212) 678-2873; ps165pa@gmail.com; 11 am-2 pm.

Indoor school carnival for children and their families featuring music, magic,

Calendar

carnival games, prizes and more.

Family Saturdays: New York City Ballet David H. Koch Theater, W. 63rd St. and Columbus Avenue, (212) 496-0600; www.nycballet.com; 11 am; \$20 per person.

Saturday morning one-hour presentations designed especially for family audiences featuring short works and excerpts from New York City Ballet's diverse repertory.

Year of the Snake: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street, (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; noon–1 pm; \$5 per participant.

In this family workshop, children learn about Chinese New Year traditions and what the snake symbolizes for the year ahead. Then, they make their own unique scaly coiling snake to take home.

Sinister Pop Family Day: Whitney Museum of American Art, 945 Madison Ave. between E. 74th and 74th streets, (212) 671-1846; whitney.org; noon–3 pm; \$18 museum admission; children are free.

Families with kids ages 5 to 12 explore what it means to be a celebrity through an exciting lineup of hands-on art making, karaoke, performance, and interactive activities. Children walk the red carpet and get their picture taken, paparazzi-style.

Surrealism 101 For The Family: The Morgan Library & Museum, 225 Madison Ave. between W. 36th and W. 37th streets, (212) 685-0008; www.themorgan.org; 2–5 pm; \$6; \$2 for children.

In a combination of games and art projects inspired by the exhibition Drawing surrealism, artists and educators Nicole Haroutunian and Lisa Libicki will introduce the entire family (with children ages 6 and up) to the playful side of surrealism.

SUN, FEB. 10

Sunday Science Spectacular: 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street, (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 10 am–noon; \$40; \$20 for children.

Children explore the sounds of various musical instruments, and then create their own.

Second Sunday Family Tour: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street, (212) 423-3500; www.guggenheim.org; 10:30 am–noon; \$15 per family; \$10 members.

In "Shapes and Lines," families explore the different shapes and lines in the art and architecture of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Kids in the Kitchen With Grandparents: 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street, (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 10:30 am–noon; \$40; \$20 for children.



Photo by Sun Productions

What strikes your 'Fancy'

"Fancy Nancy the Musical" is singing and dancing its way into the McGinn Cazale Theatre Feb. 2 through April 28. Based on the children's picture book series by Jane O'Connor, this musical production has Fancy Nancy and friends, Bree, Rhonda, Wanda, and Lionel,

competing for the coveted role of mermaid in their inaugural performance of "Deep Sea Dances." When the role goes to another girl, Nancy is stuck with the part of the dreary old tree. Will Nancy bring her usual "fancy-flair" to her role, even though it isn't the one she wanted?

"Fancy Nancy the Musical" is

suitable for children 3 to 10 years old. Saturdays and Sundays Feb. 2 through April 28 at 3:30 pm. Tickets from \$29.50 to \$49.50.

"Fancy Nancy the Musical" at The McGinn-Cazale Theatre [2162 Broadway at 76th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 579-0528, www.iseats.net].

ton Ave. at E. 91st Street, (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 10:30 am–noon; \$40.

Children, ages 2–5, mix, stir, and taste delicious recipes with their grandparents.

Celebrate Purim: New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street, (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 11:30 am; \$15 admission; kids ages 7–13; \$10.

In this Sunday Story Time, children ages 4–7, imagine going for a stroll through Chinatown and share their favorite things about Chinatown — Gung hay fat choy!

Valentine's Dance Party: Le Poisson Rouge, 158 Bleecker St. and Thompson Street; www.lepoissonrouge.com; noon–2:30 pm; \$15 per person.

Baby Loves Disco celebrates family love this Valentine's Day with chocolate treats, make-your-own Valentine cards, mommy-daddy slow-dances, arts and crafts, dance lessons, and more.

Who's Got The Beat?: 1 and 2:30 pm. Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College. See Saturday, Feb. 9.

