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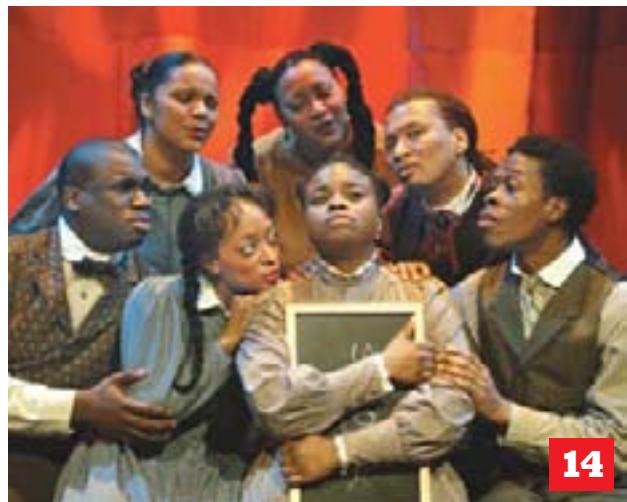
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Winners again in 2015

Parenting Media Association (PMA) gave out 301 Editorial and Design Competition and General Excellence awards to parenting magazines at a banquet on February 28, the climax of the three-day PMA Annual Convention, this year held in Baltimore, MD. There were 630 entries for this year's competition.

PMA's Editorial and Design Awards Competition recognizes excellence in journalism, photography and design achieved by publishers, editors, writers and designers at member publications.

Happily, for yet another year we came home with the GOLD. Our contributing writer and Mom in Queens, Allison Plitt, was honored with a GOLD Award for a series of interesting book reviews. The judges comments: *These reviews are reported in-depth, and they succeed in providing a lot of information about the books in question. The writer uses extensive background details and solid reporting to build up to an authoritative and supported opinion*

and gives readers good perspective on the books in question. The voice is clear and the reviews are enjoyable and informative.

Our columnist and Attorney, Alison Arden Besunder won the GOLD for the category Family Matters. The judges comments: *This is a very informative story about parents preparing their wills in case something happens before their children become adults. It is usually something many parents do not think about until their children are near adulthood or have moved out. The writer did a wonderful job of providing expert opinion and useful information to help parents navigate what can be a difficult process.*

Another GOLD went to our columnist Lyss Stern for Family Fun ideas and interest going on around town. The judges comments: *This column is filled with the writer's voice and a connection to her readers. It's got good tips for finding fun, family outings and locations around the city. The examples and stories from the writer make this a fun*

read for parents.

A BRONZE went to our much appreciated columnist Danielle Sullivan for Child Development & Parenting Issues. The judges comments: *"Just Write Mom" offers a nice mix of common-sense advice and encouragement mothers will appreciate. The writing is clear and thoughtful, and provides a welcome glimpse into a real mother's experiences.*

A final award went to our front cover stock photo for our October 2014 Teen Issue and congratulations went to our Art Director Leah Mitch. The judge's comments: *The simple background and sweet expression immediately catch attention. The colors are harmonious, and the cover is balanced. The minimal orange draws readers to the lead tease, which is placed next to the girl's face.*

It is such an honor to work with all the fine writers, designers and sales personnel on our team. I've always said it's a labor of love and indeed it is. Love was also personally bestowed



on me as I was given the Distinguished Member of the Year Award at PMA. I was surprised and delighted. Here I am with the sitting President and my good friend Sarah Taylor of Metro Family in Oklahoma City. What a thrill!

It's spring and lovely. Have a great month and a wonderful Mother's Day! I know I will. Being a mom and loving it is what brought me to this work and to the wonderful satisfaction I feel every day in this role.

Thanks for reading!

Susan Weiss-Voskidas,
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Your time

The art of carving personal space out of your own life

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

How come other moms always seem to "have it all" and still have time to work out, read the latest best-sellers, and spend time with their friends while you seem to be scrambling to keep up with the dishes, the laundry, and your daily taxi service?

The truth is, making time for yourself is an art, and like every art, it requires practice. If you don't take time to rest and rejuvenate, eventually you won't have a self to worry about, because that's how busy you will become with everyone else's concerns.

Even if you fear the guilt you imagine will come with making time for yourself, carving out space in your

own life for yourself is a healthy necessity. Best-selling author of "The Artist's Way," Julia Cameron says, "We lose ourselves because we are afraid of being selfish, but when we turn around and take care of ourselves, we actually become much happier and more generous."

Here are 12 self-nurturing activities to choose from that blend well with your everyday commitments. Most can be squeezed into a busy week, during naptime, into the mornings or evenings, or while the kids are busy with an activity:

Heart on paper. Cameron recommends three pages of longhand writing every day. Can't do three whole pages? Just do what you can. For moms, any kind of journaling can be illuminating and constructive.

Move it, move it. Shake your groove thing any time you need a quick attitude change. Shut the blinds. Take off your shoes. Put on your favorite dance music and get down. Dance your heart out for 10 minutes. You'll emerge ready for anything.

Girl-time. What could be better than walking and talking with another busy mom? Walking is better than doing lunch because it accomplishes two goals at once: connecting and exercising. Make it a standing date if you possibly can.

Make a "treasure map." According to Shakti Gawain in her book, "Creative Visualization," A treasure map is an actual, physical picture of your desired reality. It is valuable because it forms an especially clear, sharp image, which can then attract and focus energy into your goal."

So, if you really want that new job, flourishing garden, or bigger home, get out your scissors, old magazines, and glue, and create your dream on paper first. Or try Pinterest.com, an online social network where members share images.

And away you go! Nothing beats browsing the bookstore or library to get ideas for future family vacations. Instead of a trip to Disney, check

out outdoor activities like sailing, climbing, or spelunking. On second thought, check out that trip to Disney, as well. Kids are only kids once.

"Dear Susan." With the

introduction of e-mail, letter writing is becoming a lost art form. When you write by hand, it's something special. Take your time, speak from your heart, and rediscover forgotten parts of yourself that your faithful friend always remembers. Start your letter with, "Remember that time we..." and enjoy memory lane.

Get what you need. Attending a like-minded support group is vital when you need extra help. Whether you are trying to quit a bad habit, grieving the loss of a loved one, or gathering with other busy moms to share strategies, the wide variety of groups available can suit every need. Check your local phone book for a complete listing of resources in your area.

Your playful side. While signing your children up for those enriching evening and weekend classes, don't forget to sign yourself up, too. Many programs offer separate classes for children and adults at the same time. Yes, you are allowed to do some things without your kids in tow. In fact, it's good for you.

Melt into the table. After you drop the kids off for school or sports, you might head to the local spa for a massage. If you have time, a 10-minute hot tub or steam bath will increase the overall relaxation effect. Treat yourself once in awhile!

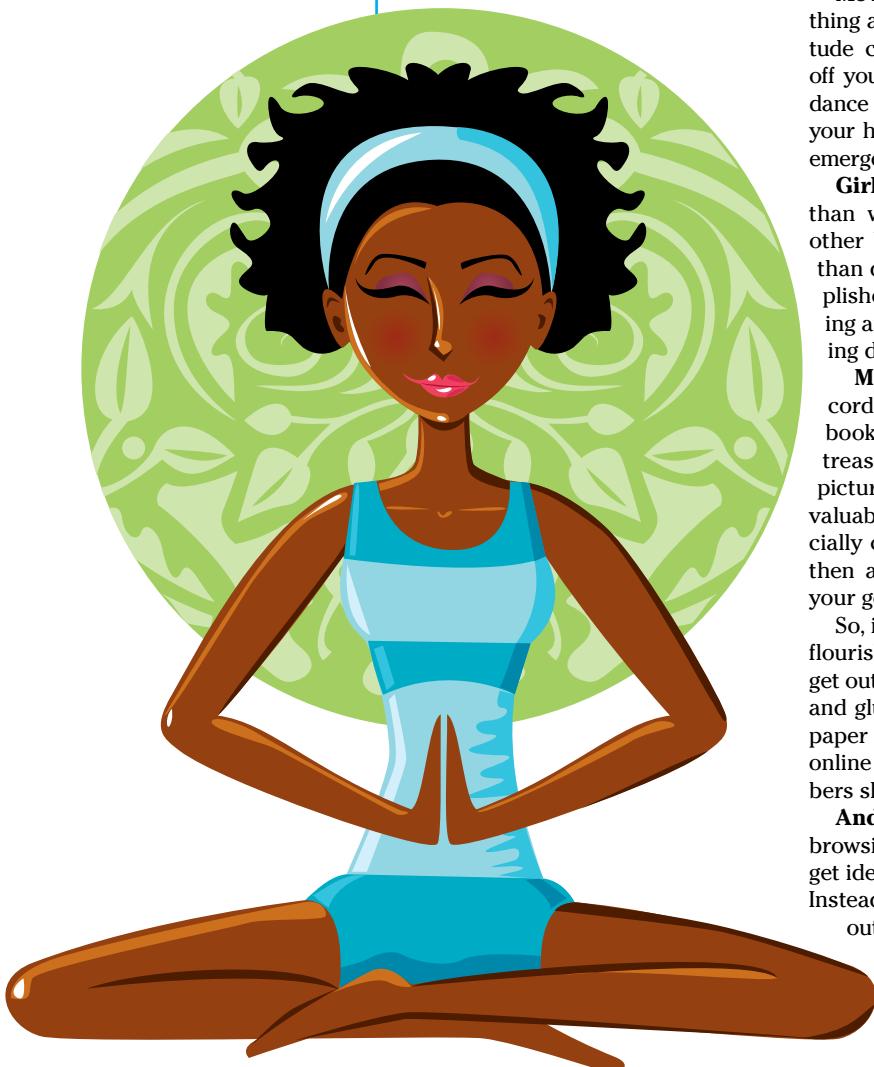
Your very own OM. In the west, meditation can be walking, writing, or even dancing. Check out the book "Meditation Made Easy" by Lorin Roche. You'll discover that meditation simply means developing your capacity for rich experience. Why not invent your own practice?

Art appreciation. Give yourself a full hour to wander a museum or local gallery, soaking in the energy and appreciation of other people's genius. Consider becoming a member and visiting regularly.

