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Letter from the publisher

Mid-summer musings

Talking about Back to School at the end of July is getting on my nerves. I'm not the only one. Our social media guru and columnist Danielle Sullivan and I had the same thought going.

It seems that we are pushing the marketing of things up further and further and the phrase itself is so worn out that we want to dispose of it and replace it with something else, but what? TV commercials and print ads are already overusing this tired expression.

The return to classes will mean summer's over and that a family's regular routine will resume. Vacations will be behind us and summer schedules and long days of light will



come to a close, as will the beaches. But not yet, and not now! We have weeks ahead of us of still lovely summer weather. Personally I love the beach!

There are great summer foods in the farmer's markets and food stalls with the first of the summer corn showing up in the last week or so. Peaches and nectarines have appeared and tomatoes too! Sunflowers are for sale and up in the loveliest places. To me they mean mid-summer.

New York is such a great place to be in the summer with many events taking place in every borough. Our calendars are full of wonderful things for every family to do wherever you live or want to play.

Signing up for our e-blasts and utilizing our website can help keep you in the loop about what's happening in every part of the city. Log onto www.NYParenting.com and sign up for the newsletter. Twice a week we will send you links to interesting articles and ideas for the weekend that will inspire you and your family. You'll also get a chance to win tickets and other prizes.

Speaking of winning, we are giving away a gorgeous Britax Affinity Stroller to some lucky family. Enter to win by clicking on the link www.NYParenting.com/stroller and make sure you fill out the form completely. That means also telling us why you would like to win it. Only city residents can enter, so don't tell your sister-in-law on the island or in Westchester. They are not eligible.

This issue has some great arti-

cles that we hope you enjoy. Allison Plitt has written an interesting piece on Smart Snack guidelines for the schools. Be sure to read it.

Whatever your plans are for the coming weeks, enjoy! If you're like me and you're hard at work except on the weekends, then make the most of those days. If the kids are away at camp or in a day camp nearby, they should be doing the same, relishing the summer time outdoors in all the ways that kids do.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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LEARNING FOR THE LONG RUN

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Prenatal fitness

Amazing benefits for mother — and child

BY AMY GRIFFITH

Exercise during pregnancy is not only imperative to keep a mom-to-be fit and healthy, but it can also benefit the child's lifelong health. This is according to recent research from the University of Virginia School of Medicine, which determined that exercise during pregnancy has a distinct molecular consequence on the unborn child that essentially allows the child to be more fit. Other studies have shown that maintaining a healthy weight during pregnancy is tied to preventing childhood obesity, which has reached epidemic proportions in the U.S. Of course, prenatal fitness is also an imperative for the budding mom's own health with respect to both her physical and emotional well-being.

That said, while most understand that maintaining a pregnancy fitness regimen is beneficial, many women harbor erroneous fears and misconceptions about prenatal exercise or simply don't know the best way to go about integrating fitness into their daily lifestyles, both of which undermine and inhibit a pregnant woman's opportunity to optimize her health and fully enjoy the experience.

To help moms-to-be (with no applicable medical complications) gain expert-based knowledge and innate confidence relating to their fitness choices, below prenatal lifestyle expert, Amy Griffith, star of her own "Active Prenatal Yoga" Workout DVD, offers eight tips and truths to give di-

rection, debunk myths, and provide overall peace-of-mind to foster a fit, healthy and happy nine months:

- **Start now.** If a woman becomes pregnant and has not had a structured fitness routine beforehand, she can certainly start now — and should — since exercise develops muscle tone, can help prevent gestational diabetes, aids in digestion and can help regulate blood pressure. Just be sure to begin with some gentle forms of exercise. As the due date approaches, remaining active can also encourage the baby to move into proper position for birth. Even activity as simple as walking is hugely beneficial to a pregnant woman. She can even run, bike, dance, and strength train as long as it still feels safe for her body. Whatever modality of exercise she decides to engage in, it is always of utmost importance that she listen to her body and recognize individual limitations.

- **Exercise to release endorphins.** Exercise not only has countless physical benefits with keeping muscles toned, maintaining healthy body fat levels, and improving cardiovascular health among them, but it also releases endorphins that can help boost mood, improve self-esteem, reduce anxiety and depression, decrease stress, alleviate pain, and improve sleep. All of these can greatly enhance the lifestyle of a pregnant woman, helping her enjoy the overall experience.

- **Yes, "do abs."** Pregnant women still have them and will benefit from strengthening them in advance of

delivery. Exercising abs and the entire core group of muscles will help prevent back and posture problems caused by the growing stomach, will make pushing more effective pushing during labor, and will help the new mother recover quicker. For example, a pregnant mother in her second and third trimester will mainly be working her transverse abdominus, which wrap from front to back like a corset, and also the obliques. Keeping these muscles toned and active will help them to return to their pre-pregnancy state far sooner. Abdominal exercises during pregnancy can also reduce the risk of abdominal separation, which can lead to other physical ailments. Beforehand, be sure to research the safest types of abdominal exercise for the various trimesters and execute with proper form.

- **Try yoga:** Yoga is not just about gaining strength and flexibility, and finding calm in moments of stress; it also helps slow down our busy lives. Prenatal yoga is a very safe form of exercise. Executed with the use of props to support the pregnant woman as baby grows, the mother can maintain the standard yoga poses but in a modified way. Prenatal yoga also teaches the powerful connection of breath and movement, encouraging the woman to let go of tension trigger points in her body. All of these elements combine to cultivate a deeper understanding of how the woman's body moves, and what she can do to relax in an uncomfortable situ-



ation, both physically and mentally. Many of the elements of a prenatal yoga class can be utilized by the mother as she moves through labor and delivery, including poses to ease labor pains, breathing techniques, and meditation.

• **Cardiovascular exercise is a-ok.**

The old theory of not allowing your heart rate to exceed 140 beats per minute is no longer supported by the medical community. There is about a 50 percent increase in blood flow when a woman is pregnant, so the heart works much harder to deliver all of these nutrients throughout the body and especially the placenta. While a pregnant woman who is exercising may tire out more quickly, there is no evidence that such exertion is harmful to her baby. The general rule of thumb is if a pregnant woman can continue to carry on a conversation while performing an exercise routine, then she is in a cardiovascular safe zone.

• **Set a fitness mantra.** A mantra is a positive intention — word or phrase that you come back to daily to “check in” and be reminded that everything is okay and on course. Setting a mantra will help you to trust your body, and accept the changes that are occurring

physically. It can help to quiet down the ego and encourage you to slow down and even accept the temporary fitness limitations. This is a key lesson to reiterate throughout pregnancy and can help to keep the pregnant woman safe while exercising. Some mantras are, “I accept,” “I trust,” and “I am strong.” These positive reminders carry throughout the pregnancy and the birth of the baby.

• **Massage to recover faster.** A carefully delivered massage from a prenatal massage specialist can alleviate pain in various parts of the body that can be caused by too much physical activity — exercise and otherwise. Massage stretches and loosens muscles that become tight as baby grows and the as the woman’s body changes. Massage will also benefit the pregnant woman as it relieves tension. A pregnant woman’s low back pain, headaches, sciatica, and swelling can all be eased by a trained massage therapist. When her body feels better, she is able to continue to keep herself healthy with regular exercise.

• **Meditate to de-stress.** Meditating can connect to a mantra you set or simply help to quiet down, clear your mind, calm your nervous system, and regulate your blood pressure. When employed in combination with a fitness regime, a pregnant woman can reap the rewards of both physical and emotional health. Pregnant women can quiet down fears and release them through the practice of meditation. When the mother lets go of fear, it opens her up to having a positive pregnancy and birth. Labor and delivery are certainly a physical experience, but many women say it is 90 percent mental. Allowing oneself to move inward and “step out of your own way” gives the body permission to do exactly what it knows how to do: birth baby! Meditation enables the mom-to-be to mentally surrender while exercise gives her physical strength and confidence.

Nationally certified prenatal yoga instructor Amy Griffith is one of America’s leading prenatal fitness and lifestyle experts, providing free advice, including eBook and video content, to her army of followers and fans at www.AmyGriffith-workout.com. The above should not be construed as medical advice. Individuals should consult with their own physicians before starting any fitness or exercise regime.

Kindergarten 101

Help your child score a smoother transition into school

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

For many parents, kindergarten signals an important transition from the all-consuming baby and toddler years. Suddenly, your “baby” is expected to make more choices on her own, stay focused over a longer period of time, learn new skills, and navigate a social circle with less oversight from you. Plan ahead to pave the road to a happier kindergarten transition for all with these tips:

Visit the school. Before school begins, attend school orientations and meet the teacher to help your child grow familiar with his new learning environment.

Calm kindergarten jitters. Build excitement and optimism for school. Shop together for a new backpack or lunchbox, school supplies, and new clothes.

“Even if parents are feeling nervous, they should do their best not to portray that to their child,” says Kathy Weller, a kindergarten teacher. “Be very upbeat about the upcoming new experience.”

Recognize friendly faces. Before school starts, arrange play dates with future classmates. A few familiar faces on the first day may help calm any nervous butterflies.

Read together. Reading to your child teaches valuable listening skills and creates an opportunity to help your child prepare for the kindergarten experience. Check out books like “The Night Before Kindergarten” by Natasha Wing and “Kindergarten Rocks” by Katie Davis.

