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# NEW YORK Parenting

Bronx/Riverdale Family  
April 2018

Where every child matters



22



18

## FEATURES

- 8 Steps to ensure your child is safe online**  
BY JUDITH MCLEAN
- 10 Behind the behavior**  
When schools understand trauma, they can save lives  
BY LAURA DEINNOCENTIIS
- 12 Best ways to research camp**  
BY JESS MICHAELS
- 18 Under the radar**  
Yes, autism affects girls, too  
BY SALLY J. PLA
- 22 Sharing safely**  
How parents can share milestones with less risk  
BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

## COLUMNS

- 6 Short Stuff**
- 20 Healthy Living**  
BY DANIELLE SULLIVAN
- 30 Good Sense Eating**  
BY CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

## CALENDAR

- 24 April Events**

## SPECIAL SECTION

- 14 Camp Directory**



30

# Kid power

In the past few weeks we have watched an incredible groundswell of passion, commitment and determination from kids across this nation. A few weeks ago, I myself watched the 10 am walkout of three schools in Brooklyn in memory of the 17 dead in Parkland, Fla. Not just the high school, but also the middle school a block away and a local elementary school (upper grades) who also had organized a planned commemoration.



However divided adults might be about guns, violence, the Second Amendment and a person's right to bear arms, the fact that there have been thousands of young victims of gun violence just since Sandy Hook cannot go unaddressed, and these young activists are determined to see that

it doesn't.

How can any of us not be proud when we see teens behaving with such integrity and fervor? There's powerful energy in this movement and as of this writing the March For Our Lives is just days away.

For the younger children, to see their big sisters and brothers or cousins or neighbors engaged so intently in sociological organization and protest, is a lesson impossible to teach in a classroom.

The impact of this movement is bound to change much of this generation just as The Civil Rights Movement, the Anti-War Movement, and the Women's Movement did, and as the "Me Too" Movement is doing at this very moment.

Someone recently commented that the

protests of the past are not powerful in the way they used to be. I strongly disagree. In fact, the power of protest in the past year and a half has been awe-inspiring and parents throughout the city and country should be overwhelmed with pride at the young voices leading this particular movement.

Apathy is the frightening factor. It is natural that, along with youth, should be visions of the future. Not a future of what is, but visions of a future that might be.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
Publisher/Executive Editor  
Susan@nyparenting.com

## Community News Group

**CEO:** Les Goodstein  
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Jennifer Goodstein

## New York Parenting

**PUBLISHER / EXECUTIVE EDITOR:**  
Susan Weiss  
**PUBLISHER / BUSINESS MANAGER:**  
Clifford Luster  
**OPERATIONS ASSOCIATE:**  
Tina Felicetti  
**SALES REPS:** Erin Brof, Mary Cassidy,  
Shelli Goldberg-Peck, Jay Pelc  
**ART DIRECTOR:** Leah Mitch  
**WEB DESIGNER:** Sylvan Migdal  
**GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:** Arthur Arutyunov,  
Gardy Charles, Earl Ferrer, John Napoli,  
Mark Ramos

**MANAGING EDITOR:** Vince DiMiceli  
**ASSISTANT EDITOR:** Courtney Donahue  
**COPY EDITOR:** Lisa J. Curtis  
**CALENDAR EDITOR:** Joanna Del Buono

## Contact Information

**ADVERTISING: WEB OR PRINT**  
(718) 260-4554  
Susan@NYParenting.com

**CIRCULATION**  
(718) 260-8336  
Tina@NYParenting.com

**EDITORIAL**  
(718) 260-4554  
Family@NYParenting.com

**CALENDAR**  
(718) 260-2523

**ADDRESS**  
New York Parenting Media/CNG  
1 Metrotech Center North  
10th Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

[www.NYParenting.com](http://www.NYParenting.com)