Feel the burn. Exercise is sound advice for everyone, but especially for stress-weary moms. If you need help getting motivated, enroll in a fun class like kickboxing, tae-bo, or karate. Spinning, Jazercise, and Bikram yoga are also great for your health.

Most importantly, enjoy yourself. The more you schedule you-time into your hectic schedule, the happier you will become. You deserve it, mom!

Author and freelance journalist Christina Katz is always on the lookout for new ways to make time for herself. Her latest book is "The Art of Making Time for Yourself, A Collection of Advice for Moms."



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Stepmom

on Mother's Day

It's okay to take time for yourself

BY GAYLA GRACE

What's a stepmom to do on Mother's Day? Do we insist that honor be bestowed upon us? Do we create expectations of what our stepchildren should do for us? Do we allow the biological mom to get all of the attention for the day?

Mother's Day can be a hard day for stepmoms, because it reminds us of the time and energy we invest in our stepchildren that might include little reward. And if our stepchildren do try to show their appreciation, it can be an awkward and insincere effort, usually prodded by their father.

If you play an active role as a stepmom, you deserve some recognition for your efforts. That doesn't mean you'll get it from your stepchildren. Sometimes children feel it dishonors their mom to show appreciation to their stepmom on Mother's Day. It's okay, however, to ask your spouse to honor and acknowledge you for your efforts with his children.

I've learned to enjoy Mother's Day with no expectations from my stepchildren. If they offer a gift or choose to honor me in some way, I'm thrilled. But even if they don't, I remind myself it's a privilege to take part in shaping another child's life and affirm myself for what I offer. I know my husband appreciates the role I play, and we'll celebrate the day together.

Some stepchildren love to recognize their stepmom on this special day and will make a sincere effort to

let you know how much you mean to them. A host of variables play into how a stepchild reacts on Mother's Day. The length of the marriage, the age of your stepchildren, the biological mom's behavior, and the environment in your home contribute to your stepchild's behavior. If your stepchildren honor you, embrace the offering. But if they choose not to, don't take it personally.

Here are a few suggestions to help you enjoy the day, regardless of what your stepchildren do. Pick one or two, or construct one of your own, to create a day that will leave you feeling special for the valuable role you offer your stepfamily:

- Spend Saturday night at a bed-and-breakfast and wake up Sunday morning to a scrumptious breakfast prepared for you. Re-connect with your spouse as you reminisce and celebrate the good things happening in your stepfamily.

- Find another stepmom who's having a difficult time and spend the afternoon with her. Encourage her efforts and talk through her challenges. Laugh together and affirm one another. Find positive ways to offer your support on an ongoing basis.

- Abandon your house and spend the day at a nearby lake, beach, bike path, or hiking trail. Absorb the beauty of nature while you count your blessings in your life. Set goals with your spouse that will help you become more connected in your stepfamily such as regular game nights, stepmom-stepdaughter shopping dates, or movie nights as a family.

- Attend your favorite

place of worship wearing a beautiful corsage, signifying the important role you play as a stepmom. Take pride in participating in your stepchildren's lives as an additional parent.

- Give yourself the gift of relaxation with a good book, time at the movies, or a day at the spa with a girlfriend. Eat at your favorite restaurant, and tell your family you'll be taking the day off from chores. Pamper yourself in whatever way feels special to you.

Mother's Day doesn't have to be a difficult day for stepmoms. If you create expectations of how you want your stepchildren to honor you, it will result in disappointment. But if you choose to create your own special day, you'll make memories that leave you feeling blessed to be a stepmom. So go ahead — plan your own celebration! You deserve it!

Gayla Grace treasures her role as mom and stepmom to five children, ages 14-30. She loves to encourage stepfamilies through her website and blog at www.stepparentingwithgrace.com.



Stepparenting resources

Books:

- The Smart Stepmom by Laura Petherbridge and Ron L. Deal
- Stepmonster by Wednesday Martin
- The Courage to be a Stepmom by Sue Patton Thoele
- The Smart Stepfamily by Ron L. Deal

Web:

- www.stepmommag.com Stepmom Magazine
- www.smartstepfamilies.com
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Common sense on Charter Schools



New Yorkers consider what they have to gain from the movement

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

As summer approaches, New York City's heated charter school debate seems to be gradually cooling down for now ... until the start of another school year in the fall.

Charters are free public schools open to all children in the state through a random lottery. As an alternative to traditional district schools, charters give parents the opportunity to choose what works best for their child. Since they're usually smaller, charters provide a more personal atmosphere, and many tend to emphasize core subjects (English and math), along with the arts, science, and languages. They have longer school days and school year.

NY'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PART 2 OF A SERIES

Many parents, teachers and administrators truly believe the larger conversation shouldn't be about "district vs. charter," but rather, common sense solutions.

Pros and cons

Some folks support the notion that charters exist solely to "privatize" education, drain traditional schools of money and motivated students, and destroy unions, while others strongly disagree.

Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams recently weighed in on the debate.

"Charter schools are part of the educational landscape in Brooklyn, one where a parent has various options of how to educate their child. All of our students need to be equipped with the top-notch education they deserve," he said. "There are some important steps we must take to ensure that our education system as a whole is addressing the overcrowding crisis we have in our borough's schools, including an end to forced co-location. Additionally, every school needs to take their fair share of ELL (English Language Learners) and IEP (Individualized Education Plan) students, to ensure equitable access to education."

Charters can innovate

New York City Charter School Center CEO James Merriman is one of

the nation's foremost experts on, and a leading voice and advocate for high-quality charter schools. He and his team work at the state and city levels to provide a public policy environment that ensures that charters can continue to grow and succeed for our children, especially those most in need.

With extensive support from Gov. Cuomo and the legislature, the Charter Center is currently working to broaden the public's understanding and appreciation of these hybrid schools, remove the arbitrary cap on charters, and secure parity in funding.

According to Merriman, "Charters are able to innovate in their classroom structures, curriculum, and teaching methods. In return, they're held to higher standards of accountability." And it's working, he said, pointing out that as parents seek out schools that best serve the needs of their children, they're applying to charters, many of which are out-performing their district counter parts in droves, he claims.

He said recent polls indicate that 86 percent of New Yorkers want more school options, while there are more than 50,000 students on waitlists to get into the city's 197 charters, which provide high-performing options within the city's public education system.

Common Core & Success

According to successacademies.org: On the most recent New York State math and English Language Arts exams, Success Academy scholars responded well to the challenge of the more rigorous standards of the Common Core.

Among the 2,255 scholars who were age-eligible to take the test, 94 percent were proficient in math and 64 percent proficient in language arts. Success Academy schools ranked in the top one percent in math and the top three percent in language arts among all 3,560 schools in the state. In math, our scholars outperformed two of the city's four highly selective gifted and talented schools.

Queens' charter school movement

"Queens has a very serious problem with student overcrowding in our existing public schools, plus we have the issue of finding enough space to accommodate

all our Universal pre-K students," said Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, adding, "I therefore have concerns about expanding the number of charter schools in our borough because they would be competing with our existing public schools for a limited amount of available classroom space. As Borough President and as the mother of two young boys, my main objective is to make sure all of our borough's children receive a quality education and do not suffer any negative impacts due to overcrowding."

What's happening in Manhattan?

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer's stance on this debate seems to confirm that the issue is in some ways, a double-edged sword.

"Done right, charter schools can be a laboratory for innovation and a benefit for communities looking for additional educational options. But all too often, the expansion of charters has come at the expense of kids in our public schools," she said.

According to Brewer, the forced co-locations in public schools, both in Manhattan and elsewhere, have left public school students as second-class citizens in their own buildings.

"Just last month, I was at a meeting with teachers from across the city, who described how their students had been deprived of libraries, computer labs, and even bathrooms because a co-located charter had taken over part of their building and refused to share," she said. "I have seen fabulous charter schools and met fabulous charter operators, but there are others who are wielding the charter school 'movement' like a weapon against our public schools. The emphasis in education policy must be on solutions that raise up all our students."

There's hope

Department of Education spokesperson Harry Hartfield summed it up best: "It's our goal to invest in all our public schools to make sure parents have great options for their children, regardless of what neighborhood they live in. It doesn't matter whether a child attends a traditional public school or a charter public school — we want every child to get the education they need to succeed."

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Just a mom

As we
celebrate
Mother's
Day, taking
back the
role of
mother

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

The time-honored tradition of celebrating Mother's Day has a long and surprisingly varied history. The observance of a special day for mothers can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, but the American version had its origins in the mid-1800s. The early proponents of Mother's Day were not interested in being honored by their children with candy, cards, and flowers. That practice arose in the early 1900s and resulted in the commercialization of the holiday by companies capitalizing on a popularized variation of the original idea.

Mother's Day was initially intended as a call to action for mothers to unite in promoting optimal child care and preventing the loss of sons and daughters to the carnage of war. There was a vision of an international dedication to peace so that families, worldwide, might raise their children to their fullest in safety. Their motivation was not to bring attention to themselves, but to assert the primacy of the responsibility for nurturing and rearing the next generation.

With Mother's Day upon us, I really wanted to say something profound to commemorate this occasion. I have started and deleted this column so many times, I've nearly made a hole in my screen. You see, the feeling that keeps creeping back is that of disappointment. Yes, I admit it.

I am disappointed with the lot of us mothers. I am disheartened by the number of women I hear respond to the question, "What do you do?" with, "Oh well, I don't work. I'm just a mom." And I am equally discouraged by the number of women employed outside the home, who, when responding to the same question, never mention the fact that they are mothers, as if to do so would be admitting a weakness or flaw in their makeup.

What has happened? What have we done? Somehow we have diminished the value inherent in the realm of responsibilities historically assigned to women — the domain of child rearing.

Somewhere along the way we got equality confused with sameness. We bought into the notion that the only way to be equal, to be valuable in society, was to start doing whatever it was that men happened to be doing. We accepted the misguided belief that our worth is determined by whether or not we get a paycheck and how big it is. We've been so anxious to achieve equality that we've thrown the baby out with the bath water. In our struggle to liberate ourselves from the stifling belief that anatomy is destiny, we liberated ourselves from the most important job we will ever do as humans — rearing children, the next generation of human beings, the ones to whom we will one day be handing over this world.