Tackle a few skills. While knowing his colors, the ABCs, and how to count to 10 will give your child a head start, work on other skills like teaching him to tie his shoes and knowing his full name, phone number, and birthday.

Plan transportation. Avoid transportation snafus by sticking to a plan and keeping your child (and the teacher) informed. If your child will ride the bus and is nervous, listen and reassure her. Drive the route ahead of time. Also, seek out a “bus buddy” for your child, whether a responsible older neighbor child or another bus-riding classmate. On the first day of school, arrive early at the bus stop. Introduce yourself and your child to the driver. Assure your child that you (or whoever you’ve designated), will be waiting for her when the bus returns after school.

Get good eats and sweet dreams. Make sure your new kindergartener gets plenty of rest and eats healthy meals, which will help

him better manage the stress of the transition and stay focused during school. Wake up a little earlier to avoid a rushed first day.

Team up with the teacher. Share insights about your child’s strengths with the teacher to help her understand what motivates and interests your child.

“Parents should approach school with the idea that the teacher has their child’s best interest at heart,” says Dr. Holly Schiffrin, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Mary Washington, who specializes in child development and parenting practices. “The parent should convey that they are on the same team as the teacher (even if they have different ideas about how to assist their child).”

Reflect on the day. Having a hard time getting your child to discuss his day?

“Keeping a daily journal of their day (with mom’s help) is a fun way to get your kids to talk about school,” says kindergarten teacher Wendy Hughes. “Ask your child to tell you some funny or interesting things that may have happened that day.”

Manage adversity. Every child is bound to have a rough day. Encourage her to resolve her own problems and take responsibility for her actions.

“Ask your child for her input and perspective, genuinely listen, acknowledge and empathize, and then shift the focus towards reaching solutions as a family and in unison with your teachers and school,” says parent coach Tom Limbert, author of “Dad’s Playbook: Wisdom for Fathers from the Greatest Coaches of All Time.” “Focus on giving your child the tools, morals, and lessons she will need when not in your presence, which will now be more and more often.”

Mark the occasion. Celebrate your child’s first day of school with a special outing after school like a frozen yogurt, dinner out or a play date at her favorite park. Who knows? You may find that initial celebration turns into an annual first-day-of-school tradition for your family.

Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines is a family communication expert, wife, and mom. She and her two sons plan to celebrate the first day of school with a trip to the ice-cream counter.



CONTEST WINNERS!



New York Parenting and Queens Family was proud to send a Queens family to the Mets game on May 24 at Citi Field. Pictured here are 9-year-old Casey Golinski and mom Linda Penberg, who had a great time at the game.

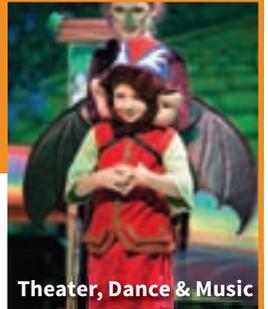
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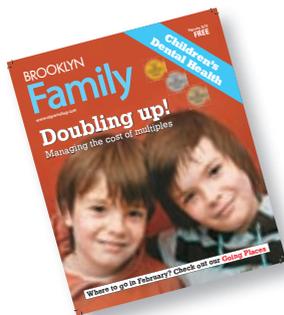
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Snacking smarter at school

BY ALLISON PLITT

There is a revolution going on in our country's schools this year and it's not about the Common Core Standards. It's about ensuring that all food sold in schools (outside of the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program) adhere to the United States Department of Agriculture's Smart Snacks nutritional standards, in which schools must have transitioned to complete compliance by July 1.

To better understand the evolution of the Smart Snacks guidelines, it is important that parents and caretakers revert back to 1979, when the Department passed competitive food rules for the first time. Regulations limited sales of food with less than five percent of the recommended dietary allowances per serving for eight key nutrients. These products included soft drinks, chewing gum, and other sugar-based foods. These

items could not be sold in food-service areas during mealtimes but could be sold anywhere else in a school at any time.

President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which required the Department for the first time in more than 30 years to establish national nutritional standards for all foods sold and served at schools any time during the day. This law exempts fundraisers from its compliance as long as they are approved by the school and are infrequent.

Three years later the Department proposed new competitive food rules and opened them for public feedback for 60 days. After public comment and revision, it published a revamp of school snack standards called "Smart Snacks in School" in June 2013 and informed all participating schools that they had 14 months in which to comply. The rules are in effect only during the school day and 30 minutes thereafter.

"I want us to imagine a new world. A world where healthy food is actually more convenient than junk food."

Helping United Mankind and Nutrition Healthy Vending Machines is one of the new merchants selling healthy food and beverages in schools across the nation. The company also published a "Smart Snacks In School Guide," which contains a summary of food and beverage rules as well as nutrient standards.

Any competitive snack food sold must be a fruit, vegetable, dairy product, protein-rich food (meat, beans, poultry, seafood, eggs, nuts, seeds), whole-grain rich food (first ingredient is a whole grain or product is 50 percent whole grains), or a combo food that has at least a quarter cup fruit or vegetable. All the competitive foods have nutrient limits in calories, sugar, sodium, and fat.

Competitive snack beverages are sold in limited portions and have limited calories. They include water, carbonated water, unflavored low-fat milk, flavored or unflavored fat-free milk and soy alternatives, 100-percent fruit or vegetable juice, and diet sodas. Caffeinated drinks can only be sold in high schools.

Sean Kelly, chief executive officer of Helping United Mankind and Nutrition Healthy Vending Machines, explains, "Kids consume up to 60 percent of their total calories from school and up to 40 percent of their caloric consumption comes from junk food. To exacerbate this problem, the nutritional education that we provide our kids in our society is negligible at best."

Some schools have already started selling healthful snacks at lunchtime either on the menu or from vending programs. As a result, these schools have already seen their students boost their overall daily consumption of fruit by 26 percent, vegetables by 14 percent, and whole grains by 30 percent. They also ate more fiber, calcium, and vitamins A and C.

Kelly believes there is a correlation between the declining aca-

demical performance of the United States' students (ranked 17th among 50 other countries according to a study done by the Economist Intelligence Unit in 2012) and an increase in the processed food industry in our country.

"This isn't just about obesity and malnutrition," Kelley remarked. "It's also about the state of education in America. Maybe the reason our kids can't learn what we want them to learn is because they can't focus or retain information because they're falling asleep in class and they continually experience blood sugar-induced erratic energy swings as a result of poor nutrition."

According to Kelly, when people talk about solving the obesity epidemic, they talk about educating people more about nutrition, getting people to eat less harmful food and more healthy food, and having people exercise more.

Kelly, who was a personal trainer while in college, does believe in those solutions, but he also adds one more component to the mix — easy and convenient access to healthy foods.

"The reality of the world we live in today is that it is very, very difficult to be healthy, but for a second, I want us to imagine a new world. A world where healthy food is actually more convenient than junk food. Where it's easy to access nutrition and nutrition is everywhere. Where convenience stores and vending machines and micro-markets bring nutrition directly to people rather than asking people to get educated about it and go and find it on their own," Kelly says.

He continues, "Where it's incredibly difficult to find and, therefore, eat those foods that are harmful to you, so you do so sparingly as was the original intention. Where everywhere you turn there are fresh foods, energy-sustaining health snacks, foods from the earth, healthy drinks, fruits and vegetables. In this world, it's almost impossible to consistently eat harmfully and, as a result, the problems related to obesity, malnutrition, even education, began to fade away. Access, therefore, is the answer."

To find out more about Smart Snacks in School, visit www.smartsnacksinschool.com.

Allison Plitt is a freelance writer who lives in Queens with her husband and young daughter. She is a frequent contributor to *New York Parenting*.



ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
ESQ.

Affording home care

My parents are in their early 80s and my father was just diagnosed with Alzheimer's. My mom is afraid that she will not have enough money to pay for his long-term care, but that she has too much money to qualify for government benefits. What should we do at this point?

“Aging in place” is the generally preferred course of action for our parents’ generation, meaning that they would rather remain in their home as they age. Many people are concerned that they will not have assets sufficient to pay for their care either in their home or a facility. There are options available to New York State residents that can help defray the cost of care, and allow the elderly to obtain assistance without emptying their or their children’s pocketbooks.

Medicaid (not to be confused with Medicare, which provides health-insurance and prescription drugs for the elderly) is a joint federal and state program that is becoming increasingly relied upon as the long-term care solution for the middle class. Contrary to common belief, being on Medicaid does not mean that you receive substandard care. The Med-

icaid program is simply a source of payment for those who qualify for it.

The Medicaid program is “means based,” meaning that you cannot have assets in excess of a certain amount to qualify. The asset threshold changes each year, and is \$14,550 for an individual for 2014.

Assets do not disqualify you from medicaid home care

Many people believe that they are disqualified from Medicaid Home Care because they are over the maximum \$14,550 Medicaid asset allowance. This is a misconception. First, an applicant’s home is an “exempt resource” and does not count toward the maximum. Second, certain transfers can be made in anticipation of Medicaid, which would not necessarily disqualify an applicant from Medicaid Home Care Services. People commonly cite the “five-year look-back,” but do not know that the look back applies only to nursing home care and not home care in New York State. Many are also unaware that retirement accounts are exempt and do not count toward the threshold.