A Valentine's Day Chocolate Tasting: Bank Street Bookstore, 610

W. 112 St. at 112th Street and Broadway, (212) 687-1654; bankstreetbooks.com; 2 pm; free.

This culminating event of the Save the Planet Brigade workshop series includes amazing shade-grown organic cacao products from Belize, including bars of white, milk, dark, and extra-dark chocolate. All ages.

Save the Planet Brigade: 2 pm. Bank Street Bookstore. See Sunday, Feb. 3.

"The African Drum": 3 pm. The National Black Theatre. See Friday, Feb. 8.

MON, FEB. 11

"The African Drum": 10 and 11:30 am. The National Black Theatre. See Friday, Feb. 8.

Young People's Chorus 25th Anniversary Gala: Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave. at W. 57th Street, (212) 247-7800; www.carnegiehall.org; 7 pm; \$60.

A star-studded array of well-wishers from the worlds of classical, pop, Broadway, and dance join the Young People's Chorus of New York City in a spectacular showcase.

TUES, FEB. 12

"The African Drum": 10 and 11:30 am. The National Black Theatre. See Friday, Feb. 8.

WED, FEB. 13

"The African Drum": 11 and 11:30 am. The National Black Theatre. See Friday, Feb. 8.

New Parent Get-Togethers: 11:15 am–12:30 pm. 92nd Street Y. See Wednesday, Feb. 6.

THURS, FEB. 14

Will You Be My Valentine?: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street, (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; noon–1 pm; \$5.

In this family workshop, children create their own Valentine's Day mailbox to deliver their heartfelt message to their loved ones.

Valentine's Day Book Signing with Rachel Vail: Bank Street Bookstore, 610 W. 112 St. at 112th Street and Broadway, (212) 687-1654; bankstreetbooks.com; 2 pm; free.

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books.com; 4:30 pm; free.

Spend Valentine's Day with author Rachel Vail as she signs, copies, and reads from her new book "Kiss Me Again," for ages 13-17.

FRI, FEB. 15

Shababa Bakery: 10:15–11 am. 92nd Street Y. See Friday, Feb. 8.

Breastfeeding Support Group: 11:15 am–12:30 pm. 92nd Street Y. See Friday, Feb. 1.

Stroller Tours: Noon–1 pm. Whitney Museum of American Art. See Friday, Feb. 1.

SAT, FEB. 16

Family Tour and Workshop: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street, (212) 423-3500; www.guggenheim.org; 11 am–1:30 pm; \$30 per family (\$20 members).

Families with children ages 4-12, view the Gutai: Splendid Playground exhibition, as artists Matsutani Takesada and Horio Sadaharu engage families in creating Gutai-inspired art.

The Not-Its!: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street, (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$13-\$20.

With an out-of-this-world sound evoking both The Go-Go's and '90s power-punk, Seattle's The Not-Its! mix crunchy guitars and smooth, and four-part harmonies. The concert celebrates the release of their latest CD, KidQuake!

Hands-On Nano Demos: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street, (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; 1–3 pm; free.

Children, ages 7 and up, uncover the fascinating world of nanoscience and nanotechnology and participate in hands-on activities that explore the properties, structures, materials and scale of this field of science.

SUN, FEB. 17

President's Day: New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street, (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 11:30 am; \$15 admission; kids ages 7-13, \$10.

In this Sunday Story Time, children ages 4–7 discover why we celebrate the holiday, and then act as George Washington in the DiMenna Children's History Museum.

Washington's Birthday Ball: Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden, 421 E. 61st St. between First and York avenues, (212) 838-6878; www.



Photo by SONY

Find your Valentine

“Will you be my Valentine?” Find out on Feb. 14 at Sony Wonder Technology Lab.

Children and parents create their own Valentine's Day mailbox and deliver heartfelt messages to loved ones.

Reservations are never required for Family Workshop at the Sony

Wonder Lab, so come on down and have lots of artistic fun. The event is geared to the younger set.

“Will You Be My Valentine?” on Feb. 14 from noon to 1 pm. Admission is \$5 per participant.

Sony Wonder Technology Lab, [550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street in Manhattan, (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com].

mvhm.org; 1–3 pm; \$15; \$10 children.