The irony is that at the same time women are trying to dissociate themselves from the mommy label, men by the thousands are discovering that the role with the greatest potential for providing them with the sense of meaning and significance they seek is their role as fathers.

They are beginning to realize that the way to make the most profound and definitive impact on the future is by the job they do as parents!

As far as I know, Thomas Lickona's conclusion is still accurate: "A child is the only substance from which a responsible adult can be made." Actually, it is the only substance from which any kind of adult can be made. The uniquely complex, comprehensive, dynamic nature of the parent-child relationship is unparalleled. It is the foundation for every other relationship a child establishes. Everything a child comes to believe about him or herself, about the world, about how to relate to others, originates in the parent-child relationship.

Before proceeding, let me clarify my position: I am not suggesting that a woman has to have a child to be complete, fulfilled, or make a meaningful contribution to the future. Neither am I suggesting that rearing children is the only job women are capable of doing or should be allowed to do. Nor am I proposing that the responsibility for rearing children should be limited to

women. What I am suggesting is that those of us who are mothers, in addition to carrying out this role to the best of our ability, have an obligation to ourselves and to our children to make sure that the magnitude of the responsibility of parenting is not minimized! In short, I am asserting that somehow the job of rearing children has been devalued, that we women have contributed to this process, and that it is high time we did something about it!

So how do we go about addressing this dilemma? Where do we begin? Here are a few suggestions:

Remember that every mother is a working woman

Our foremothers made incredible sacrifices to insure that we would have the right to pursue our dreams, whatever those might be. We are not doing anybody, especially our children, any good by dividing ourselves into camps — the working versus the non-working. When I continue to hear that mothers, whether they are working at home or working outside the home, feel guilty for the choice they have made, I can't help but think that with all that guilt there can't be much effective parenting going on. The more comfortable we feel with the choices we have made, the less threatened we are likely to feel by the choices of others. The greater confidence we have, the more effectively we will carry out the responsibilities of our multiple roles.

Seek excellence, not perfection

There is no such thing as a perfect mother. We all make mistakes. We say and do things that we regret. Obsessing over mistakes is rarely productive. The worst mistake is one from which nothing is learned. We can acknowledge our mistakes, offer a sincere apology, including our intentions for correcting the situation, learn how to avoid repeating the mistake, seek to identify and adopt more effective methods, and move on. After all, isn't that what we expect our children to do? An encouraging voice is much



more motivating than a critical one, including the one we use on ourself.

Don't depend on the maternal instinct

Just because we are females does not mean we automatically know everything there is to know about children, especially in the challenging times in which we live. Parenting is learned, so we mustn't hesitate to learn more about it. We are no less of a mother because we happen to find ourselves in a situation we don't know how to handle. It is wise, not weak,

to seek advice, suggestions, and information that can help us with this awesome responsibility.

Never allow gender to be a limitation

Just as gender should not limit the choices of our daughters, it should not limit the choices of our sons. Our children will be more complete, effective human beings if they have ample opportunities to learn and master a broad array of skills. We may not all need to know how to do calculus, but we do all need to know

how to nurture and care for another human being, whether we are going to be parents or not.

Never allow gender to be an excuse

The next time I hear, "Boys will be boys," or "That's just the way girls are," I am going to scream! Gender is not, has never been, and will never be an acceptable excuse for being irresponsible, disrespectful, lazy, cruel, violent, or any other undesirable behavior that has been attributed to it. Unacceptable behavior has nothing

to do with gender. It has everything to do with not having been taught how to behave appropriately.

Emphasize the commonalities rather than the differences

We have adopted the habit of separating ourselves into factions based on some singular characteristic — working mothers, stay-at-home mothers, inner-city mothers, urban mothers, rural mothers, African-American mothers, Hispanic mothers, Christian mothers, Muslim mothers, Jewish mothers, children with special needs mothers, conservative mothers, liberal mothers. The list is endless, but the word they all have in common is "mothers." When we focus on the prefixes rather than the suffix, the limited differences blind us to the multiple commonalities. And consequently, we are doing ourselves and our children a tremendous disservice. That which we have in common should bind us together and unite us in our shared objective.

We are all engaged in the monumental task of preparing the next generation of human beings

In addition to assisting them in making the most of the best of themselves, it is imperative to remember that when we improve conditions for other children, we improve them for our own in the long run. Someday your child may be my child's teacher or student, plumber or electrician, emergency room doctor, co-worker, friend, or spouse and vice versa. Someday our children will be making decisions about our future, just as we are making decisions about theirs now.

Nothing we do guarantees that we will leave a mark on the future like the job we do as mothers. As you celebrate this Mother's Day, take time to reflect on what this role means to you, your children, your family, the future. The next time someone asks, "What do you do?," I challenge you to proudly announce, "I'm in futures. I'm a mom!"

Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman has degrees in Child Development, Family Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy. Waterbury-Tieman has been married for 29 years and has two sons. She spent 15 years in various agencies and clinics as a family therapist and parent educator. Visit Carolyn at www.aparent4life.com, follow A Parent for Life on Facebook, or send questions and comments to parent4life@yahoo.com.



'Angels' among us

Musical uses song to shed light on African-American history

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

New York City Children's Theater will present "A Band of Angels" this spring, commemorating the 10-year anniversary of the musical that was written by the late playwright Myla Churchill in 2005. The play itself is an adaptation of Deborah Hopkinson's children's book with the same title.

The show centers upon a character named Ella, who is transported back in time, where she meets a college a capella group, "The Jubilee Singers," and gains a newfound appreciation for history and education. The new production celebrates "The Jubilee Singers," a group that was established in 1871 at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, and still exists today. Fisk University

was founded five years prior in 1866 and was one of the first schools to educate freed slaves.

The 70-minute musical includes traditional African-American spirituals performed a cappella. The show is directed by award-winning actor and director Colman Domingo, who most recently appeared as Civil Rights leader Ralph Abernathy in the film "Selma." I spoke to the creative team behind "A Band of Angels" (Barbara Zinn Krieger, creative director, and Domingo) to learn more about the show and what will make it a family outing to remember.

Shnieka Johnson: Why was it important for you to bring the work to stage at this time?

Barbara Zinn Krieger: New York City Children's Theater is reviving "A Band of Angels" this season for

two reasons: to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, and to celebrate its author, Myla Churchill, who died this summer, and to whom the production is dedicated.

SJ: How similar is Myla Churchill's script to the children's book by Deborah Hopkinson?

BZ: Deborah Hopkinson's book traces the history of Fisk University and the first group of Jubilee Singers who saved their school by introducing a white audience to spirituals. That story line forms the center of the play. In order to engage 21st-century pre-teens, Myla added a framing device. Ella, a modern tween, doesn't think education is important, so her Aunt Beth sends her on a "Sankofa," a trip back in time to take the place of her great-great-grandmother, Ella Sheppard,

one of the original Jubilee singers. Modern Ella experiences the hardships of those first Fisk students and realizes how important education really is.

SJ: What is the timeline for a production such as this?

BZ: In the fall of 2014, Colman Domingo agreed to direct the show. Kristen Rosenfeld, our music director, was soon on board, followed by the designers. We auditioned actor and singers in March, and April 6 rehearsals started. "A Band of Angels" opened on April 25.

SJ: Was Fisk University involved in any way (historical reference, etc)?

BZ: We have a promotional partnership for the revival with Fisk University, Fisk University New York Alumni, and UNCF, The United Negro College Fund. Hopefully, many of those folks will attend performances throughout the run.

SJ: What community and school outreach is taking place with this particular show?

BZ: We are providing free tickets to 1,100 children in Title 1 schools, schools where there is a high percentage of low-income families. Each class receives a Resource Guide, which helps the teachers prepare the children to see the show. The book is available in the lobby, and many groups come early so teachers can read the book to their classes before the performance.

SJ: What do you want parents to know about this show?

BZ: Parents can enjoy the show as much as their children, as there is a mix of adult and young characters. The story is full of excitement as well as history that will appeal to kids this time around as much as it did 10 years ago. The gorgeous music, sung in tight harmony, is abundant. Many spirituals such as "This Little Light Of Mine" are well known, and others, just as beautiful and inspiring, will be a joy to experience, perhaps for the first time.

SJ: Explain the importance of bringing kids to theatre early on.

BZ: The live theater experience is unlike any other. Engagement with live actors creates an indelible experience for the audience that is not soon forgotten. If we want our kids to enjoy theater as grown-ups, I believe they should be exposed as soon as possible, which is why New York City Children's Theater has shows for 3 to 7 year olds as well as 8 to adult, the suggested age for "A Band of Angels."

• • •

A chat with director, Colman Domingo.

Shnieka Johnson: Compare Myla Churchill's script to the children's book by Deborah Hopkinson.

Colman Domingo: Myla's play has more of a theatrical narrative, which is very important to conveying a story to the stage. She maintains the integrity of the book but gives it a heightened sense of theatricality.

SJ: What is the timeline for your cast and production team?

CD: We rehearse for two-and-a-half weeks, eight hours a day, six days a week.

SJ: Do you think that there is great parallel between the show and current events?

CD: The play touches on the urgency of knowing the collective history of disenfranchised people in our country and ways of survival.

SJ: What personal message do you want parents to know about this show?

CD: That the play is not only a lesson about history, but fun, intelligent and not a "children's show," where the story is dumbed down in any way. It is savvy for smart kids.

SJ: What is your take on the importance of bringing kids to theatre early on?

CD: Giving kids more tools to imagine, to create, to have their minds blown by taking an empty space and taking them to a place or time that is unimaginable is imperative for our survival. Art is the parachute that might save us all.

• • •

"A Band of Angels" at Theater 3 [311 W. 43rd Street between Eighth and Ninth aven in Times Square, (646) 250-1178, www.nycchildrenstheater.org] April 25 through May 10, Saturdays and Sundays at 2 and 4 pm. \$25 regular seating, \$45 premium (preserved, first and second seating). Appropriate ages 8 and up.

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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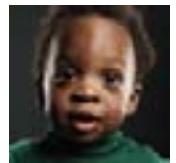
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JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Mother's Day gifts

Before you go wracking your brain and scouring stores for the ideal Mother's Day gift, you might want to consider what mothers really want. While the typical offerings may please some, it's the extra special thought that goes a long way. And every mom is different, so the key is finding what the mom in your life values. Hint: It's not flowers.