There are various ways of transferring assets in order to qualify for Medicaid. This is often necessary where a parent is “house rich,” but cash poor, and wants to avoid selling their house in order to obtain care. The methods are too many and too complex to list here, but these transfers can be accomplished and, in many cases, can yield a favorable result to help keep a parent in his home while providing him with care. You should always consult with an attorney before transferring your assets.

Income does not disqualify you from receiving Medicaid home care

There is an income limitation on Medicaid applicants. The income limitation for a single applicant for 2014 is \$809 to \$829. Many people are under the false assumption that their

income is too high to allow them to qualify for Medicaid. Wrong again!

In New York State, eligible applicants can employ what is called a “Not-for-Profit Pooled Trust.” The Pooled Trust operates similarly to a “flex account” that you might have through your employer at work to pay for qualified medical expenses. With a Pooled Trust, your income in excess of the threshold gets sent to the Pooled Trust organization (a non-profit organization that “pools” excess income from many other people). You are the beneficiary of that excess income and it can be used to pay qualified expenses. As a result, your income is reduced sufficient for you qualify for Medicaid Home Care services, while allowing you to still reap the benefit of the excess income. There is an annual fee for the Pooled Trust, and thus there should be enough excess income to justify payment of the annual fee. In addition, your bills (only bills in the beneficiary’s name) must be submitted to the Pooled Trust each month for payment. Lastly, the Pooled Trust is not a savings account. Any assets that are remaining in the beneficiary’s account at the beneficiary’s death revert to the Pooled Trust. It is important to use as much as possible in the Pooled Trust each month.

In short, if one or both of your parents are concerned about the cost of long-term care and implementing long-term care solutions, a consultation with an elder law attorney is invaluable. The best time to start planning for these situations is before your parents become ill or injured, but even if you have not done so, it might not be too late.

Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of 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 Alison Besunder on Twitter @estatetrust-plan and on her website at www.besunderlaw.com.



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Overdosing on vitamins

Learn the risks to your child

BY ALEXA BIGWARFE

Iwould never have thought that I could make my child sick from giving them too many vitamins. However, the Environmental Working Group is warning parents that we may be harming our children by feeding them too many vitamins and minerals, particularly vitamin A, zinc, and niacin. These are commonly added to “fortified” cereals and other foods.

Vitamins and minerals were originally added to everyday foods to protect children’s health, but the Food and Drug Administration’s percentage of daily values shown on food nutrition labels are for adults and exceed maximum safe levels for

children. The group states that the agency’s guidelines on what food companies should show on the nutrition facts label — the percentage of daily values — are inadequate. Furthermore, those calculated on products made for children still show the values for adults, not children.

Does it really matter if children “overdose” on vitamins and minerals? The answer is yes. Too much vitamin A can result in short-term health problems, such as brittle nails and hair loss. In the long term, over consumption of vitamin A can lead to liver damage and skeletal abnormalities. If pregnant women consume too much vitamin A, it can cause developmental abnormalities in the fetus.



Too much zinc can result in anemia and can, impair immune function.

Excess niacin or vitamin B3 leads to rashes and skin reactions, nausea and toxicity in the liver.

Children are much more at risk of overdosing on vitamins than adults.

Where are the biggest sources of these excess vitamins? The Environmental Working Group’s report states: “Fortified breakfast cereals are the No. 1 source of added vitamin A, zinc, and niacin in children’s diets.” In 23 of the cereals with the highest added doses, just a single serving would exceed the daily safe level of a child age 8 or younger. Most of those cereals in the highest ranges are not marketed toward children, but there are also high levels in snack bars (consumed by children) as well.

To be safe, make sure you know about these vitamins and minerals, and limit your children’s intake of foods fortified with vitamin A, zinc, and niacin to only 20-25 percent of the adult daily value.

Alexa Bigwarfe is the mother to three young children. She is a strong advocate for all things related to children’s safety and health issues.

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Britax

Prep list

Is your
child ready
for school?
Are you?

BY JUDY M. MILLER

Anticipation builds as the new school year approaches. Every year, my kids become antsy as the stores fill up with new backpacks, fun and colorful accessories, and the latest in locker and school supplies. And even though I am not ready to begin the process of letting summer with my kids slip through my fingers, I grudgingly give in and get to work. The excitement of and preparation for a new school year can be stressful for the parents and their children.

So, what can parents do to make the transition smooth for themselves and their children? Especially for the child who is attending a traditional school for the first time or going to a new school? Here are some ideas to get everyone ready for school.

Schedule a visit. Meeting the teacher and walking through the building does a lot to ease the stress of change. If your child's schedule requires changing classrooms and the use of a locker, take her to school and encourage her to physically walk through her schedule and become familiar with her locker. Your child gains a sense of the familiar and you, when you think of your child during the day, can be calm knowing where your child is. (Make and keep a copy of her schedule.)

Get the paperwork done. Mark this task off your to-do list early. Doing so allows you the time to address anything that may have been overlooked, like a copy of your child's inoculations. Make and keep copies in case paperwork is misplaced. Keep a folder at home for each of your children with all required school paperwork, class list, phone numbers, class schedule, and any other important papers. If you need something, you'll know where it is. Last-minute worries and misplaced paper add to stress. You're working towards smooth, yes?

Take your child shopping. Going shopping for school supplies is our annual first step of getting ready for



Gradually begin moving bedtimes and wake-up times back to school schedules. The excitement of the new school year, adjustment to class work and studying, and added expectations wears your child out.

school, part of our tradition for transitioning from summer back to school. In the early part of August we wade through the aisles with shopping carts and our lists of required school supplies. Each of my four kids has a copy of their list and runs through the aisles, grabbing the items on their list and throwing the supplies into the carts. I check what is in the carts against my master list. I also adjust supplies, to account for the myriad of school projects that will be pop up throughout the school year, and the items that may not go the distance during the course of the school year (extra poster board, erasers, folders, plastic rulers, highlighters, dry-erase makers).

Checkups! If your insurance allows, consider scheduling check-ups in early to mid-summer. Seeing the dentist and doctor earlier, especially when inoculations are required, disassociates them with the start of the school. Middle and high school sports physicals will need to be completed before your child begins practices for her fall sports.

Connect or reconnect. Consider a simple get-together or picnic with school friends and families you may not have seen over the summer. Reestablishing friendships and catching up does wonders for everyone. This is a great opportunity for new families to get acquainted as well. If you are the new family, ask for a mentor family who has a child of the same age as yours. The mentor family can "hold your hand" as you and your child transition into the new school environment, answering questions and helping you become familiar

with the system.

Move the clock up. Summer is time to replenish. To slow and let down. Even if you work, your child, whether she has been at camp or at home, has been sleeping in and staying up later. Gradually begin moving bedtimes and wake-up times back to school schedules. Changing the schedule early should help you get some added sleep since you aren't staying up as late either. Help the younger kids say good bye to the fireflies and flashlight tag, and assist your middle or high-schooler with a small scavenger hunt or barbecue with friends. The excitement of the new school year, adjustment to class work and studying, and added expectations wears your child out.

Go over expectations. Sit down with your children and go over what you and your child's school expects of them. Some schools require signed agreements from the student that holds them responsible for their actions, like cheating, turning work in on time, responsibility, and treatment of other students. If these are required by your child's school, make sure you discuss the agreement and that your child understands what she is signing. If you or your child feels anything needs clarification, get it and keep a copy of the signed agreement.

Organize and mark everything. When you are shopping for school supplies with your child, get yourself some new supplies, too. I always get myself a new supply of sticky notes, permanent markers, highlighters, paint pens, and notebooks. I purchase storage bins if they are needed. Extra supplies go into the bins and are used by my kids as needed throughout the school year. My personal supplies go into the desk drawer, necessary for marking clothing, new backpacks and school supplies. Permanent markers won't work on every surface, so paint pens come in handy (and they come in white).

Moving through the steps of preparing your child to return to school allows you and your child to become ready for school. If you find you aren't there when the bus picks her up that first morning, remember, you'll see her sweet face across the dinner table later.

Judy M. Miller is a freelance writer living in the Midwest with her husband and four children. She is the author of "What To Expect From Your Adopted Tween."

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Continued on page 18

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Education

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 16

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Rosie Pope

Room for romance

A consummate multitasker offers tips for keeping the spark alive

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Summertime and the livin' is easy? Well, not so much, especially after those long, hot, stressful workdays that inevitably turn into even longer, more hectic evenings at home. Now that the kiddies seem to be underfoot 24 hours, seven days a week, that hint of romance on a balmy summer night may easily go unnoticed.

When you and your partner are in the mood for love, but your little darlings won't go beddie-bye, how do you keep that spark alive?

Rosie Pope has some great tips. Along with mastering the art of looking fabulous and sexy in her stylish high heels — while pregnant — the popular parenting diva, and star of Bravo's hit show, "Pregnant in Heels" (where she's a maternity concierge), has also mastered the art of keeping things fun and romantic with hubby Daron, despite the daily chaos of family life.

Married 10-plus years, Rosie and her husband are facing the challenges of raising four adorable, active kids, (ranging in age from 7 years to only 4 months), while juggling full-time careers. The couple has lived in New York and the surrounding area since meeting in an elevator one day, and falling in love. It was an urban romance.

"Juggling my dual life as business owner and a mother of four is not something that I've mastered with total elegance," she says. "While it may at times look like that from the outside — thanks to a great blow out and some snazzy wedges — the inside is a hurricane of emotion! Like so many other mothers in America, I was not able to take the maternity leave that I would have liked. After all, I run my own business, so stopping work for months at a time really wasn't an option."