Bring the family to celebrate the birthday of our nation's first president with live music and dance. Costumed dancers perform and teach traditional country dances, and encourage everyone to join in the fun.

MON, FEB. 18

World War II Writing Workshop For Teens: New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street, (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 10 am–3 pm.

Children, ages 10–18, learn about the incredible stories from the World War II era, as educators lead age-based groups through this fascinating history, inspiring their short fiction, poetry, and other forms of writing.

History of Chocolate: New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street, (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; noon–4 pm; \$15 admission; kids ages 7-13, \$10.

See, smell, and taste colonial hot chocolate. Then, watch as American Heritage Chocolate educators grind cocoa beans, add spices like red pepper, nutmeg and cinnamon, and heat up hot chocolate to taste.

TUES, FEB. 19

World War II Writing Workshop For Teens: 10 am–3 pm. New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum. See Monday, Feb. 18.

Sci-Tech Workshop: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street, (212) 833-8100; [\[nywondertechlab.com\]\(http://nywondertechlab.com\); noon–2 pm \\$15.](http://www.so-</p>
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Children learn how to solder, use resistors and connect LEDs to batteries to make their own unique electronic key-chain to take home.

WED, FEB. 20

Grug: New 42nd Street Studios, 229 W. 42nd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues, (646) 223-3042; www.new42.org; assorted times; \$14-\$20.

Hamish, Jude, and Lucas lead this charm-filled puppet performance by Australia's Windmill Theatre. Join the huggable haystack with a knack for problem solving, as he turns a cramped burrow into a cozy home, finds food to quiet his grumbling tummy, and tends his growing garden, for ages 2-5.

New Parent Get-Togethers: 11:15 am–12:30 pm. 92nd Street Y. See Wednesday, Feb. 6.

THURS, FEB. 21

Singalong with Hopalong Andrew: 92Y Tribeca, 200 Hudson St. at Vestry Street, (212) 601-1000; www.92y.org; 10 am; \$10 child; \$5 for additional children in the same family; adults accompanying children free.

Join the fun for plenty of Pre-K and early-childhood standards, sprinkled with folk songs, cowboy songs, and other fun songs.

FRI, FEB. 22

“Scooby-Doo Live! Musical Mysteries”: Beacon Theatre, 2124 Broadway at W. 74th Street, (212) 465-6500; www.beacontheatre.com; 11 am and 5 pm; \$40-\$75.

Scooby-Doo and the Mystery Inc. Gang have been called upon to help solve the mystery of a trouble-making ghost who is haunting a local theater.

Breastfeeding Support Group: 11:15 am–12:30 pm. 92nd Street Y. See Friday, Feb. 1.

SAT, FEB. 23

Whitney Wees: 10:30–11:30 am. Whitney Museum of American Art. See Saturday, Feb. 2.

Family Fun Picturing People: 10:30 am – 12:30 pm and 1:30 – 3:30 pm. Whitney Museum of American Art. See Saturday, Feb. 2.

Justin Roberts and the Not Ready for Naptime Players: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street, (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am and 2 pm; \$15-\$25.

Justin sings his hit songs, including “Willy Was a Whale” and “Pop Fly,” as well as songs from his new releases,



Courtesy of Symphony Space

A symphony of sound

It's a symphony of hand clapping, foot stomping, and fun music at Symphony Space throughout the month.

Shed those winter blues and warm up with a fun concert featuring Lucky Diaz and the Family Jam Band on Feb. 2. The band will debut its newest CD "A Potluck" that's chock

full of fun, child-friendly tunes.

The Seattle band, the Not-Its!, comes east and introduces its latest CD "KidQuake" on Feb. 16. The CD evokes the sounds of the Go-Go's and the '90s punk rock genre.

It's full of crunchy guitars and smooth, four-part harmonies, just geared to pop gems and full of ev-

eryday kids' stuff.

Justin Roberts and the Not Ready for Naptime Players introduce their first CD "Lullaby" on Feb. 23. After this concert they head back to the recording studio to finish up on another CD, titled "Recess." Tickets for Lucky Diaz on Feb. 2 and the Not-Its on Feb. 16 run from \$13 to

\$20; show times for both concerts are at 11 am.