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# PARENTING MEDIA ASSOCIATION 2017 DESIGN & EDITORIAL AWARD WINNERS



## New York Parenting is Proud to Congratulate Our Winners

### EDITORIAL:

**GOLD** – *Queens Family* – Profile –

Front Line Hero *By Tammy Scileppi*

**SILVER** – *Brooklyn Family* – Column:

Child Development and Parenting Issues –

Behavior and Beyond – *By Dr. Marcie Beigel*

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Column: Reviews *By Allison Plitt*

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**BRONZE** – *Manhattan Family* –

Column: Child Development and Parenting Issues

– Healthy Living – *By Danielle Sullivan*

**SILVER** – *Bronx/Riverdale Family* –

Column: Family Matters – Ask an Attorney –

*By Alison Arden Besunder*

**SILVER** – *Bronx/Riverdale Family* – News Feature

This Kid's Got Chops – *By Shnieka L. Johnson*

**BRONZE** – *New York Special Child* – Ancillary

Feature Writing – Meet Julia: New Character

on Sesame Street has Autism – *By Tammy Scileppi*

### DESIGN:

**GOLD** – *Bronx/Riverdale Family* – Front Cover:

Use of Stock Photo – September Issue

**SILVER** – *Brooklyn Family* – Front Cover:

Use of Stock Photo – March Issue



Norwalk, CT (March 2, 2018) —The Parenting Media Association (PMA) announced the winners of its editorial and design competition at a banquet held at the conclusion of its annual meeting in St. Petersburg, FL on Friday, March 2, 2018. “Our awards recognize the best work done in our industry,” said PMA President Mary Cox. “Our member publications engage with families throughout the United States, Canada and Australia, be it through print, websites, email, social media and events. Our collective goal is to making parenting easier – after all, it’s the most important job in the world – and even more of a fun ride.”

# Short Stuff

## Connect with local moms

Join our Facebook sisterhood to find moms in your neighborhood for advice, community, and commiseration at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/nymoms>



## Products to help prevent sexual assault

The month of April is nationally recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. Join Sabre, makers of pepper spray and personal safety products, in the prevention of potential victimization and help support survivors against sexual abuse.

Sabre has partnered with Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization. Proceeds from the RAINN Key Case Pepper Spray with quick release key ring and the Red Personal Alarm with key ring are used to advocate against sexual violence and help to protect survivors, according to the Network.

People between the ages of 12 to 34 are at the highest risk of sexual violence, accounting for 54 percent of all victims, according to the Network. Carrying pepper spray or other safety devices decreases the likelihood of an attack or abduction.

To learn more about Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, visit [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org).



## Plant-powered nutrition for infants

Sprout Foods, the largest independent infant nutrition company, was the first brand to launch baby food in a pouch.

Plant-powered products are more than just a hot trend ... they're here to stay! With more and more parents seeking alternative sources of protein for their children, and an eagerness to introduce vegetables early on when young palates are just developing, Sprout saw an opportunity to offer plant-powered products to satisfy a variety of diet choices, including purees that are dairy-free and vegan-friendly.

"More people are interested in feeding their families a nutrient-rich, whole foods, plant-based diet as a way to lighten their load on Mother Earth, and instill healthful nutrition habits that can have a life-altering impact. Research shows that kids who eat healthful plant-based diets have a lower risk for obesity and chronic diseases later in life. Sprout's creative, delicious, plant-based purees and snacks offer wonderful options for family's dedicated to this healthful lifestyle," Sharon Palmer, The Plant-Powered Dietitian, a leading plant-based food and nutrition expert and author.

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**SAB.ORG/AUDITIONS**

for information and optional pre-registration

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(visit [sab.org/auditions](http://sab.org/auditions) for details)

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**April 20** - Chinatown | **April 21** - Harlem

Auditions are also held at SAB's Manhattan headquarters for a \$35 fee. Visit [sab.org](http://sab.org) for further information.