While maintaining her whole-

some image, the dotting mom has skillfully managed to channel her inner temptress (much to her hubby's delight), and reminds harried New York parents to work on keeping that spark alive — no matter what!

According to Rosie, it's all about that all-important date night — even when mom's exhausted and not really in the mood.

"Every night can be Friday! Don't wait till the weekend to have a special date — if the opportunity presents itself, seize the moment!"

Here, she offers NY Parenting's moms and dads her insights as a parent, so they can better balance motherhood (and fatherhood) with intimacy, and discusses how you and your better half can find time for amoré (every night!).

Rosie reveals her secrets to a healthy and lasting relationship and marriage:

Communication: Communicate — even when it's hard (and quite often, frustrating).

Empathy: Don't forget to think of things from your partner's perspective. (It's tricky, especially when he or she is annoying the heck out of you. But it's do-able and works wonders to foster a loving atmosphere).

Work on intimacy! It is unequivocally a very important part of your relationship, and it's kind of like going to the gym: you may not like feel like it, but you are always glad you did it!

Feel good about yourself: Do what you need to look and feel confident. Remember —





How does Rosie find time for date nights and late-night shenanigans with four demanding kids, her maternity shops, and a line of baby clothing she designs?

confidence is attractive!

Tell your love story: Everyone has one, so regularly remind yourselves of that moment you fell in love. Those feelings live on inside of you and you need to revisit them often.

So, how does Rosie find time for date nights and late-night shenanigans with four demanding kids, her maternity shops, and a line of baby clothing she designs? Well, it ain't easy, but she truly believes the trick is to "seize that moment!"

"Any night can be a date night once the kids are in bed," she says. "We are strict about their bedtimes, so we have time with each other most evenings. My husband is a fantastic cook, so we don't need to go out. I pour the bubbly, make the play list, and he

grills the fish.

"We work together, so we actually get to spend a lot of time together. It's less about the need for us to go out to special places and more about finding those key points everyday — to check in with each other on a personal level, rather than on a parenting or business subject."

She admits they're very lucky to have help at home, and grandparents that really help out a lot.

And what's Rosie's advice for single parents dating and bringing someone new into the family?

"Be honest with your children. My parents separated when I was very young and I think some of the difficulty I had growing up was being kept in the dark about relationships. And so when I learned of them, they were very serious, and it seemed so out of left field to me and made it hard for me to adjust or accept this new person. Kids can handle a lot when you are honest with them."

So, on those balmy nights when a hint of romance is in the air, she reminds couples to "keep it fun and often!" You can fill in the blanks.

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Travel writing teens

Kids get more
out of a trip
when they
document it

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Weekends away, school breaks or summer excursions abroad — traveling with kids takes planning.

The Family Travel Forum is a website that offers tips and first-hand examples of travel with children written by parents and kids.

The site encourages families to think ahead — like reviewing maps in weeks leading up to the trip.

By planning ahead to discover the sites and events that the destination has to offer, families can engage their older children in the research and encourage them to select some of the families' excursions. This is one of the great tips on the Family Travel Forum website.

Some other tips include con-

firming — in advance — the travel budget, the distance you're willing to travel, and the mode of transportation that will be used. On the



Scenes from teen travels: (Above) A friendship blossoms in Uganda. (Left) The teen author bonds with her host father in China.

day of your departure, be sure to pack plenty of snacks and quiet activities in a small bag or carry-on luggage to keep the children entertained during the travel to your destination.

Another great idea encouraged by the Family Travel Forum is to have children write and document their travel experiences in a journal or via a blog.

These activities will promote literacy and other artistic skills (i.e., photography, drawing, etc.), which will not only

help with your child's development and growth, but could also earn them scholarship money for their education or future travel.

About the contest

Now in its eighth year, Family Travel Forum's merit-based contest is open to students ages 13 to 18 who are enrolled in junior high or high school or being home-schooled. Candidates submit a 600-word essay on any trip they have taken in the past five years

along with a photo or video. Family Travel Forum rewards the best posts with scholarship grants or travel prizes.

The top three essays are rewarded with cash (with first place receiving \$1,000; second place \$500; and third place \$250) and

25 honorable-mention winners receive travel gifts. Additionally, there is a prize for Best Video. These prizes are given by Family Travel Forum, along with the Society of American Travel Writers, our partner in this program.

This year, Family Travel Forum is offering two additional scholarships and more prize money

with its new sponsors I Love New York and the New York Travel Writers Association, increasing teen travel writers' chances to win.

Visit http://myfamilytravels.com/Teen_travel_writing to review the rules, requirements and prizes, and to find a link to the Scholarship Submission Form.

“Documenting travel experiences contributes to overall literacy, and that as kids and teens enjoy sharing their experiences, this is both a fun and educational activity.”

Family Travel Forum, the Society of Travel Writers, the New York Travel Writers Association and New York State’s Tourism Board (through the effective “I LOVE NEW YORK” travel campaign) have partnered for the past eight years to award grants and travel gifts to teen writers and bloggers ages 13 to 18. Thus, by encouraging your budding travel writer or photojournalist during your next family trip, it is possible that they could fund their own excursions in the future.

To get more information about the scholarship, Family Travel Forum, and traveling with children, I interviewed Fran Falkin, an editor for the website:

Shnieka Johnson: Why is it important to encourage kids and teens to document and write about travel experiences?

Fran Falkin: At Family Travel Forum we feel that documenting travel experiences contributes to overall literacy, and that as kids and teens enjoy sharing their experiences, this is both a fun and educational activity.

SJ: Is there a way to introduce writing and documentation at a younger age?

FF: Absolutely. Little ones can draw pictures in a travel journal and also dictate some words for a parent or older sibling to add, or they can make a collage of images from travel brochures or pictures printed from the internet.

SJ: Can this be done for trips both big and small? Even in “stay-cations?”

FF: Sure. It’s great for kids to connect with their own backyard. Last year’s scholarship topic asked teens to write about

why people should visit their hometowns, and we received a lot of great pieces.

SJ: What do you suggest to parents that want their kids and teens to write more?

FF: Kids really model their parents’ behavior, even when you think they’re ignoring you! Start your own family journal and give every child their own space to write on pages that you begin. You can start by noting that day’s activities, or your itinerary and hotel name if you’re on vacation. If kids only want to paste in their cut-out pictures, add postcards, ticket stubs, or other travel souvenirs, encourage them to add a caption explaining why that item is important to them. Soon you’ll have a big scrapbook that everyone will enjoy looking at. If your family is more comfortable typing, start an online blog together using a free service like <http://blogger.com>

SJ: Does technology play an important role? Or is a travel journal a sufficient start for young writers?

FF: Technology plays an important role in everything today. Teens love to tweet and share their pictures on Instagram, where they can write long captions. But, for story writing, the “travel journal” can be the old-fashioned bound notebook, or a tablet computer — whatever works for your teen.

SJ: Is there a larger number of teen travel writers and bloggers?

FF: Each year we receive several thousand applicants signing up for the scholarship from all 50 states, and most of them have never blogged before.

SJ: Tell me about the scholarship that you offer annually, how did it come to fruition?

FF: Family Travel Forum always encouraged kids to write about their family trips and at one time had a separate website called kidtravels.com. In 2007, we realized that kids, especially teens, would be more likely to participate if there was a chance to win a prize, and so the Family Travel Forum Teen Travel Writing Scholarship was born.

Shnieka Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer. She is based in Manhattan where she resides with her husband and son. Contact her via her website: www.shniekajohnson.com.

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Understand your child's brain

What neurology can teach you about parenting

BY ALLISON PLITT

Steven Jay Fogel, a longtime student of human behavior and development, explains in his new book — “Your Mind Is What Your Brain Does for a Living: Learn How to Make It Work for You” — the way our brain functions, the importance of parent-child attachments, and how our addictive use of technology has brought about a digital revolution.

He recounts his story of financial success at a young age, but that happiness still eluded him. Having studied with psychologists, educators and rabbinical scholars, Fogel has published this book to share his insights and experiences with others about how he found that inner joy.

Brain function

Initially, Fogel dispels the myth that the brain functions like a computer. The brain does process information like a computer, but the likeness ends there.

“Every-day experiences reveal ways in which your brain operates in a most uncomputer-like fashion,” he writes. “Examples include visual illusions, the emotional basis of decision making, irrational approaches to problem-solving, and the unreliability of human memory.”

Fogel said for years neuroscientists believed that humans only used 10 percent of their brain, but now they have discovered that people use all parts of their brain. They have also discovered that the brain is fully developed around the time a person is 25 years old.

Neuroscientists, furthermore, did a study in which 3-month-old babies showed a distinct preference for a puppet that was helpful to another puppet instead of a puppet that hindered another puppet. They concluded from the study that the babies were innately able to sense right from wrong.

One term Fogel often refers to is “default programming,” which is created by emotionally impactful experiences we have growing up. In



his own words, Fogel describes “default programming” as “the wiring that we have been developing since infancy.” Past traumatic experience often leads to an adult responding to an event without rational thought or emotion.