Here's a list of five things that mothers want and need, and not just on Mother's Day:

Sleep. Ask any mom and depending on the age(s) of her children, she can fill you in on her exact amount of sleep deprivation. Lack of sleep often starts somewhere in pregnancy and it ends — well, I don't know when it ends, or if it actually does. I am still sleep-deprived and all my kids have been out of diapers for years.

NOT flowers. I recently read somewhere (can't remember where — see #1) that moms do not want flowers for Mother's Day. The article said it was a useless gift, often a last-minute thought, and an easy purchase to fulfill the obligation of even getting a gift. So unless the mom in your life really, really loves flowers, I'd skip this one. And shout-out to hubby, my allergies are horrendous, so please pay careful attention to this suggestion.

Something unique. Meaning something that says mom, and your particular wife, girlfriend, partner, or mother — not what is mass-marketed to stores for the droves of women who are mothers. Sure, an over-the-top frilly pink hat or the newest kitchen gadget might satisfy a lot of moms, but it would honestly tick me off. It's just not me. And every mom wants something that says you know her, you get her taste, you understand her likes and dislikes, and didn't merely settle for a gift at a stand in the mall. For me, a live Dave Matthews Band CD that I don't already have, a new computer gadget, or a great book would do just fine.

Jewelry almost always works. But again, know her taste. Does she like silver, gold, or white gold? Does she prefer earrings or a necklace? Try combining a remembrance of



her child, in the form of a locket or charm, in the piece of jewelry. There is nothing sweeter than being given a symbol of your baby that you can keep with you and wear.

Words. OK, this might seem too easy, but really it can be more meaningful than you may think. Every mom likes to hear and needs to know that you think she is doing a good job, appreciate everything she does day in and day out, and value her as a partner and a mother. You can write it in a letter or a card. If you are creative, you can pen a poem. You can simply

just say it in a well-planned out time and place (think nice dinner that she didn't have to cook over a bottle of wine).

Being a mother is a gift in itself, but nothing feels better than having the person in your life that you love the most celebrate your unique life as a mom.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney's Babble.com. Find Sullivan on her blogs, Just Write Mom and Some Puppy To Love.

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MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SEREDA

Celebrating other moms

This May I'll be celebrating my third Mother's Day and instead of wishing for some much-needed sleep or some alone time, I'm taking a different approach to the celebration altogether; I'm thinking of other moms.

For years I've dreamt of hosting a huge Mother's Day banquet for all the great moms in my life: my aunts, godmother, cousins, friends, and of course, my own mother. It'd be a beautiful event, only the best, for my favorite moms. Much like high tea, I'd

have the best silverware, place settings, croissants and scones, and champagne flowing everywhere. Everyone would be dressed in pretty florals, possibly hats. Maybe we'd even have some fun raffles like a TV, or something that I recently won in a raffle: cleaning services! I'd gather all the moms and make a great speech about how they've influenced me as a woman and mom. The problem with my dream is that, well, it's a dream. I always seem to remember my great idea the month before Mother's Day, hardly enough time to plan such an event.

When I think about it more, I realize that the where or the how is not as important as the what. What

I want my fellow moms to know is that they are inspiring. They have inspired me, and they are definitely inspiring their own children whether they think so or not.

I've definitely learned little nuggets of motherly wisdom from the women in my life. I see

the way the older generation has transitioned from young mothers to empty-nesters and grandmothers. Yes, they're totally different with their grandkids than they were with their own children. It's to be expected. I see my cousins, whom I've grown up with, and am in awe of their own unique parenting styles. They are sweet and tender and extremely creative with the things they do as a family. My friends and fellow moms are always there to listen to my parenting woes and give great advice. Whenever I'm feeling conflicted about something, we can share stories and relate. And of course, my own mom has been there for me every step of the way in this journey. She's proud of the mother I'm becoming and a lot of that is owed to her. I understand the choices she's made as a mother, even when I didn't get it as a child. That's the beauty of becoming a mom, you get other moms, especially your own.

Maybe next year I'll actually throw that beautiful banquet for all the great moms in my life. But either way, I want them to know that they have, and continue, to inspire me in my parenting journey.

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Giving birth

The new frontier in assisted reproduction

BY ALLISON PLITT

Famous people get pregnant and have children all the time, but not many do so at the age of 50.

Enter Sophie B. Hawkins.

The American singer, songwriter, and musician, announced in February that she is pregnant and is expecting to deliver her baby girl in July 2015.

Hawkins, whose hits include "As I Lay Me Down," said that in order to become pregnant, she used in vitro fertilization (IVF), which involves combining a woman's eggs and a man's sperm outside of the body in a laboratory. Once an embryo or embryos form, they are then placed inside a woman's uterus.

In Hawkins' case, she used 15 frozen embryos that had been created with donor sperm when she was 31 years old. As reproductive technologies have advanced, opportunities for women to have children at an older age have become more available.

According to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, births by women ages 50 to 54 rose by more than 165 percent from 255 such births in 2000 to 677 in 2013.

Dr. Jamie Grifo, program director of the New York University Langone Fertility Center and a reproductive endocrinologist, explained that most of these mothers conceived children by using donor eggs fertilized by sperm and implanted into the womb.

As the average age for menopause is 51, fertility decreases through a woman's 30s and 40s and usually vanishes by 45.

"Egg donors are not a new trend. There are a limited number of patients over the age of 50 who use

at 50

assisted reproduction, mostly donor eggs," said Grifo. "There have been no reported pregnancies in women over 50 doing IVF with their own eggs, as the pregnancies of women 45 and older are almost always achieved using donor eggs. An egg donor cycle (starting with egg production and ending with an embryo transfer) can cost \$20,000 to \$30,000," Grifo stated.

The mothers themselves must meet certain criteria to be considered for IVF at an older age. In addition to having a normal blood pressure and weight, prospective mothers must undergo an electrocardiogram that checks for problems with the electrical activity of the heart, a stress test for the heart, a colonoscopy, and a mammogram.

The Centers for Disease Control list some of the risks involved for women in their late 40s and 50s having children as preeclampsia (a condition during pregnancy marked by high blood pressure and a high level of protein in the urine), gestational hypertension, diabetes, preterm delivery, and multiple births.

NYU's website (www.nyulangone.org) states that it is unique among fertility centers in that it has "pioneered improvements in genetic screening technology over the past 20 years, leading to more efficient and safer IVF procedures." In other words, the doctors test embryos for certain genetic disorders to ensure they are healthy before beginning the IVF process.

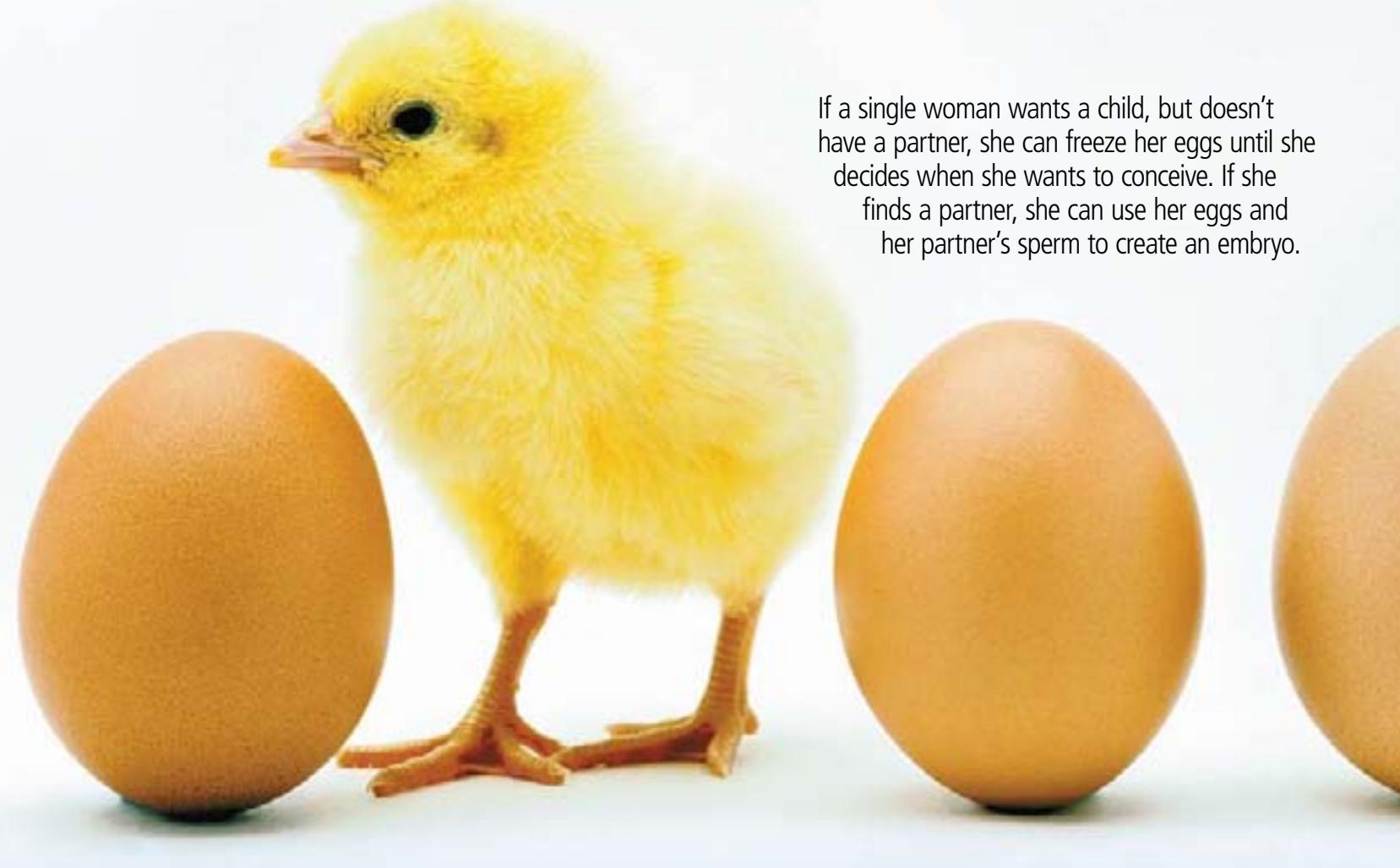
When asked if women 50 and older having babies is a rising trend, Grifo observed, "It's happening, but it's still not that common. The age of first deliveries is rising dramatically, especially on the coasts, just because the stages of our life expand with our life expectancy, so we spend more time in each of the stages."