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# Steps to ensure your child is safe online

BY JUDITH MCLEAN

The internet is a fantastic tool that has changed the world in many great ways; however, as with many things in life, the web has a sinister side. The unfortunate truth is that your child is never more than a few clicks away from content with adult themes, or sites with far more worrying motives.

Not only is ominous content a concern, but cyber bullying is a modern plague in our society, too.

Electronic devices and the rise of social media have allowed group bullying to be-

come a common issue.

Therefore, as a parent, it's more important than ever to be aware of the warning signs and offer support before your child has the courage to ask, since, so frequently, children struggle to trust anyone when the abuse is coming.

In order to ensure your child is never exposed to these dangers, here are some tips to bear in mind:

## 1. Monitor their online activity

Just as you would keep a careful eye on your child playing outside with friends and

do your best to make sure he wasn't taking unnecessary risks in the playground, you ought to do the same when he is on the web.

Even though it can seem tedious after looking at the millionth YouTube video, being by your child's side is the best way to ensure he has a positive experience online. GetNetWise.org has produced a very comprehensive online safety guide that's worth a read.

## 2. Make your expectations clear

Before your children start to use elec-

tronic devices to browse the internet, make your expectations clear to them. Determine how much time you want them to be online each day and which sites you find acceptable, by making it clear you can be sure there will be no misunderstandings.

This is also a good time to outline the potential consequences for breaking the rules.

Additionally, it's a good idea to make a list of sites they are allowed to visit without permission and make it clear that if they want to visit any not on the list, they must seek your approval beforehand.

### 3. Educate them on privacy protection

In recent years, it's been very apparent that many youths haven't been aware of the consequences of revealing their personal information. Therefore, by teaching your children about the potential dangers, you can be assured that they will hopefully make the right choices. The best way to do this is to make it 100 percent clear that:

- They should never provide their personal details including name, address, password, or photographs without asking you first.
- They should never open or respond

to e-mails from unknown e-mail addresses.

- They should never arrange to meet up with anyone online.

### 4. Take advantage of parental controls

Many parents begin researching for software to help keep their kids safe online without realizing their internet service provider probably already provides free parental control software. Some providers offer controls that allow you to restrict the access your child has to certain websites. They also allow you to filter by age, time, and category, ideal for busy parents who want some additional peace of mind.

### 5. Ensure your child can trust you

It's important to let your child know that if she ever sees anything online that makes her feel uneasy, she can seek your support without prejudice. Of course, you need to ensure she knows the consequences for actively seeking out sites you don't approve of. However, equally, she needs to know she can trust you to not overreact in the event that she stumbles on something by mistake. Therefore, reassure your children and make it

clear that they can approach you in such events without fear of repercussions.

### 6. Restrict device use to an appropriate location

By isolating device use connected to the internet to an appropriate location, like the living room, you can easily monitor what your kids are up to on the web. It's never a good idea to leave children unattended online; therefore, consider disconnecting the internet from computers in their room or places where it's more difficult for you to monitor their online activity.

### 7. Consider limiting use to kid-friendly sites only

For young kids, it's a good idea to limit the websites they can visit and only allow them to use those designed specifically with a child audience in mind. That way not only do you know they're safer, but they are actually benefiting from content designed for them; some popular sites include Yahoo!igans, KidRex and FunBrain.

*Judith McLean is a mother of four and an educator, who has written extensively on the topic of parenting. Find more of McLean at MomBible.com.*



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# Behind the behavior

## When schools understand trauma, they can save lives

BY LAURA DEINNOCENTIIS

*Ben arrives late to school almost every morning. When he enters his second-grade classroom, his teacher asks for his homework. He slaps classmates on the backs of their heads and knocks books off their desks. His teacher tells him to sit down in a loud, annoyed voice. Ben continues walking around the room distracting other students. The teacher raises her voice and points a finger at Ben, ordering him to sit. Ben kicks his chair and spins around the room. "That's it! I am calling your mother!" the teacher threatens, but Ben does not hear her. He has run out into the hallway. The teacher picks up the phone and dials the main office to alert the principal.*

**H**ow would you handle this situation if you were Ben's teacher? Do you agree with the steps she took to try and manage his behavior? Is there anything you would do differently?