Fogel’s book takes an optimistic stance about neuroscience because he writes, “Brain research has revealed that our brains are malleable, with the capacity to be shaped and reshaped, which scientists refer to as neuroplasticity.” Although our brain may be programmed to a default setting that is based on past experiences, Fogel said it is possible to be “mindful” in which you are aware of your present thoughts and actions in order to

make reasonable decisions that defeat old self-destructive behavior.

Parenting

For parents, Fogel’s chapter about parent-child attachment stresses the importance of children feeling secure in their bond with their parents.

“If you have a good parent-child attachment, then the child can go off into the world with a strong feeling of self-worth, feeling confident that they can handle things,” he writes. “If a parent or caretaker is remote, unresponsive, or emotionally turbulent and insensitive to the child’s needs, the parent-child bond won’t be secure, and children raised in these circumstances will grow-up with a poor self-image and are likely

to have other problems as well.”

Fogel believes another crucial aspect of parenting are the messages that parents communicate to their children.

He explains, “If a child has a mother or a father or a caretaker or a sibling who is in that child’s daily life, and if that person is always saying that around every corner is disaster and that the child’s only choice in handling things is just going to be shooting himself or herself in the foot, how can that child go out into the jungle and expect to find berries? All that child is going to expect to find are snakes.”

The middle prefrontal cortex, located behind the forehead, provides the brain with higher cognitive functions, which are a result of a healthy parent-child attachment.

“The more attuned a parent is to his or her child, the safer the child will feel; the more secure the bond between parent and child will be; and the healthier the child’s development will be in the first seven areas the middle prefrontal cortex participates in that enable us to modulate ourselves mentally, emotionally, and physically. Thus, parents who are mindful in their relationships with their children provide secure attachments,” he writes.

Fogel lists the first seven areas of the middle prefrontal cortex, which are responsible for the following cognitive functions: regulating your body (vital organs such as your heart and other bodily functions to keep them in balance), attuned communication with people, emotional balance, response flexibility (taking in information, stopping and reflecting before you act), insight, empathy and modulating fear. When the parent-child attachment is strong, these cognitive behaviors function properly, giving the child a sense of well-being.

Technology and the brain

Another topic Fogel broaches is our modern-day addiction to technology, which is making us less-mindful individuals. Fogel says humans are fear-based creatures, as we walk around with our smart phones anticipating upsetting e-mails and text messages. He credits the smart phone for creating the 13-hour-a-day work mode, where it is not uncommon for a boss to call an employee for a file at 7 pm.

In regards to e-mails and text messages constantly coming in on our smart phones, Fogel says that



Steven Jay Fogel

often the messages that come in make people become “activated,” by which he means a highly dramatic state of intense emotions catalyzed by our default programming.

Fogel advises, “Any time you get a digital communication that activates you, don’t answer it for two hours. You want to be able to detach yourself, so you can be mindful enough to consider different possibilities for your response and respond productively rather than defensively. Once you’ve sent an angry or otherwise intensely emotional e-mail, you can’t take it back. As the old saying goes, ‘Once the bullet leaves the gun, there’s not much you can do.’ So when a digital communication upsets you, take a deep breath, keep breathing, and think about what you want to communicate and the way that you want to communicate it.”

According to Fogel, there are two crucial points in his book that can change someone’s life. He says, “First, we are not the voice in our head. The voice in our head sounds like an authority to us, and we believe it’s always right, but it’s not. Sometimes what the voice tells us is actually wrong — because what the voice says is just the interpretation of our default programming. We, not the voice in our head, are the ones that have to make the decision about how we’re going to act.”

The second vital point to his book, Fogel says, “Is that our feelings are not facts. Just because we feel our boss doesn’t like us, it doesn’t mean he doesn’t like us. Just because we feel someone is wrong about something and that we’re right doesn’t mean that it’s true.”

For more information about Stephen J. Fogel, visit <http://stevenjayfogel.com/>.

Allison Plitt is a freelance writer who lives in Queens with her husband and young daughter. She is a frequent contributor to New York Parenting.

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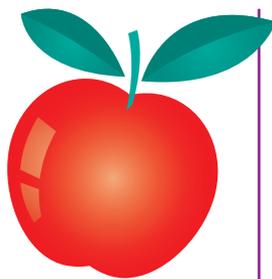
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A photograph of a smiling family consisting of a man, a woman, and two young girls.



DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

Five tips for success

Dear parent,

Once school begins, we have five tips that will help make the year a successful one:

- Look at your children's school work each day, whether it is a picture drawn by a first-grader or a paper written by a high-school sophomore.
- Talk about each school day with your children and share also what your day was like.
- Praise them for real accomplishments and efforts. Meaningless praise does not build children's self-esteem.
- Be supportive of your children's teachers and schools. Always consider yourself a partner of their teachers, not an adversary.
- Request conferences with teachers and counselors when trouble begins to appear. Don't wait for a full-blown problem to occur.

Dear teacher,

Common Core was implemented in my children's school this past year. How has it changed the curriculum?

Dear parent

Common Core standards are designed to prepare America's students for college and a career, as well as making sure that all children are literate in the 21st century, in both print and digitally. New York, as well as almost every other state, has adopted these standards, which are for English language arts-literacy and math. The new curriculum supporting these standards was introduced in New York City schools during the past school year. Schools spent time in 2011 to 2013 preparing to enact these standards. In the coming

school year, the emphasis will be on reflecting and refining instructional expectations.

You may have noticed in the past school year that the English language arts-literacy curriculum placed a greater emphasis on literacy in history-social studies, science and technical subjects in grades 6-12. And you probably saw your children reading more non-fiction. In addition, the standards required students to read to cite answers, not just rely on their opinions.

Plus your children should have been required to show that they can listen and speak clearly. They also needed to explain concepts and find information primarily from expository texts. And you should have observed more use of the internet.

In mathematics, there was a considerable change. No longer were teachers covering as many topics as possible. Instead, teachers were going into more depth in fewer mathematical areas. The idea is to eliminate content that is not helpful. Having students develop a deeper understanding of basic mathematical principles will help them move on to more advanced mathematical topics. You can see exactly what the new standards include for each grade level (k-12) at www.corestandards.org.

Dear teacher,

How can I help my young children become more creative?

Dear parent,

Fostering creativity in children is important. You do this naturally if you provide them with interesting and challenging materials and opportunities. Plus they need to experience the arts and music. Creativity is also developed through giving children free time for unstructured play and limiting time spent watching TV or playing electronic games.

The following activities will encourage creativity in young children:

- Give them an ordinary household item such as a stick, paper clip or bottle, and ask them to imagine other ways that it can be used. For example, a plastic bottle could be a vase, a bowling pin or a terrarium.
- Drawing is another way to en-

hance creativity. Draw a straight or curvy line on a piece of paper and have your children turn it into a familiar object. Or give them a page of circles drawn to different sizes. Have the children see how many objects can be depicted by adding elements to each circle.

Dear teacher,

I'm not sure that my children are really reading on grade level, even though their teachers say they are. Is there any way that I can measure their reading level?

Dear parent,

Teachers may or may not be able to give you an accurate picture of your children's true reading levels, as they as well as school districts often have different grade level standards. You can find many websites online that offer tests to determine children's reading levels. One of the most accurate and simple tests for good and poor readers is the San Diego Quick Assessment. You can find it on our dearteacher.com website right on our home page. Remember, bright children should usually be reading above grade level. And do keep up with your children's progress in reading by using the reading assessment test at the beginning, middle and end of the school year.

Dear teacher,

What is the best way to read a wordless picture book with my 4-year-old daughter?

Dear parent,

One of the best ways is to begin the book by looking at its cover. Tell your child the name of the story. Then go through the book looking at the pictures together. Do talk about what you both see in each illustration. The next step is to go back through the book telling the child a story about the pictures. Often after turning a few pages, your young daughter will just take off "reading" the book to you from what she sees.

Parents should send questions and comments to dearteacher@dearteacher.com or ask them on the columnists' website at www.dearteacher.com.

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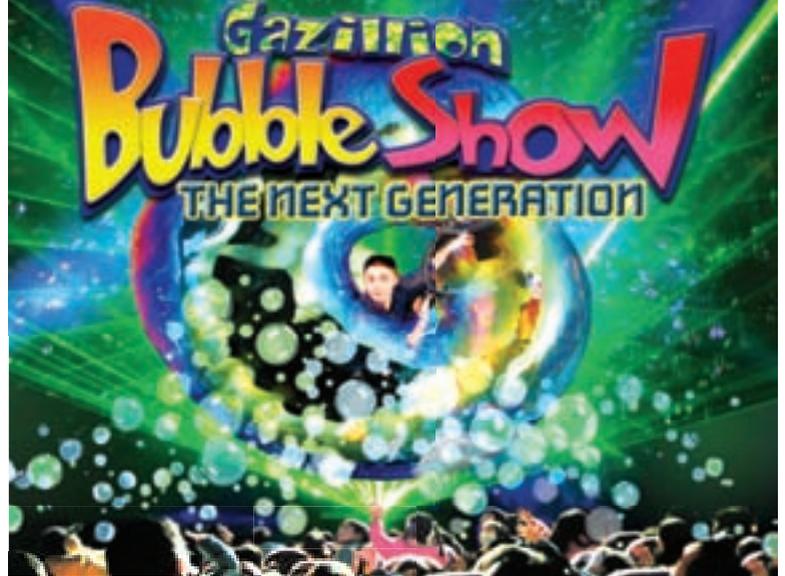
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Calendar

AUGUST



Wild at heart

It's going to be wild times in the Bronx when Wildlife Theater from the Central Park Zoo comes-a-calling on Aug. 15

The Wildlife Theater troupe is an outreach group that presents an educational and entertaining performance for children, explaining the importance of ecology. From penguins to polar bears, dinosaurs to butterflies, children leave with a new wonder for the world around them and

the creatures that share our planet.