Based on a 2011 research paper published by his colleagues at New York University, Grifo said, "We looked at eggs, embryos, frozen eggs, fresh eggs and embryos and showed that per retrieval, we got the same pregnancy rate. There are advantages and disadvantages to each option and with good counseling and informed consent, patients can decide what to do."

Because frozen embryos involve donor sperm or the sperm from a male partner, not all patients are comfortable freezing embryos, because they may never be used if the woman separates from her partner. The woman can only use the embryo with the male partner's consent.

It is illegal to sell frozen eggs and embryos and donating them involves costly testing on the donors' behalf, which usually ends up having them forgo the procedures and throw the reproductive materials away.

Dr. Barry Behr, professor of obstetrics and gynecology (reproductive endocrinology and infertility) at Stanford University's Medical Center, disagrees with Grifo's conclusion that almost all assisted reproductive



If a single woman wants a child, but doesn't have a partner, she can freeze her eggs until she decides when she wants to conceive. If she finds a partner, she can use her eggs and her partner's sperm to create an embryo.

technologies have about the same pregnancy rates.

An example Behr refers to can be found online at the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology (www.sart.org) under the heading "IVF Success Rates" that produces a "National Data Summary" from 2013, which is a compilation of statistics from fertility centers throughout the country. The website also allows users to look at the data of individual fertility clinics nationwide, although it is not designed to compare IVF clinics' success rates.

According to the National Data Summary, the percentage of transfers resulting in live births is 56.1 percent for fresh embryos, 47.1 percent for frozen donor eggs, 40.5 percent for thawed embryos, and 41 percent for donated embryos. These statistics show the highest success rate is by using fresh embryos. There is a 9 percent lower success rate from using frozen donor eggs than using fresh donor eggs (in fresh embryos).

Behr also says that fresh embryos and eggs have higher success rates

than frozen embryos and eggs.

"There is nothing in life where fresh is the same or worse than frozen. You can look at published data. Pregnancy rates are 10 percent to 20 percent lower with frozen eggs cycles than they are with fresh egg cycles."

Regarding the use of eggs versus embryos, Behr sees different success rates as well.

"Pregnancy rate does not mean that the techniques are equivalent. It's not arithmetically possible to have eggs be equal to embryos. Eggs are more fragile than embryos, so there is a slightly lower survival rate in eggs than embryos. One egg going in does not translate to one embryo developed," Behr explains.

"Not every egg fertilizes," he continues. "That means that if 60 percent to 70 percent of your eggs survive and fertilize, the utility of eggs starting with 10, we're now down to six to seven embryos. If I start with ten embryos, I bet that I will have more babies from my ten embryos than from your 10 eggs."

Saying that he fully supports egg-freezing, Behr believes this technique has advantages over embryo-freezing. For example, if a single woman wants a child, but doesn't have a partner, she can freeze her eggs until she decides when she wants to conceive. If she finds a partner, she can use her eggs and her partner's sperm to create an embryo. She also has the option of using donor sperm to create the embryo.

Other instances where egg-freezing is advantageous is when a female cancer patient wishes to bank her eggs. Egg-freezing is also a more viable alternative for those who have moral or ethical concerns about storing extra embryos after in vitro fertilization.

Behr says the data from the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology for 2011 and 2012 shows greater disparity in success rates among the different technologies.

"Now I'm not saying in five years or 10 years those success rates may be closer, but the success rate of an

embryo will always be higher than that of an egg, because you don't know the potential of an egg before it is fertilized today."

In an interview with ABC Television in 2012, Behr said it was "morally irresponsible" to tell a couple about freezing eggs but not disclose to them about freezing embryos.

Behr says he has softened his position on being "morally irresponsible," but he claims there are fertility centers and individuals "who are morally irresponsible and who are selling people on false hope and that is immoral and unethical. This would not be the case for Dr. Grifo's nor our practice. Neither myself nor Dr. Grifo represent our field in parity."

For more information about in vitro fertilization, visit NYU's Langone Fertility Center website at www.nyulangone.org/locations/fertility-center.

Allison Plitt is a contributing writer to New York Parenting and lives in Queens with her husband and daughter.

Room for debate

The New York City Urban Debate League gives students a voice — and a lot more

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

The New York City Urban Debate League is for all ages, and welcomes children from second to 12th grade. The art of debate showcases the academic benefits of extracurricular activities, and adds to children's skills in writing, reading, speaking and listening. Each of these skills is important for academic achievement, especially under the New York State Common Core Standards, and increases their ability to take notes, collaborate, question, organize and research. Programs such as debate are also proven to influence children's interests in college, career, and civic success — making them more likely to vote, volunteer for a campaign, or run for public office.

The positive benefits of

debating for children are numerous. Young debaters often earn better grades than their peers and have higher attendance rates in school. They are also more likely to be college and career ready — which is a goal of the New York State Common Core. Students organically work on their ability to think critically and problem solve, research, write, communicate, collaborate and think creatively. Students that participate in debate are seemingly more prepared than their peers to perform well on standardized tests in the areas of English, reading, math and science. Graduation rates and college attendance rates are also notable for young debaters — around 90 percent of graduate high school on time and go on to attend college.

Most recently, New York City debaters swept nearly all the divisions of the State Championships. Public high school Brooklyn Tech swept Novice, Junior Varsity, and Varsity Policy Debate Divisions! The team included Dante DeBlasio and Samuel Eluto, who were undefeated and placed first for Varsity Policy Debate.

Want a program in your child's school? The city's debate leagues are free for all public schools and are Common Core aligned. There is outreach for each school by master debate coaches as well as year-round teacher professional development, resource availability, and online support. The mission is to support debate education programs. The programming is offered every week. There are championships in

both the fall and the spring. I spoke to New York City Urban Debate League executive director, Erik Fogel to learn more about the benefits of debate.

Shnieka Johnson: How long has the program been around?

Erik Fogel: We were founded in September 2011 because less than one percent of the city's Title I low-income schools and students had access to debate.

SJ: What is the demo-

graphic of the participants?

EF: The majority of our students are Hispanic Americans and African Americans, about 80 percent Hispanic and African Americans, and 20 percent Asian Americans, European Americans. Ages are elementary to high school, with majority being middle school, so I'd say roughly ages 7 to 20 years old.

SJ: What life skills does debate lend itself to?

EF: Debate is the most rigorous academic program since Ancient Greece. It teaches students public speaking, critical thinking, reading, writing, questioning, researching and every other academic skill. It also teaches every academic subject — from philosophy to economics to international affairs to ethnic studies. Students basically receive a college education through debate. And so it's the best preparation for college, career and civic success.

SJ: How can parents get their kids involved?

EF: Parents can ask their school to start a debate team. All our programs are free for New York City public schools. Additionally, we offer a debate club that meets nearly every Saturday.

SJ: How do you start a program at a local school if they do not have one?

EF: We train teachers with outreach, workshops, curriculum, and lessons on being a debate coach. We have a program director who visits schools to support teams. We also have workshops and additional training every Saturday through the school year and then summer debate institutes available for teachers all throughout the summer.

What do you want parents to know about this initiative?

EF: Everyone can be a great debater. All students should have access to the best debate education opportunities to learn college-level skills, learn about the world around them, and learn the skills to advocate and change the world around them.

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.



(Top) Students, left, Dante DeBlasio and Samuel Eluto (second from right) celebrate a win with teachers James Bathurst and Adam Stevens. (Right) Starr Arroyo, Stephanie Nyame, Yaira Brito, Erik Fogel (teacher), Ashley Meija of the Bronx School for Law, Government and Justice celebrate a win.

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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Saw it on Facebook

Heard about the ‘Facebook divorce’? Here are the facts

Did you hear? You can get divorced on Facebook now.

“Yeah, I read the article.”

I overheard this brief (and misleading) exchange recently. Two women were referring to a recently decided New York Supreme Court case, *Baidoo vs. Blood-Dzraku*.

Many of us are on Facebook. If you are reading this column, maybe you’re getting divorced. Will this case affect you?

Probably not.

Baidoo vs. Blood-Dzraku involves “service of process.” In other words, notifying someone that an action (here, a divorce action) has been instituted against him, and that he is required to respond to it. The question raised was whether one spouse can inform the other of a divorce action using Facebook. And only Facebook.

Justice Matthew F. Cooper, in his decision, said that the preferred method for serving a summons in a divorce action is personal delivery to the defendant. This reflects the great emphasis that this state places on insuring that a person who is being sued for divorce — a proceeding that can have immeasurable financial and familial consequences — be made aware of and afforded the opportunity to appear in the action.

But personal service isn’t always possible; for instance, when one spouse doesn’t know where the other is. Under such circumstances, alternative service is allowed. With the court’s permission, a summons can be delivered to a person other than the spouse at the spouse’s workplace or home.

Or, the summons can be affixed to a door at one of these places, and a copy mailed to a spouse’s last known address or actual place of business (“nail and mail” service). Then there is publication service, where the summons is printed in a newspaper designated by the court. The idea is that, if the spouse cannot be notified in another way, maybe he will find out about it by reading that newspaper.

The law does allow a court to go beyond these methods and to devise



one “that fits the particular circumstances of the case” — but only if the usual methods are shown to be “impracticable.”

To get permission to use a private Facebook message as her sole method of service, Ellanora Baidoo, the wife in this case, had to offer evidence and persuade the judge that, in her situation, the other methods of service wouldn’t work, and that the social media site was likely to. And, she succeeded.

The judge found that, although the parties married in 2009, they never resided together, and the last address the wife had for him was an apartment he vacated in 2011.

By phone — they spoke occasionally — her husband had told her that “he has no fixed address or place of employment. He has also refused to make himself available to be served with divorce papers,” according to the court.