### Ben's story: A snapshot

Ben saw his father get hit by a car last summer. After the fatal accident, his mother stopped working due to severe depression and the family eventually lost its home. For the past three months, Ben, his mother, and his two younger sisters have been living with relatives in a two-bedroom apartment in another borough. It takes Ben almost two hours to commute to and from school each day, which is why he is consistently late. (His aunt drops him off on the way to work, after getting her own kids to school.)

When Ben arrives home in the evening, he finds his mother sleeping or watching television on the couch. She does not think to ask him about school or his homework, which is impossible to do in such an overcrowded, noisy space. He is exhausted and often falls asleep without eating dinner. Since he shares a bed with three other children, he does not get adequate rest. He stays up most of the night listening to his mother and uncle fight. Ben often leaves for school without brushing his teeth and wearing the same clothes from the day before. No one at school has ever noticed, except for a few classmates who make fun of him.

Does knowing Ben's story alter the way you would approach the situation? How

### Suggestions for teachers

What can teachers do to help students who have been impacted by trauma?

- Ask students how you can help them; let them know you care.
- Understand students' needs and be flexible to accommodate them.
- Explain how stress affects the body and mind, and teach students strategies to help reduce or control their reactions.
- Offer alternatives if students are uncomfortable in a situation.
- Model positive, affirming language to replace students' inner critics.
- Provide consistency and predictability; transitions are difficult because the unexpected can trigger a stress response.
- Build and encourage meaningful relationships so students feel supported.
- Set short-term, achievable goals to ensure success.
- Create quiet, safe spaces for students to de-stress and calm down.
- Listen to students; show them their voice matters.

does this new information inform your understanding of his behavior? Is engaging in a power struggle and implementing negative consequences the most effective way to create change?

Ben is one of 35 million children who have experienced significant trauma. Traumatic experiences include physical, sexual, and verbal abuse as well as physical and emotional neglect. Many possible scenarios exist within these categories, including living with a parent with a mental illness or substance abuse issues, witnessing domestic violence, losing a parent to abandonment or divorce, or having a family member in jail. School and community violence, natural disasters, terrorism, and refugee trauma are other issues that children face today.

The impact of trauma depends on a number of variables and protective factors. The severity and duration of a traumatic experi-

ence does not always correlate with the outcome. Children's personalities, cognitive abilities, and genetic dispositions play a role in how trauma affects them. Resilience also largely depends on a cohesive family environment that will provide ongoing support. Considering trauma often occurs within families, community advocacy is critical to provide children with opportunities to connect with others in meaningful ways. Children's well-being and success lies in the power of resilience.

### What this means for schools

With an estimated one out of four children coming to school with a trauma history, teachers and staff need to become aware of the symptoms and educated in trauma-sensitive practice. On average, students spend 35 hours a week with their teachers. This is a significant period of time in which educators can positively impact the lives of their students.

Typically, if a student acts out in class, the teacher will attempt to redirect the behavior, as in the scenario with Ben. If that strategy is unsuccessful, the child may face punishment or removal from the learning environment. For children who have not been impacted by trauma, these behavioral interventions may work. So, why did the same techniques backfire on Ben?

The brain's response to trauma affects its development and can lead to physical, emotional, social, and cognitive impairment. Experiencing chronic stress and anxiety is overwhelming and exhausting. Regular coping skills cannot manage the intensity of emotions that flood children with a trauma background. In fact, a reactive stance exacerbates inappropriate behavior.