Wildlife Theater from the Central Park Zoo on Aug. 15 at Poe Park at 10:30 am. Free admission, thanks to SummerStage Kids and City Parks Foundation.

Poe Park [Grand Concourse at E. Kingsbridge Rd. and E. 192nd Street, in Kingsbridge; Wildlife Theater from the Central Park Zoo [www.wcs.org/wildlifetheater; www.CityParksFoundation.org].

Submit a listing

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

Send your listing request to bronxrivervdalecalendar@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!

FRI, AUG. 1

IN THE BRONX

"The Kung Fu Capers": Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West; (718) 960-8833; www.LehmanCenter.org; 10 am; \$1.

A hilarious play featuring the Children's Theater Company at Lehman (Peace Grove).

"Little Red's Hood": Poe Park, Grand Concourse at E. Kingsbridge Rd.; www.cityparksfoundation.org; 10:30 am; Free.

A new twist on an old tale.

Fordham Fever Fridays: Muller Park & Plaza, Creston Ave. and E. Fordham Rd.; www.facebook.com/events/865; 11 am-4 pm; Free.

Health and Wellness highlights, and children's activities.

Read Aloud: Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 11 am; Free.

For children 3 to 8 years old.

Puppet workshop: Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 2 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 years old learn about puppet making. Space limited pre-registration required.

Game on: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 3:30-4:30 pm; Free.

Bring a friend and take the Xbox 360 challenge.

Manga workshop: Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

For children 13 to 18 years old.

Game Day: Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 enjoy games.

Summer Reading: Kingsbridge



Get in the swing

Have a ball! CityParks Golf, presented by the Rene Lacoste Foundation, offers golf lessons for children 6 to 16 years old.

Now through Aug. 22 children can learn the basics, including teeing off and sinking that putt. Children can also benefit and develop self-esteem, discipline, and sportsmanship while improving their skills and trying out for the CityParks Intermediate Program and Junior Golf Academy.

CityParks Golf is open from

9:30 am to 10:30 am for children 6 to 8 years old, and from 10:30 am to noon for children 9 to 16 years old. Both locations are free.

Pelham Bay Park, Field 4, on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Haffen Park, on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Pelham Bay Park, Field 4 at Bruckner Blvd. and Middleton Road in Pelham Bay.

Haffen Park at Hammersley and Gunther avenues in Norwood.

CityParks Golf (www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports/register).

Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Teens meet and check out new books to read.

First Friday Trolley & Music: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org; 5:30-8:30 pm; \$10 (\$8 seniors & students).

Explore the museum, stroll through the gardens and savor light refreshments.

FURTHER AFIELD

Family Jam: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3 pm; Free.

Celebrate summer and play, learn, build, and experience adventure.

SAT, AUG. 2

IN THE BRONX

Community Paddle: Starlight Park, Bronx River Ave. and E. 172nd Street;

(718) 430-4665; www.nycgovparks.org; 1:30 pm; Free.

Short canoe trips for beginners and families.

Family Art project: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave.; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am-1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Children use recycled foam trays, modeling clay and reeds to make a handmade river raft. Keep it as a small sculpture or see if it floats.

Kids Rule: Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West; (718) 960-8833; www.LehmanCenter.org; noon-5 pm; Free.

Fun, games, magic shows, and children's theater along with water slides and pony rides.

Comic book drawing: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; 1-3:30 pm; Free.

Learn from Ivan Velez the basics in this workshop.

FURTHER AFIELD

Cultural Connections: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Noon and 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Hear the peaceful sounds of the mbira (an African thumb piano) with Kevin Hylton.

Garden tour: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 2-3 pm and 3:30-4:30 pm; \$12 (\$15 non-members).

Family friendly peek inside the gardens, learn about garden plots and make a tasty treat. Pre-registration required and online. Cancelled in case of inclement weather.

SUN, AUG. 3

IN THE BRONX

Summer Sunday: Bronx House, 990 Pelham Parkway South; (718) 792-1800 X 235; bronxhouse.org; call for time; \$10 per class (\$15 for 2; \$10 special needs program).

Each session focuses on a separate discipline, music, dance, and theater.

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Aug. 2.

Kids Rule: noon-5 pm. Lehman Center for the Performing Arts. See Saturday, Aug. 2.

FURTHER AFIELD

Cultural Connections: Noon and 1 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See

Continued on page 30

Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at www.NYParenting.com/calendar

Continued from page 29

Saturday, Aug. 2.

MON, AUG. 4

IN THE BRONX

Tech time: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 2:30 pm; Free.

Need an extra computer? Use library laptops for help. For children 13 to 18 years old.

Gaming: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children meet and play games.

TUES, AUG. 5

IN THE BRONX

Learning time: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 11 am; Free.

Children from birth to 5 years old participate in interactive stories, finger-play, and action songs.

Movie time: Riverdale Public Library, 5540 Mosholu Ave. at W. 256th St.; (718) 549-1212; www.nypl.org; 3 pm; Free.

Teens 13 to 18 years old enjoy an afternoon with friends and watch age appropriate films.

Getting fresh: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Stop and smell the Jell-O. Teens 13 to 18 years old make their own gelatin air-fresheners. All materials provided.

WED, AUG. 6

IN THE BRONX

The Okee Dokee Brothers: Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Blvd. and Midletown Road; www.CityParksFoundation.org; 11 am; Free.

Kid rock music for all ages.

"The Industrious Mr. Franklin": Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 2 pm; Free.

Children 3 to 15 years old meet the inventor and travel with him and his friends in this new play.

E-book discussion: Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 8 to 12 years old use iPads for book discussion group. Workshops are limited to 12 children. Pre-registration required.

Movie time: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Family friendly film every week.

Urban Tech Club's Robotics 101:

Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old design and construct their own robot. Pre-registration required.

"Bronx Princess": Bathgate Community Garden, 1818-1836 Bathgate Ave.; (212) 333-2552; www.nycgovparks.org; 7:30-9 pm; Free.

Family documentary focusing on Rocky, who leaves her mother in New York City to reunite with her father in Ghana.

FURTHER AFIELD

Plant walks: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 5:30-6:30 pm; \$12 (\$15 non-members).

Children 8 to 12 years old discover the plants of the garden.

THURS, AUG. 7

IN THE BRONX

Roz & Val Show: Van Cortlandt Park, Jerome Ave. and Gun Hill Road; www.CityParksFoundation.org; 10:30 am; Free.

A concert of harmony, high-energy pop, funk, rock and hip hop.

Aquatic Garden: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave.; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 1-2 pm; \$8 adults (\$4 student/seniors/\$2 children over 6; Free to members and children under 6.

Children discover why water is black and learn how we cultivate aquatic plants.

Aakwaaba, Hu Jumbo, Africa Hurrah: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children explore Africa through music and dance with Mama Ellison. Learn real dances, sing songs.

Science Club: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Teens learn about gears, pulleys, wheels and axles and make model cars, planes and paddle boats, creating a Rube Goldberg mechanism.

Game On!: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 12 to 18 years old play Xbox and Kinect games.

Science workshop: Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 5-6:30 pm; Free.

Children 12 to 18 years old do science projects with paper, planes and silly putty.

Dancing in the park: Van Cort-

landt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 6:30-8 pm; Free.

Learn as you go salsa and let the grass between your toes.

"The Lego Movie": Owen Dolen Recreation Center, 2551 Westchester Square; www.nycgovparks.org; 8-10 pm; Free.

An ordinary Lego is mistakenly placed on a team whose quest is to save the world.

FRI, AUG. 8

IN THE BRONX

Music with a Message: Grand Concourse, E. Kingsbridge Rd. and E. 192nd Street; www.CityParksFoundation.org; 10:30 am; Free.

Renaissance Youth Center presents the Bronx based group ranging in age from 6 to 21. The group entertains and enlightens.

Manga workshop: 3:30 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Friday, Aug. 1.

Game Day: 4 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Friday, Aug. 1.

Summer Reading: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Friday, Aug. 1.

"Frozen": Hunt's Point Recreation Center, 765 Manida St.; www.nycgovparks.org; 8-10 pm; Free.

This year's breakout animated feature.

FURTHER AFIELD

Family Jam: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3 pm; Free.

Celebrate summer and play, learn, build, and experience adventure.

SAT, AUG. 9

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave.; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am-1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Spray a Garden lets children paint the colors of summer without using brushes.

Family camping: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 885-3467; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 6 pm; Free.

Join the rangers for a night out under the stars and in a tent. Families chosen by lottery.

FURTHER AFIELD

Family Adventure Race: Inwood Hill Park, Indian Rd. and W. 215th Street, Manhattan; www.cityparks-foundation.org; 11 am; Free.

Families gear up and take the challenge; obstacle courses, javelin throwing, jump roping, basketball, hurdles and a mini climbing wall. Prizes given to the top three competitors.

SUN, AUG. 10

IN THE BRONX

Summer Sunday: call for time. Bronx House. See Sunday, Aug. 3.