Further, investigative firms had all been unsuccessful in their efforts: the post office had no forwarding address for him, there was no billing address for his pre-paid cellphone, and the Department of Motor Vehicles had no record of him.

After having convinced the court that the more traditional methods of service were not viable, Baidoo still

had to show that her proposed manner of serving her husband was “reasonably calculated to apprise [her husband] that he is being sued for divorce.”

The court had concerns: could the wife have fabricated the husband’s Facebook account? If the account was legitimate, what if he rarely used it? Baidoo was able to allay these concerns.

Still, the question remained: could service on Facebook really be the only means of service? No court had ever allowed this. Should publication service also be required?

Justice Cooper said, no, publication service can be expensive, “and the chances of it being seen by [the husband], buried in an obscure section of the paper and printed in small type are ... infinitesimal.”

And so, new law was made.

New York City and Long Island-based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin helps clients end their relationships respectfully and without going to court. Contact him at lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com, (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lchabin.

Disclaimer: All material in this column is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.



ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
ESQ.

Wills and your kids

My spouse and I have recently had children. If something happens to both of us, we want to leave our money to our children. What are our options since they are still very young?

In New York, if you pass away while the child is a minor, and you do not have a will, that child will receive his or her entire inheritance once he reaches the age of 18. However most parents do not want their 18-year-old child to inherit their entire parent or parents' estate at such a young age because the child may not be mature enough to handle what could be a sizeable amount of money. This is particularly true for a child or children who have suffered such an unspeakable loss at a young age. For that reason, it is important to have a will in place and create trusts to best suit your needs.

A Last Will and Testament contains a "Minor's Trust" that is intended to hold any property left to a minor child — defined by you in the will as someone under any age — 18, 25, 30, and so on.

In general there are two types of structures. The first is called a "pot trust" or "sprinkle trust," which means that all the money goes into the "pot" to be used for the benefit of all children who are beneficiaries of the trust.

The pot trust usually grants the trustee full discretion to make distributions for any reason, or imposes an ascertainable standard such as "health, education, maintenance, and support" (sometimes referred to as a "Hems" standard). This type of trust is most appropriate for when you have two or more young children who would live with a guardian. In some respects, a pot trust is more manageable for a trustee and is more appropriate because the majority of the expenses will be attributable to the children as a whole, such as food, or are expenses all children would benefit from, such as summer camp. This type of trust allows the trustee to act much as a



parent would by not requiring the trustee to keep separate records for each child and not requiring distributions to each child are exactly the same. With such a trust it may be most appropriate to make the trustee a different person from who you are appointing the guardian of your children to ensure a check on the trustee's distributions.

The second option is to create a separate trust for each child. This trust is more appropriate for older children or young adults because each child will have different needs and expenses of greater variance and at different times. At your death your estate is divided equally among your children and each child gets his or her own trust. Most likely you will have the same trustee for all the trusts, but the money is kept in separate sub-trusts for each beneficiary. This allows different options and scenarios regarding distributions from the trust by the trustee. Usually the trustee has a standard for discretionary distributions of principal, such as "for health, education, and maintenance."

You may also want to include distributions of income and/or principal (the corpus) at one or more specified ages to the child directly. There are various options. A common methodology is to provide for half at age 25 and the remainder at age 30. You can also make those distributions contingent on graduation from an accredited college, and delay those distributions to ages 30 and 35 (or later) if they do not graduate college.

You can also split it into thirds, or give the trustee discretion to keep the property remaining in trust for tax purposes or creditor protection purposes. If you are drafting your will when your children are young, you may be considering implementing a combination of these two trusts.

The specific terms are driven by your own particular objectives and concerns, which are different for every person. It all depends on your family's situation financially and your children's ability to handle money. A good way to work through these decisions is to assess the estimated value of your estate (including life insurance), how much money would be in your net estate (your gross estate less any major liabilities like a mortgage). Consider how many children you have or plan to have, and how much money is estimated to be available for each child.

For a larger trust, you might consider multiple distributions of principal over a longer period of time.

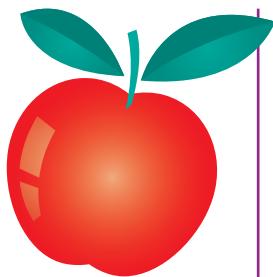
For a smaller trust, one or two distributions is probably more efficient.

As he grows, you may find you have a very responsible child and so you may not need to spread the distributions as far out; or you may find you do not think he could handle a large amount of money at one time so you may want to consider delaying the distributions until a later age.

Regardless of what you select, you, your plan, and your children will all be changing as your children mature. It is critical to review these and other provisions every few years to ensure that your plan continues to be suited to your current situation.

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 Besunder on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at www.besunderlaw.com.

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DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

Why schools assign summer homework

Dear teacher,

All of my children have brought home folders of summer homework that need to be completed before the first day of school in the fall.

The summer homework is such a big deal that my child entering kindergarten even has a lot of material to cover. Are other schools doing the same thing?

I certainly don't look forward to having to browbeat my children to do this work all summer long. Last year, I was lax about having the kids do their homework. As a result, the last two weeks before school started was just doing homework, homework, homework!

Dear parent,

Your children's school is not out of step, as more and more schools are assigning summer work. The reasoning behind this is that it keeps students' school skills sharp — especially for those who have the traditional, long summer break of up to 70 days. Students who do not do some work in the summer will on average suffer a learning loss equivalent to about one month.

Typically, students score lower at the end of summer than at the end of the school year on the same standardized tests. Students who are reluctant to do any summer work should be reminded that failure to

do this work will put them behind.

Admittedly, summer is a time to relax and largely forget about school. Parents can keep it that way if they organize how the summer homework will be handled. Give them a say in when they will do them. You could suggest that they take a short break from these assignments after school is over and before it begins again. Another suggestion is that they only work on the assignments three or four days a week until all the homework is completed.

Debunking common myths about stuttering

Dear parents,

Much of what we think that we know about stuttering is actually a myth. Many very successful people, including Winston Churchill, Marilyn Monroe, and a recent top-10 performer on "American Idol," have had severe stuttering problems. Here with help from The Stuttering Foundation is a list of facts to counter the myths about stuttering. You can learn more about stuttering by visiting the organization's website at www.stutteringhelp.org or by calling (800) 992-9392.

Myth: People who stutter are not smart.

Reality: There is no link whatsoever between stuttering and intelligence.

Myth: Nervousness causes stuttering.

Reality: Nervousness does not cause stuttering. Or should we assume that people who stutter are prone to be nervous, fearful, anxious, or shy? They have the same full range of personality traits as those who do not stutter.

Myth: Stuttering can be "caught" through imitation or by hearing another person stutter.

Reality: You can't "catch" stuttering. No one knows the exact causes of stuttering, but recent research indicates that family history, neuromuscular development, and the child's environment, including fam-

ily dynamics, all play a role in the onset of stuttering.

Myth: It helps to tell a person to "take a deep breath before talking" or "think about what you want to say first."

Reality: This advice only makes a person more self-conscious, making the stuttering worse. More helpful responses include listening patiently and modeling slow and clear speech yourself.

Teaching children how to write their names

Dear teacher,

My daughter, who is entering first grade, still can't write her name. How can I teach her how to do this before next year?

Dear parent,

You can work with your daughter using the steps below to help her learn to write her name. She needs to master each step before going to the next one.

- Get a copy of the alphabet letters the school is using. They should show the direction that each letter is formed.

- Teach her how to print the letters in her name, starting with her first name. The letters can be taught in any order. She also needs to know the names of the letters.

- Print her name. Have her trace these letters many times. She may find it easier to write using a marking pen.

- Write her name using only dots. Then she should connect the dots.

- Print her name, and have her copy it under the letters you have written. She should say each letter as she writes it.

- Have your child write her name without looking at the model.

- Teach your child her last name in the same way.

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

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Calendar

MAY



Learn how to ride

Put that pedal to the metal and learn to ride at Van Cortlandt Nature Center on May 30.

Park rangers instruct children 5 years and older the basics of bike riding — how to balance, start, steer and stop. Children must bring their own helmets and

pre-register.

Learn to Ride on May 30 from 10 am to 1 pm. Free. Meet in the southwest corner of the park.

Van Cortlandt Nature Center [W. 246th St. at Broadway in Kingsbridge, (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers].

Calendar

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 bronxriverdalecalendar@cnlocal.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, MAY 1

IN THE BRONX

Free Friend Friday: Legoland Discovery Center, 39 Fitzgerald St.; (866) 243-0770; www.legolanddiscoverycenter.com/we; 10 am–9 pm; Free with annual pass.

Annual pass members may bring a friend for free.

Advisory Group: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 11 am; Free.

Teens share their opinions on the library.

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.

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

The folk group Hawthorne featuring Nat Osborn, Aimee Bayles, Karna Ray, and Stu Mahan perform. Explore the museum, stroll the gardens. Registration requested. The trolley makes an hourly loop starting at 5:25 pm from the 6 train Pelham Bay Park subway station to Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum to City Island.

SAT, MAY 2

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 admissio

n to the grounds.

Make a fun project with air-dry, wash-away clay.

Spring fever: Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse; (718) 681-6000; www.bronxmuseum.org; 1 to 4 pm; Free for chil-



Celebrate mom at the Garden

Come to a garden party and celebrate moms the weekend of May 9 and 10 at the New York Botanical Gardens.

Live music, games, picnicking, and more greet moms on this special all-day, all-weekend event. From 10 am to 6 pm badminton, bean bag toss, and croquet are available on

the lawn, with card making and watercolor painting along CrabApple Path. Live entertainment on Daffodil Hill is performed by the Fuzzy Lemons on Saturday and the Banjo Rascals on Sunday. Daffodil Hill also offers the Bubble Show and Bubbles with Silly Sally each day and a special dance performance.

Mother's Day Weekend, May 9 and 10, from 10 am to 6 pm. \$30 adults, \$27 for students and seniors, and \$15 for children 2 to 12 years old.

New York Botanical Garden [200th Street and Kazimiroff Blvd. in Morrisania, (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org]

dren under 12 with parent.