Tickets for the Justin Roberts concert run from \$15 to \$25, and showtimes are at 11 am and 2 pm.

Symphony Space [2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street in Central Park West, (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org].

"Lullaby and Recess."

"Scooby-Doo Live! Musical Mysteries": 11 am, 2 pm and 5 pm. Beacon Theatre. See Friday, Feb. 22.

Tech for Tots: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street, (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; noon-1 pm; free.

Bring your little ones in to experiment with different sounds that they hear every day, and then record themselves on an audio CD to take home.

SUN, FEB. 24

"It's Not Fair to Me": 92YTribeca, 200 Hudson St. at Vestry Street, (212) 601-1000; www.92y.org; 11 am; \$15 (children under 2 free).

Bill Harley and Keith Munslow celebrate release of "It's Not Fair to Me" as they debut new songs at this exclusive NYC show.

"Scooby-Doo Live! Musical Mysteries": 11 am, 2 pm and 5 pm. Beacon Theatre. See Friday, Feb. 22.

Celebrate Purim: New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street, (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 11:30 am; \$15 admission; kids ages 7-13, \$10.

In this Sunday Story Time, children ages 4-7, hear the story of Naomi, a girl that just moved into a new apartment in the city and is wondering why her mother wants to celebrate Purim with complete strangers.

Purim Carnival: 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street, (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 3pm; \$10; \$15 for children.

Children enjoy games, mask making, entertainment, and delicious hamantaschen, and experience the story of Purim and meet the heroes of the Megil-

lah — Queen Esther and Mordechai.

MON, FEB. 25

Build It!: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street, (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; noon-5 pm; \$11 admission fee.

Children explore unconventional ways of building, constructing, and assembling in this three-dimensional guided workshop.

WED, FEB. 27

New Parent Get-Togethers: 11:15 am-12:30 pm. 92nd Street Y. See Wednesday, Feb. 6.

Mix It Up: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street, (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; noon-5 pm; \$11 admission fee.

Children create unique artwork using mixed media, such as paint, cardboard,

fabric, tissue paper, and pipe cleaners.

THURS, FEB. 28

In the Sound Booth: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street, (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; noon-5 pm; \$11 admission fee.

Have a melody in your head that you just can't stop humming? Ever secretly dreamed of being a famous pop star? The sound booth provides children with the opportunity to write and record their own songs, with the assistance of a Teaching Artist.

LONG-RUNNING

A Song for the People: Museum of Jewish Heritage-A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, 36 Battery Place, (646) 437-4202; www.mjhnyc.org; \$10; \$7 children 10 and under.

Continued on page 44

Calendar

Continued from page 43

This exhibition transports listeners through memories of celebrations across generations. It features vibrant modular carpets, donated by FLOR, that are used for wall treatments and flooring. Some of the tiles are embedded with photographs, artifacts, and video screens, while others are laser engraved with graphics and text. Runs through spring.

WWII & NYC: New Exhibition: New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street, (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; \$15 admission; kids ages 5-13, \$5.

WWII & NYC explores the impact of the war on the metropolis, which played a critical role in the national war effort, and how the city was forever changed. Exhibit runs now through May 27.

Winged Tapestries Moths at Large: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; daily; 10 am-5:45 pm; \$24; \$14, children; \$18, seniors and students.



Meet Julie Andrews

The shelves are alive with the words of Dame Julie Andrews and Emma Walton Hamilton at the Bank Street Bookstore on Feb. 5.

Andrews, a world-renowned actress and author who shot to fame as "Mary Poppins" and daughter Emma have added to the "Very Fairy Princess" series with their newest endeavor, "The Very Fairy Princess Fol-

lows Her Heart."

Star-struck readers can get their copies signed to boot!

The series is geared for little girls 3 to 6 years old. Reservations are requested.

Free book signing, Feb. 5 at 3:30 pm (the book is \$16.99).

Bank Street Bookstore [610 W. 112th Street, Broadway and W. 112th Street, (212) 678-1654; www.bankstreetbooks.com].

org; daily; 10 am-5:45 pm; \$24; \$14, children; \$18, seniors and students.