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Aug. 9.

MON, AUG. 11

IN THE BRONX

Tech time: 2:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Monday, Aug. 4.

TUES, AUG. 12

IN THE BRONX

Learning time: 11 am. Parkchester Library. See Tuesday, Aug. 5.

Support group: Latino Pastoral Action Center room 321, 14 W. 170th St.; (718) 450-2567; snadvocacynavigator@gmail.com; 7-9 pm; Free.

Parents of children with autism join with other parents in a loving, caring group. RSVP required.

WED, AUG. 13

IN THE BRONX

Teddy Bear Picnic: Riverdale Public Library, 5540 Mosholu Ave. at W. 256th St.; (718) 549-1212; www.nypl.org; 11:30 am; Free.

Pre-schoolers infants to 18 months have a picnic with their stuffies on the lawn.

E-book discussion: 4 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Wednesday, Aug. 6.

Movie time: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Wednesday, Aug. 6.

Urban Tech Club's Robotics 101: 4:30 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Wednesday, Aug. 6.

"The Croods": Point Riverside Park, Lafayette Ave. and Edgewater Road; www.nycgovparks.org; 8 pm; Free.

The Stone Age family with 21st-century problems.

FURTHER AFIELD

Plant walks: 5:30-6:30 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Wednesday, Aug. 6.

THURS, AUG. 14

IN THE BRONX

David Gonzalez' Aesop Bops! Funky Fables: Van Cortlandt Park, Jerome Ave. and Gun Hill Road; www.nypl.org

Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at www.NYParenting.com/calendar

CityParksFoundation.org.; 10:30 am; Free.

The storyteller has the children hopping and bopping and feeling like they are in the story themselves.

Science Club: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Thursday, Aug. 7.

Game On!: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Thursday, Aug. 7.

FRI, AUG. 15

IN THE BRONX

Wildlife Theatre from the Central Park Zoo: Poe Park, E. Kingsbridge Rd. and E. 192nd Street; www.CityParksFoundation.org.; 10:30 am; Free.

Outreach program that teaches children about the importance of ecology, and the creatures that share the planet with us.

Game on: 3:30–4:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Friday, Aug. 1.

Manga workshop: 3:30 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Friday, Aug. 1.

Game Day: 4 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Friday, Aug. 1.

Summer Reading: 4–5 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Friday, Aug. 1.

FURTHER AFIELD

Family Jam: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3 pm; Free.

Celebrate summer and play, learn, build, and experience adventure.

SAT, AUG. 16

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave.; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am–1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Flutter with butterflies — see them, sketch them, and then learn all about them.

Mi bebe y Yo: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 10:30 am; Free.

For little ones 18 months old in Spanish.

African dance: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 3 pm; Free.

Join Caren Calder for a live performance for children 5 years and older.

"The Lego Movie": St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Ave. and 145th Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 8–10 pm; Free.

An ordinary Lego is mistakenly placed on a team whose quest is to save the world.



Photo by Gabriel Desbiers

Circus in the parks

The 2014 International Contemporary Circus Festival brings the circus to city parks on Aug. 19 through Aug. 21.

Families can gather for a fantastic evening under the stars to enjoy world-class performers on stage, as well as strolling performers from Circus to Go by the

Big Apple Circus. This evening brings the circus outside the tent and into the park, as part of the SummerStage Kids series.

Aug 19 through 21, 7 pm. Free. *Marcus Garvey Park, (W. 122nd Street & Mount Morris Park Westin Harlem, www.cityparksfoundation.org).*

FURTHER AFIELD

Aztec innovations: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

Children learn what chocolate, chewing gum and popcorn all have in common — it's the Aztecs. Children discover the food, culture, and architecture of this ancient culture.

SUN, AUG. 17

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Aug. 16.

Freshwater fishing: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

Children learn catch and release. Equipment provided. Children ages 8 and older are welcome to participate.

Harlem Family Day: Marcus Garvey Park, W. 120th St. and Madison Avenue; (212) 860-1394; www.summerstage.org; 4–7 pm; Free.

Shine and the Moonbeams, Moona Luna, Kojo Odu Ronmey & Friends, B-Love-s Hlp-HOP Jazzy Grove and DJ KS*360, plus lots of fun with inter-

active workshops, face painting and more.

FURTHER AFIELD

Aztec innovations: 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 16.

MON, AUG. 18

IN THE BRONX

Tech time: 2:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Monday, Aug. 4.

Pajama night: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 5 pm; Free.

Grab those jammies and a stuffed lovey and come in for a bedtime story.

TUES, AUG. 19

IN THE BRONX

Learning time: 11 am. Parkchester Library. See Tuesday, Aug. 5.

Movie time: 3 pm. Riverdale Public Library. See Tuesday, Aug. 5.

FURTHER AFIELD

Loki Circus Theater company: Marcus Garvey Park, W. 122nd St. and Mount Morris Park West, Manhattan; www.cityparksfoundation.org; 7–9:30 pm; Free.

Puppets, jugglers, hip-hop jugglers and more thanks to SummerStage.

WED, AUG. 20

IN THE BRONX

Presley and Melody: Riverdale Public Library, 5540 Mosholu Ave. at W. 256th St.; (718) 549-1212; www.nypl.org; 2 pm; Free.

An interactive concert for children of all ages.

E-book discussion: 4 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Wednesday, Aug. 6.

Movie time: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Wednesday, Aug. 6.

Urban Tech Club's Robotics 101: 4:30 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Wednesday, Aug. 6.

FURTHER AFIELD

Loki Circus Theater company: 7–9:30 pm. Marcus Garvey Park. See Tuesday, Aug. 19.

THURS, AUG. 21

IN THE BRONX

Concert: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 2 pm; Free.

The Bilingual Birdies Band celebrates language and culture with music, dance and puppetry. For children 18 to 36 months and a caregiver.

Science Club: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Thursday, Aug. 7.

"Annie": St. James Recreation Center, 2530 Jerome Ave.; www.nycgovparks.org; 8–10 pm; Free.

Grab a blanket or chair, get some popcorn and view this classic with Albert Finney, Carol Burnett, and Tim Curry.

FURTHER AFIELD

The Acrobatic Conundrum: Marcus Garvey Park, W. 122nd St. and Mount Morris Park West, Manhattan; www.cityparksfoundation.org; 7–9:30 pm; Free.

Thanks to SummerStage Kids it's a thro-mantic comedy of acrobats, aerialists, and jugglers.

FRI, AUG. 22

IN THE BRONX

Game on: 3:30–4:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Friday, Aug. 1.

Family camping: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 6 pm; Free.

Join the rangers for a night out under the stars and in a tent. Families chosen by lottery.

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Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at www.NYParenting.com/calendar

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SAT, AUG. 23

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave.; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am-1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Make a sketch outdoors and then use the image to make a T-shirt design with markers and special crayons.

FURTHER AFIELD

Summer crafting: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am and 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children make a sun hat and learn how to stay cool in the shade.

SUN, AUG. 24

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Aug. 23.

Basic Canoeing: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am-2 pm; Free.

Rangers teach the basics and lead a tour of the gentle waterways. There is a mandatory safety review before each session.

FURTHER AFIELD

Summer crafting: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am and 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children make a sun hat and learn how to stay cool in the shade.

MON, AUG. 25

IN THE BRONX

Tech time: 2:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Monday, Aug. 4.

TUES, AUG. 26

IN THE BRONX

Learning time: 11 am. Parkchester Library. See Tuesday, Aug. 5.

"Wall-E": Soundview Park, Metcalf and Lafayette avenues; www.nycgovparks.org; 8 pm; Free.

Children enjoy this animated story.

WED, AUG. 27

IN THE BRONX

Teddy Bear Picnic: 11:30 am. Riverdale Public Library. See Wednesday, Aug. 13.

Bionic Bodies: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 11 explore the human body and make a model of a bone, a working human lung, and observe a goldfish. Pre-registration required.

E-book discussion: 4 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Wednesday, Aug. 6.

THURS, AUG. 28

IN THE BRONX

Art workshop: Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 2 pm; Free.

Children 7 to 12 years old make seashell fans using a variety of skills. Limited to 30 children.

Science Club: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Thursday, Aug. 7.

Game On!: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Thursday, Aug. 7.

FRI, AUG. 29

IN THE BRONX

Game on: 3:30-4:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Friday, Aug. 1.

Game Day: 4 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Friday, Aug. 1.

FURTHER AFIELD

Back to school jam: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11 am; Free with museum admission.

Enjoy the last days of summer vacation with snacks, crafts, music and giveaways.

SAT, AUG. 30

IN THE BRONX

Learn to ride: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 10 am - noon; Free.

Rangers teach a safety class including balance, take off, and steering and stopping.

Family Art project: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave.; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am-1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Focus on fins, especially goldfish, in this fun 3D craft.

Community Paddle: Starlight Park, Bronx River Ave. and E. 172nd Street; (718) 430-4665; www.nycgovparks.org; 12:30 pm; Free.

Short canoe trips for beginners and families.

FURTHER AFIELD

NYC Unicycle Festival: Governor's Island, Colonels Row, Manhattan; www.nycunifest.com; Noon-5 pm; Free.

Two-day event featuring world-famous unicyclists performing stunts and giving lessons.

SUN, AUG. 31

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Aug. 30.