Welcome spring's long-awaited arrival. Explore healthy living and contemporary art through art activities and tours of current exhibitions of three photographers from the Bronx and Cuba Libre. Special guest workshop from the Bronx Children's Museum. Pre-registration required.

Read-A-Loud: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 1 pm; Free.

Children listen to stories read by members of the Rotary Club of Riverdale.

SUN, MAY 3

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm.

Wave Hill. See Saturday, May 2.

Freshwater fishing: Crotona Nature Center, Charlotte Street and Crotona Park East; (718) 378-2061; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; Noon; Free.

Rangers teach the catch and release method and responsible fishing. Mandatory safety review class is required.

MON, MAY 4

IN THE BRONX

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

For children 5 to 11 years old.

Game On: Bronx Library Center,

310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 7 to 12 play with Wii, PS3 and Xbox. Pre-registration required.

TUES, MAY 5

IN THE BRONX

The Informers: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

YouTube presentation produced by teens for teens.

Continued on page 30

Calendar

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

Continued from page 29

WED, MAY 6

IN THE BRONX

Toddler time: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 11 am; Free.

For children 18 to 36 months with a parent or caregiver.

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

Children use iPads and read the recommended books. For children 8 to 12 years old.

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

Age-appropriate movies for children 5 to 12 years old.

THURS, MAY 7

IN THE BRONX

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

Preschoolers 3 to 5 years old enjoy picture books with the librarian.

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

Caregivers and parents and their toddlers 18 to 36 months enjoy finger play, songs, stories and play time with other toddlers.

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

Children 7 to 12 learn the basics. Pre-registration required.

Mother's Day craft: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 create a unique card craft for mom.

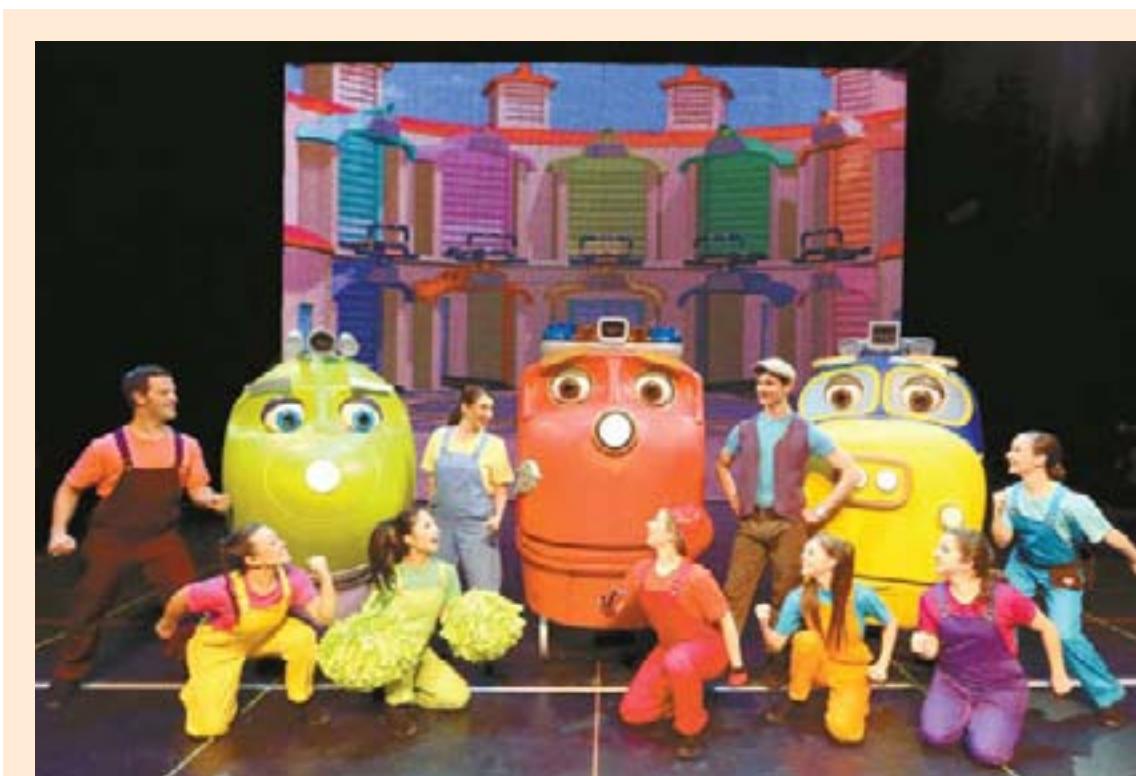
FRI, MAY 8

IN THE BRONX

Free Friend Friday: 10 am-9 pm. Legoland Discovery Center. See Friday, May 1.

Advisory Group: 11 am. Kingsbridge Library. See Friday, May 1.

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



Make tracks for 'Chuggington'

"Chuggington Live! The Great Rescue Adventure" is choo-chooing into the Beacon Theater on May 16 and 17.

This premier live action show, produced by Life Like Touring and Ludorum, is based on the popular TV show and gives young fans

the opportunity to experience the great adventure of the Chuggington trainees, Wilson, Brewster, and Koko. This show presents impressive trains with working features and movements — bringing the Chuggington characters to life on the stage.

"Chuggington Live! The Great Rescue Adventure" on May 16 and 17 at 11 am, 2 pm, and 5 pm. Tickets range from \$40-\$75.

Beacon Theatre [2124 Broadway at W. 74th Street on the Upper West Side; (866) 858-0008; www.beacontheatre.com].

SAT, MAY 9

IN THE BRONX

Birdathon: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; 7 am to 12:30 pm; \$30 (\$15 child; \$15 adult member; \$5 child member).

Join in to celebrate spring migration. From advice of bird experts to fun and educational activities, the day has it all.

Learn to ride: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 885-3467; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 10 am to 1 pm; Free.

Children learn the basics of bike riding — how to balance, start, steer, and stop. Must bring your own helmet. Pre-registration required. In the Ryan Stadium Lot.

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.

Floral fantasies for mom.

Mother's Day brunch: New York Botanical Garden, 200th St. and Kazimiroff Blvd.; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; 10 am-6 pm; \$30 (\$27 student and seniors; \$15 children 2-12).

Celebrate mom with live entertainment, games and outdoor fun.

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

Parents with children are invited to participate in reading aloud and crafts. For ages 3 to 6. Pre-registration required. Limited to 25 children.

Digital scavenger hunt: St.

Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Ave. and 145th Street; (718) 402-5155; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am-4 pm; Free.

Outdoor adventure searching for clues plus the shape-up class and nutrition workshop.

FURTHER AFIELD

Craft Fair: Chelsea, W. 21st St. between Eighth and Ninth avenues, Manhattan; (917) 589-8893; www.twofairladies.com; 11 am-4 pm; Free.

Two Fair Ladies present more than 60 handmade artisans featuring handmade jewelry, clothing, accessories for kids and adults, art, ceramics and more. Seventh annual event benefits PS 11.

Calendar

SUN, MAY 10

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, May 9.

Mother's Day brunch: 10 am–6 pm. New York Botanical Garden. See Saturday, May 9.

MON, MAY 11

IN THE BRONX

Game On: 4 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Monday, May 4.

TUES, MAY 12

IN THE BRONX

The Informers: 3:30 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Tuesday, May 5.

WED, MAY 13

IN THE BRONX

Toddler time: 11 am. Kingsbridge Library. See Wednesday, May 6.

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

Children's film: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Wednesday, May 6.

Magic the Gathering: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548–5656; www.nypl.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

The game that started it all for teens 13 to 18 years old.

THURS, MAY 14

IN THE BRONX

Storytime: 11 am. Bronx Library Center. See Thursday, May 7.

Toddler time: Noon. Bronx Library Center. See Thursday, May 7.

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

Children 7 to 12 years old use a variety of skills and materials.

FRI, MAY 15

IN THE BRONX

Free Friend Friday: 10 am–9 pm. Legoland Discovery Center. See Friday, May 1.

Advisory Group: 11 am. Kingsbridge Library. See Friday, May 1.

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



Kids can sew it up

Take a stitch in time at the Cross-Stitch Circle at the Dimenna Children's History Museum, now through June 25.

This unique drop-in workshop allows children ages 6 years and older to try their skills at one of the oldest forms of embroidery in the world.

Participants can learn the basics of this craft, or they can

make a handcrafted gift.

Cross-Stitch Circle on Thursdays, now through June 25, from 3:30 to 5:30 pm. Free with museum admission.

DiMenna Children's History Museum at the New-York Historical Society [170 Central Park West, between W. 76th and W. 77th streets, (212) 485–9273, www.DimennaChildrensHistoryMuseum.org].

SAT, MAY 16

IN THE BRONX

Spring migration: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; (718) 548–0912; www.nycgovparks.org; 9 am; Free.

Tag along with rangers to discover the best spots to view our fine feathered friends on their spring journey.

Game Day with Princess for Lifetime: Poe Park Visitor Cen-

ter, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365–5516; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am–noon; Free.

Participants enjoy crafts, games, and other activities using sand art and paper.

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.

Discover the beautiful patterns on a turtle shell and duplicate it with

fabrics.

Walk with the club: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220–5103; www.bronxzoo.com; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; Free with standard zoo admission.

Take in a river walk and a live performance by Jilly Puppets.

Field day fun: Playground-Williamsbridge Oval, Reservoir Oval East and Bainbridge Ave.; (718) 543–8672; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am–2 pm; Free.

Relay races, tug of war, obstacle course and arts and crafts.

SUN, MAY 17

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, May 5.

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

Rangers help children connect with nature and teach them all about the importance of the salamander and the eco-system. Prepare to get your hands dirty as you search under rocks and leaves.

MON, MAY 18

IN THE BRONX

Game On: 4 pm. Bronx Library Center. See Monday, May 4.

WED, MAY 20

IN THE BRONX

Toddler time: 11 am. Kingsbridge Library. See Wednesday, May 6.

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

Children's film: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Wednesday, May 6.

THURS, MAY 21

IN THE BRONX

Storytime: 11 am. Bronx Library Center. See Thursday, May 7.

Toddler time: Noon. Bronx Library Center. See Thursday, May 7.

FRI, MAY 22

IN THE BRONX

Free Friend Friday: 10 am–9 pm. Legoland Discovery Center. See Friday, May 1.