This exhibition features 34 striking and dramatic images of moths, displaying the arresting beauty and surprising diversity of moths from Ottawa-based

photographer Jim des Rivières. Runs through September.

The Butterfly Conservatory:

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, (212) 769-5200; awang@amnh.org; www.amnh.org; daily; 10 am-5:45 pm; \$24; \$14, children; \$18, seniors and students.

The annual exhibition, "Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter" returns and celebrates its 15th year.

"Pippi": Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater,

79th Street and West Drive, (212) 988-9093; Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10:30 am and noon; Wednesdays, 10:30 am, noon, and 2:30 pm; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm; \$8; \$5, children under 12.

This family-friendly production features nearly two dozen, hand-made marionettes crafted by the expert puppeteers.

Cross-Stitch Circle:

New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street, (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Thursday, Jan. 31, 3:30 pm; Thursday, Feb. 7, 3:30 pm; Thursday, Feb. 14, 3:30 pm; Thursday, Feb. 21, 3:30 pm; and Thursday, Feb. 28, 3:30 pm; \$15; \$5, children ages 5-13.

Perfect for beginning cross stitchers who will learn the basic stitch and create a bookmark with their new-found skill. More seasoned stitchers can continue working on their bookmarks, or can branch into more complicated designs.

"Pinkalicious":

The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. between Lafayette and Mott streets, (212) 579-0528; www.iseats.net; Saturdays, 1:30 pm; Sundays, noon, through Sun, Feb. 24; \$29.50 regular seats; \$49.50 premium seats.

In this musical, Pinkalicious can't stop eating pink cupcakes — despite warnings from her parents, and ends up a terrible hue.

The Little Moon Theater:

TADA! Youth Theater, 15 W. 28th St. between Broadway and Fifth Avenue, (212) 252-1619 X 4; www.tadatheater.com; Saturdays and Sundays, 2 and 4 pm through Sat, Feb. 16; \$20; \$8 for children.

A travelling troupe of actors gives performances and meets an odd assortment of characters including an endearing fairy god-mother.

"Fancy Nancy":

The McGinn-Cazale Theatre, 2162 Broadway at 76th Street, (212) 579-0528; www.iseats.net; Saturdays and Sundays, 3:30 pm; Sat, Feb. 2- Sun, April 28; \$29.50 regular seats; \$49.50 premium seats.

The family-friendly musical shows Fancy Nancy and her friends, Bree, Rhonda, Wanda, and Lionel perform in their very first show, "Deep Sea Dances," but will she and Bree be picked to be mermaids?

Just Drop In:

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street, (212) 423-3587; www.guggenheim.org; Sundays, 1-4 pm through Sun, Feb. 3; \$22 adult; \$18 students and seniors.

Museum educators lead creative, interactive projects for families with children ages 3-10 that explore exhibition highlights.

Kids Week 2013:

Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, Pier 86 at 46th Street and 12th Avenue, (212) 245-0072; www.intrepidmuseum.org; \$24 admission fee; \$19 for ages 7-17; \$12 for ages 3-6; under 3 free.

Children will have the opportunity to participate in dozens of fun, educational, and interactive activities all month long and during Presidents Week. This year's themed days include "Under the Big Top Weekend," Feb. 2-16 and Feb. 2-17; "Science Meets Science Fiction," Feb. 2-18; "On Broadway," Feb. 2-19; "Intrepid Ports of Call," Feb. 2-20 and Feb. 2-22; and "Sports 'n Games Weekend," Feb. 2-23 and Feb. 2-24.



Courtesy of Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden

Happy birthday to George

I cannot tell a lie, it's just one heck of a cheery good time at the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden on Feb. 17 in celebration of George Washington's birthday.

Costumed dancers perform and teach participants traditional country dances, encouraging everyone to join in.

Curtsey, bow, and promenade while enjoying refreshments and

a tour of the museum.

Washington's Birthday celebration on Feb. 17 from 1 to 3 pm. Admission is \$15 for adults, and \$10 for members and children under 12. Reservations are not required, but are recommended.

Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden [421 E. 61st Street between First and York avenues on the Upper East Side. (212) 838-6878; www.mvhm.org].

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Organic food: Worth all that extra cost?

Shopping for organic foods is an individual choice for your growing family.

"For me, personally, my top priority is making sure that my family is eating the recommended five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables per day, whether it be from organic produce or not," says Elizabeth Zawila, a mother of two young children.

Organic defined

On food labels, the term "organic" is legally defined as:

- 100 percent organic: The product must contain only organically produced ingredients.
- Organic: The product must contain at least 95 percent of organically produced ingredients.
- Made with organic ingredients: Processed foods may bear this label if they contain at least 70 percent of organic ingredients.

Why choose organic?

There's increasing concern about the safety of exposure to synthetic pesticide residues, especially for

pregnant women and young children. What has captured parents' attention is the emerging research linking pesticide exposure to children's attention, cognition, and behavior, as well as sensory issues.

A clinical report published by the American Academy of Pediatrics in November 2012 came out in favor of buying organic produce and meat, but suggested you can skip the organic milk. The report, which analyzed existing scientific evidence, found there's little difference in the vitamin and mineral content between organic and conventional foods.

The report does cite lower pesticides in organically grown produce and a likely lower risk of exposure to drug-resistant bacteria.

In one study cited, switching to organic produce for five days reduced the levels of pesticide residue in the urine of children accustomed to eating conventional produce.

"It remains unclear whether such a reduction in exposure is clinically

relevant," the report states.

Organic milk is popular with parents due to concerns about growth hormone and estrogen often given to conventionally raised cows. The report concluded, "Ingestion of milk from estrogen-treated cows appears to be safe for children," as there is little difference in the sex-hormone concentrations in organic and conventional milk.

Be strategic

Organics cost 10-to-40 percent more than conventionally grown produce. Save money by choosing store brands or shopping at warehouse clubs. Or you can purchase many organic grains, pastas, flours, dried fruit, and nuts in the bulk sections of stores for less.

"Labeling a food as 'organic' can give you a false sense of security. Even organic snack foods can be just as high in sugar, sodium, fat, as their non-organic counterparts," reminds Zawila, a registered dietitian who is a clinical nutrition specialist at the University of Illinois Medical Center.

The debate continues about which is healthier, but consider this: eating more fresh fruits and vegetables in general is the point.

If buying all organic isn't a priority or a financial reality for you, consider taking a strategic approach. Insist on organic versions of what retains the most pesticide residue, like apples, grapes, or celery. Skip it for produce with skins or peels you would not consume such as bananas, pineapples, and onions.

Zawila adds, "Having young children brings many expenses, and I know pigeonholing myself into only buying organic produce would limit the amount and variety that I would be able to buy and prepare for my family."

Dietician Christine Palumbo is based in Naperville, Ill. and is a frequent speaker on health and wellness. Contact her at Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com. Her Facebook page is Christine Palumbo Nutrition and her Twitter handle is @PalumboRD.

Citrus-Yogurt Sundae

Makes six servings with one cup of fruit per serving

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz. lowfat vanilla yogurt
- 1 tsp. freshly grated Sunkist® orange peel
- 1 tsp. freshly grated Sunkist® grapefruit peel
- 2 Sunkist® grapefruit, peeled and sectioned
- 2 Sunkist® oranges, peeled and cut into half-cartwheel slices
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 1 cup blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, or seedless grapes
- 1 tsp. sugar
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine the yogurt, orange and grapefruit peels; cover and chill. In a large bowl, combine all the remaining ingredients; cover and chill. To serve, spoon fruit mixture into individual dessert dishes and top with the yogurt.

NUTRITION FACTS: 150 calories, 0.9 g total fat, 0.4 g saturated fat, 4 g protein, 35 g carbohydrates, 2 mg cholesterol, 5 g dietary fiber, 26 mg sodium

Recipe courtesy of Sunkist®



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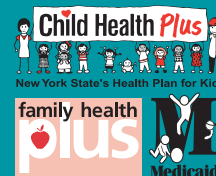
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