FURTHER AFIELD

NYC Unicycle Festival: Noon-5 pm. Governor's Island. See Saturday, Aug. 30.

"Kokuriko-Zaka Kara": Alianza Dominicana Cultural Center, 530 W. 166th St. and Amsterdam Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 740-1960; 2 pm; Free.

"From Up on Poppy Hill" is a children's movie suitable for children 6 years and older and helps support learning.

LONG-RUNNING

IN THE BRONX

Play Streets: Parque De Los Ninos, Morrison Ave. and Watson Avenue; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm, Now - Fri, Aug. 22; Free.

The Police Athletic League is again offering a safe place for children to play traditional sports including double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, Nok Hockey and basketball as well as hands-on learning activities.

Play Streets: 182nd Street, Valentine Ave. and Ryer Avenue; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm, Now - Fri, Aug. 22; Free.

The Police Athletic League is again offering a safe place for children to play traditional sports including double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, Nok Hockey.

Play Streets: 196th Street, Briggs Avenue and Bainbridge Avenue; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm, Now - Fri, Aug. 22; Free.

The Police Athletic League is again offering a safe place for children to play traditional sports including double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, Nok Hockey.

Play Streets: Faile Street, Gilbert Place and Lafayette Street; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm, Now - Fri, Aug. 22; Free.

The Police Athletic League is again offering a safe place for children to play traditional sports including double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, Nok Hockey.

Play Streets: 152nd Street, 152nd St. and Courtland Avenue; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm, Now - Fri, Aug. 22; Free.

The Police Athletic League is again offering a safe place for children to play traditional sports including double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, Nok Hockey.

Eco-Explorers camp: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; www.ecologyconnection.org; Weekdays, 9:30 am-3 pm, Now - Fri, Aug. 29; Free.

Outdoor-based educational camp so youth can explore the ecosystem and the park.

City golf: Heffen Park, Hammersley Ave. and Gunther Avenue; www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports/register; Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 am-Noon, Now - Fri, Aug. 22; Free.

Children learn the basics of the sport, from teeing off to sinking that putt. Two sessions, 6 to 8 years old from 9:30 am to 10:30 am and 9 to 16 years old from 10:30 am to noon.

Dinosaur Safari: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; Weekdays, 10 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-5:30 pm, Now - Sun, Nov. 2; \$20.95 (\$16.95 children; Free for children under 3; \$18.95 seniors).

The ride runs through the zoo and has fully animatronic dinosaurs as they move and snarl.

City golf: Pelham Bay Park, Field 4, Bruckner Blvd. and Middleton Rd.; www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports/register; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 am-Noon, Now - Fri, Aug. 22; Free.

Children learn the basics of the sport, from teeing off to sinking that putt. Two sessions, 6 to 8 years old from 9:30 am to 10:30 am and 9 to 16 years old from 10:30 am to noon.

Story, arts and crafts: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Tuesdays, 10 am-10:45 am; Free.

Children 6 months to 4 years old enjoy a story followed by a craft and activity related to the reading.

Paper Arts & Crafts: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Wednesdays, 1-3 pm; Free.

Children have fun creating collages using decoupage, origami, kirigami and more.

Eco-crafts: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; Thursdays, 11 am-1 pm, Now - Thurs, Aug. 28; Free.

Children learn to use recycled materials to make new creations.

Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at www.NYParenting.com/calendar

Dance fitness: Poe park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Thursdays, 1-2 pm, Now - Thurs, Aug. 28; Free.

Children 12 and older do low-impact full body workouts in dance.

Learn to draw: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Thursdays, 2-3:30 pm; Free.

Children 10 years and older learn the basics of still-life pencil drawing, including volume, tone, value, and sketching.

Stories in the Garden: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave.; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; Thursday, July 24, 2 pm; Thursday, July 31, 2 pm; Thursday, Aug. 7, 2 pm; Thursday, Aug. 14, 2 pm; Thursday, Aug. 21, 2 pm; Thursday, Aug. 28, 2 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Children 3 to 6 years old with an

adult listen to stories, sing-along and watch a puppet show. Event is held outdoors, in case of inclement weather meet indoor at Wave Hill House.

FURTHER AFIELD

Traveling in the World of Tomorrow: The Future of Transportation at New York's World's Fairs: New York Transit Museum Gallery Annex at Grand Central Terminal, 42nd Street and Park Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 878-0106; www.grandcentralterminal.com; Monday - Friday, 8 am - 8 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 10 am - 6 pm; Free.

This exhibition celebrates the 50th and 75th anniversaries of the 1939 and 1964 Fairs.

Science Playground: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays

and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm.; \$4, plus museum admission.

Children are encouraged to explore science through slides, seesaws, climbing webs, a water play area, sand boxes, and more, weather permitting.

Rocket Park Mini Golf: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm.; \$6 (adults,) \$5 (children and seniors,) plus museum admission.

Golfers of all ages can learn about key science concepts such as propulsion, gravity, escape velocity, launch window, gravitational assist, and more!

Kids's Discovery Stations: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; Tuesdays - Saturdays, 10:30 am-12:30 pm, Now - Fri, Aug. 29; Free with admis-

sion to the gardens.

Families drop by for a craft and learn about plants, composting and garden stories.

Touch tank: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm, Now - Sun, Aug. 31; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages touch a starfish, a horseshoe crab, or a sea snail.

Carousel: Prospect Park Children's Corner, 452 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue, Brooklyn; www.prospectpark.org/visit/places/carousel; Thursdays - Sundays, Noon-6 pm, Now - Sun, Aug. 31; \$2 per ride (\$9 per book of five tickets).

Take a ride on the park's historic carousel.

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

'I'm vegetarian now!'

Do you remember “The Simpsons” episode when Lisa — the politically active 8 year old — became a vegetarian? It was the same day her mother served lamb chops for dinner after the girl had bonded with a lamb at the petting zoo.

What if your own child suddenly announces, “I’m a vegetarian now”?

“A parent should have a conversation with their child about what their reasons are to be sure that their child is interested in vegetarianism for a legitimate reason,” says Rachel Meltzer Warren, author of “The Smart Girl’s Guide to Going Vegetarian.” “You don’t have to agree with the reason, but it’s important that your child has a responsible rationale for their choice.”

The majority of reasons are understandable. Kids are concerned about the environment, they think it’s a more ethical way to eat, or they simply do not like the taste or texture of meat.

Yet, some young people mistake vegetarianism as an easy way to lose weight or to achieve perfection. These are red flags for disordered eating, which is best to address as soon as possible.

People often shy away from the term “vegetarian” if they’re not 100 percent meat-free all of the time. Warren says it’s extremely common for a teen to be “veg curious.” They experiment with different parts of the vegetarian spectrum without of-



ficially choosing one defined label.

For example, there are red meat abstainers, pescetarians who eat no meat but do eat fish, and lacto-ovo vegetarians who eat dairy and eggs, but no meat.

Peaceful coexistence

There’s no argument about the health benefits of shifting to a more plant-based diet, regardless of where

on the vegetarian spectrum your child is.

How to survive this change at the kitchen table without the muss and fuss of preparing two separate meals?

- The vegetarian can offer to make the family’s dinner every so often.

- Take one recipe. Set some of it aside to be infused with plant-based protein, and then toss some meat, poultry or seafood into the remaining portions.

- If a recipe calls for ground beef, try French green or brown lentils. These protein-packed legumes are terrific for mimicking the texture of ground meat in stews, chilies and casseroles.

- Tempeh is a good stand-in for cubed meat in stir-fry and curries, or it can be crumbled and used in place of ground meat in casseroles.

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist who is a new Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

Fignana smoothie

This sweet smoothie is a good source of iron and calcium, two nutrients that almost every teenage girl, veg or not, could use more of.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium banana, frozen
- 3 large dried figs, stems removed and soaked in water for at least 30 minutes
- 1 cup plain lowfat yogurt
- ½ cup lowfat (1 percent) milk
- 2 tsp. blackstrap molasses

DIRECTIONS: Place all ingredients

in blender and blend on high until smooth.

VEGANIZE IT: Replace vanilla yogurt and milk with nondairy substitutes such as soy, coconut, or almond yogurt and milks.

NUTRITION FACTS: 390 calories, 6 grams fiber, 18 grams protein, 3.2 mg iron, 0.8 mg zinc, 371 mg calcium, 0.57 mcg vitamin b12, 59 IU vitamin D, 37 mg choline.

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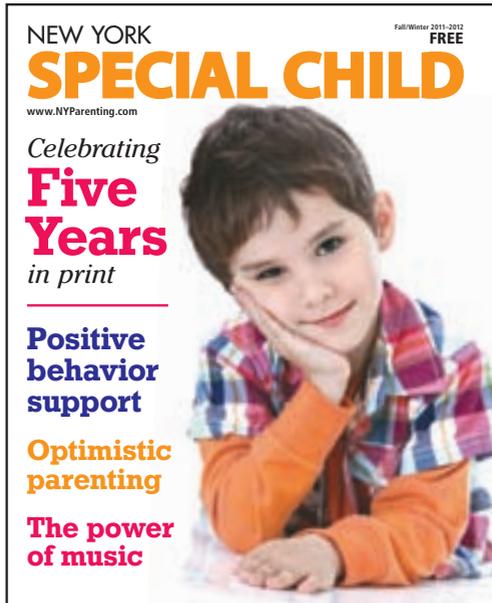
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