Continued on page 32

Calendar

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

Continued from page 31

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

SAT, MAY 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 paper flowers and show them off at the celebration parade, honoring 25 years of the Family Art Project.

SUN, MAY 24

IN THE BRONX

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

WED, MAY 27

IN THE BRONX

Toddler time: 11 am. Kingsbridge Library. See Wednesday, May 6.

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

For children 5 to 12 years old.

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

Yu-Gi-Oh battle: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Bring your decks and get ready to battle.

THURS, MAY 28

IN THE BRONX

Storytime: 11 am. Bronx Library Center. See Thursday, May 7.

Toddler time: Noon. Bronx Library Center. See Thursday, May 7.

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

Children 7 to 12 years old use a variety of skills and materials.

FRI, MAY 29

IN THE BRONX

Free Friend Friday: 10 am-9 pm. Legoland Discovery Center. See Friday, May 1.

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



Fun at the museum

Take a trip to Far, Far, Away at the Children's Museum of the Arts on May 14.

The new exhibit is open through Sept. 6, with opening day activities including art-making workshops and much more. Children of all ages will enjoy exploring the possibility of alternate worlds,

dreamscapes, and imagined lands, places where adventures occur and fantasy takes over.

Far, Far Away on May 14 from 10 am to 4 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts [103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street in SoHo; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org]. Free with museum admission.

SAT, MAY 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 to 1 pm; Free.

Children learn the basics of bike riding — how to balance, start, steer, and stop. Must bring your own helmet. Pre-registration required. (southwest corner of the park).

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.

Nature and family stories are explored.

Book fair: Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; Noon-6 pm; Free.

Now in its third year, the Bronx Book Fair (formerly the Bronx Literary Festival) connects the growing community of poets and writers in the Bronx to readers and booklovers

of all ages.

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

Families enjoy the great outdoors under the stars for a sleepover. Tents are provided, space is limited; chosen by lottery.

SUN, MAY 31

IN THE BRONX

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

Hawk watch: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 885-3467; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

Rangers guide you to the best place to view the raptors.

LONG-RUNNING

IN THE BRONX

Identification enrollment: Bronx Business Center, 3030 Third

Ave. at E. 156th Street; www.nyc.gov/idnyc; Weekdays, 8:30 am-4:30 pm; Now - Fri, June 26; Free.

The city is offering a free ID card for all city residents. Enrollment in the program provides access to services and programs offered by the city as well as by businesses. Holder may gain access to all city buildings that provide services to the public and is an accepted form of identification for accessing numerous city programs and services. Benefits also include a free one-year membership at many of the city's leading museums, zoos, concert halls, and botanical gardens.

Bug Carousel: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; Daily, 10 am-4:30 pm; Now - Sat, May 23; \$5 plus zoo admission.

Children enjoy a ride around the fun carousel.

Seasonal crafts: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Fridays, 2-3:30 pm; Free.

Make holiday arts and crafts.

Youth Made Media (Y2M2): Hunts Point Recreation Center, 75 Manida St. at Spofford Ave.; (212) 360-3327; jheffler@ciyparksfoundation.org; www.ciyparksfoundation.org; Weekdays, 3 pm-6 pm, Now - Sun, May 31; Free.

Students 11 to 15 years old receive instruction in media arts linked to environmental science. In addition children receive homework help, go on field trips, watch movies and so much more. Registration is required.

Night Lights: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave.; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm, Fri, May 1 - Sun, May 24; \$25 (\$12 children).

Celebrate the 50th anniversary with a special viewing of the Aquatic Garden, pelin-air installation; and more. For tweens and teens.

Sports workshops: St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Ave. and 145th Street; (718) 402-5155; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 9 am to 5 pm, Sat, May 2 - Sun, June 21; Free.

Pitch, shoot, and score with this workshop that focuses on developing sports skills. Children play a variety of sports each day, and can come every session, or just once. Pre-registration required.

Weekends at the zoo: Bronx

Calendar



Why not whistle while you work?

Emily Eagen whistles her way to the Resnick Education Wing at Carnegie Hall on May 31.

A musical innovator who sings and whistles a cornucopia of tunes including original, early music, and traditional Americana, Eagen is a two-time international whistling champion and a singing, whistling, and

ukulele-playing member of the popular roots band The Whistling Wolves.

Emily and bandmate Spiff Weigand's own songs explore children's flights of fancy, their dreams, and the way they turn familiar concepts on their head.

Joined by friends from the Wolves, Eagen and her string band

also toss in spoons, bones, jaw harp, and jug for a sound that has audiences stomping, clapping, and whistling.

Emily Eagen and the Whistling Wolves at Carnegie Hall's Resnick Education Wing [881 Seventh Ave. at W. 57th Street in Midtown; (212) 247-7800; www.carnegiehall.org/forfamilies]. May 31 at 2 pm. Free.

Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; Saturdays, 11 am – 4 pm, Sundays, 11 am – 4 pm, Sat, May 2 – Sun, May 31; Free with admission to the zoo.

Children learn all about the world of birds.

Paper Arts & Crafts: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays, 2–3:30 pm; Free.

Children have fun creating collages using decoupage, origami, kiri-gami and more.

Storytime: Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza, 290 Baychester Ave.; (718) 862-3945; barnesandnoble.com; Mondays, 11:30 am, Sat, May 2 – Mon, June 29; Free.

Stories come to life on the Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 Nook.

Story, arts and crafts: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Thursdays, 2–3:30 pm; Free.

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, kiri-gami and more.

Recycle to art: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Wednesdays, 2–3:30 pm; Free.

Have fun turning junk to treasure. Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult. Wear appropriate clothing.

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.

FURTHER AFIELD

Science Playground: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 9:30 am–5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–6 pm; \$5 plus museum admission.

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

"Galapagos – Nature's Wonderland in 3D": New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 11 am & 2 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 & 3 pm, Now – Tues, June 30; \$6 adults; \$5 children.

In this 3D movie, travel to the Galapagos archipelago to meet

giant half-ton tortoises and marine iguanas that spit sea-salt from their noses, hunt fishes with the colorful blue-footed boobies, and swim with tiny penguins.

Rocket Park Mini Golf: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 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!

Needlework and games: Lef-ferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 789-2822; www.prospect-park.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1–3 pm; \$3.

Join in with staff and make a small sampler and play board games.

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Raw foods for children

Eating fresh, whole foods is appealing, especially at this time of year. Some people take this fresh concept a step further by consuming all of their foods uncooked. In other words, raw.

Supporters of the Raw Foods Diet argue that once food is cooked, its enzymes — which they claim are essential for optimal digestion — are gone. But in reality, it's the body and not the food that supplies the enzymes needed for digestion.

A raw diet essentially excludes entire food groups such as cooked meat, poultry, fish, beans, and legumes. Nutrients that are hard to come by include protein, vitamin D, iron, calcium, zinc, and B vitamins. Anemia is a real possibility.

Anecdotal reports suggest that children who have raw diets are constantly hungry and can be underdeveloped for their age.

Another concern is that a child's

digestive tract may not be able to extract nutrients out of raw foods as well as an adult's tract.

"Raw fruits and veggies require a bit more digestion," says Skylar Griggs, a pediatric dietitian at Boston Children's Hospital. "Think of chewing a cooked carrot versus a baby carrot."

Some nutrients, such as the carotenoids found in carrots, sweet potato, and kale, are actually enhanced by the cooking process. The heat that softens the vegetables is breaking down the cell walls, making the nutrients more available.

Some raw diets include raw meat or fish, as well as unpasteurized milk, yogurt, and cheese.

"Uncooked fare, especially raw meat, poultry, and raw dairy products, come with a myriad of health risks which include food-borne illness," Griggs says. "My views are in line with the American Academy of



Pediatrics, which discourages the use of raw or unpasteurized milk and milk products as the health claims related to drinking raw milk have not been verified by scientific evidence."

It can be a challenge to follow this diet over the long run. What about birthday parties, sleepovers, and other social events? Will your child be left out of the fun? Keep in mind, a child who has been fed only raw foods may struggle with appropriate eating behaviors as he gains more independence.

Eating raw takes a lot of work, creativity, and careful planning.

"Parents should speak with their pediatric care provider before their child starts on a raw diet," cautions Griggs. "The child's growth should be measured closely and micro and macro nutrient deficiencies should be monitored."

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.



shape it into a ball. Place the ball on the prepared pan. Repeat until you have used up all the date-plum mixture.

Pour the chia seeds into a small bowl. Roll each ball in the chia seeds and place it back on the prepared pan. Place the balls in the freezer to chill for 2 hours. Wrap each ball individually in parchment paper or bakery tissue paper, place in a seal-

able plastic bag and keep frozen until ready to pack or eat.

NUTRITION FACTS: (1 date ball):

80 calories, 12 g carbohydrates (7 g sugar), 2 g protein, 3 g fat, 0 cholesterol, 20 mg sodium, 3 g fiber.

Used with permission from Sweet Debbie's Organic Treats: Allergy-Free & Vegan Recipes by Debbie Adler.

Seedy date balls

INGREDIENTS:

- 8 x 8-inch sheet of parchment paper
- 6 Medjool dates, pitted and halved
- 6 dried plums (aka prunes), pitted and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/2 cup raw sunflower seeds
- 1/2 cup raw pumpkin seeds
- 1/4 cup chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup fresh or frozen (and thawed) blueberries
- 1 teaspoon cacao powder
- 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 3 tablespoons water
- 1/4 cup chia seeds

DIRECTIONS: Line an 8 x 8-inch-square baking pan with parchment paper. Combine the dates, plums, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, chocolate chips, blueberries, cacao powder, salt, and water in a food processor or blender and process until almost smooth.

Take about 1 tablespoon of the date plum mixture, and with wet hands,

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It's summer again. The years are racing by, like your sports car (minivan for now). It feels like just yesterday the kids were in diapers, and you were promising you'd give them the world. Now you know that all you can give them is the footing they need to take on whatever this crazy world throws at them. We get it, and we're there with you. At the Riverdale Y, we know that summer isn't just the recess between school years; it's a season of tremendous growth. We work hard for your kids, we're working harder for you.



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