Living in a constant state of fear makes children hypervigilant. When they feel threatened, a fight-or-flight response activates, releasing stress hormones throughout the body. Some children may freeze or shut down when they are triggered. Others use anger as a powerful and protective shield to fend off what they perceive to be danger. The difficulty they have in responding to authority figures is often viewed as a sign of disrespect and defiance when it is actually an automatic response to stress, which reinforces the trauma cycle.

This heightened level of alertness also



noticing and caring build trust and resilience. Teachers need to learn how to read their students' behaviors. If a child throws a book across the room, he is expecting a reaction: power struggle or abandonment. Neither reaction provides what the child needs. Receiving reprimands and repeated rejection destroys a child's hope for building genuine relationships and leaves him feeling alone, terrified, and worthless. The fight-or-flight response kicks in and the cycle continues.

A teacher can offer an alternate trauma-informed response by observing the student's behavior and recognizing it as an expression of his inner turmoil: "It is not safe to throw books in the classroom. Here's a stress ball to release some of that tension. Take it over to the quiet area and listen to some music on the headphones until you are ready to join the class."

The response is delivered firmly, objectively, and without judgement. Acknowledgment of the underlying issues with an unexpected solution will not provoke a stress response, and as a result, the child will slowly become calmer and more centered.

Trauma-sensitive teaching is not a one-size-fits-all approach. It requires sensitivity, creativity, and trial and error. It is a slow and steady process that demands patience. Traumatic experiences can have a lifelong impact, and rigorous measures to counteract their effects must be constant. When children receive encouragement and support within a safe and stable learning environment, there is potential for growth.

A paradigm shift needs to happen in our schools. Strength-based approaches to education engage students and help them learn. They lead to improvements in academic performance and behavior as well as the development of social-emotional skills and self-esteem. When children feel that others understand them, they become empowered. They are more comfortable and better equipped to self-regulate and focus on their work. These changes will also contribute to the overall success and safety of the school. Trauma-informed practice is not easy, but its rewards are life-changing.

Talk to your children's schools about trauma-informed approaches to teaching.

*For more information, contact The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (<http://www.nctsn.org/>) and The National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (<https://www.samhsa.gov/nctic>).*

*Laura DeInnocentiis has been teaching and writing for the past 25 years. Currently, she is working toward her Masters in social work at Columbia University's School of Social Work. DeInnocentiis's creative literacy program, Literartsy, supports young writers in her Brooklyn community.*

interferes with developing positive relationships with peers. Students impacted by trauma struggle to express and control their emotions. Some may isolate while others may dominate or bully others. They crave meaningful interactions, but often misinterpret social cues when trying to build a relationship, which can trigger inappropriate reactions. Consequently, these children often remain alone, friendless, and misunderstood.

They cannot make sense of the internal contradictions they experience: longing for friends but not having the social-emotional skills to make them; yearning for peace and quiet when their stress response signals the brain to run and scream; desperately wishing for someone to notice their indescribable pain instead of the number of times they were suspended. These personal challenges breed increased feelings of frustration, powerlessness, and hopelessness.

Supportive adult relationships serve as protective factors to buffer the impact of trauma-related stress. Teachers who take

the time to develop and foster meaningful alliances with their students gain a deeper understanding of why children act out. Trauma-informed adults who consistently model healthy self-regulation, social-emotional coping techniques, conflict-resolution strategies, and effective communication skills are training children to use them so that with practice they will gradually internalize them. This is where healing begins.

All children want to succeed in school. When they are not doing well, something is getting in their way. Teachers must rigorously observe and ask questions until they figure out what the obstacles are. Sometimes it may be as simple as a student needing glasses. Other times, it can be a case of complex trauma, which requires more attention and more work. Regardless, teachers have a responsibility to problem solve, with the help of the child, until an effective plan is put in place.

The process begins by acknowledging children's experiences with empathy, compassion, and respect. The simple acts of

# Best ways to research camp



BY JESS MICHAELS

**T**hinking about camp but don't know where to start? Here are a few ways to research a camp program and find out which one will be right for your child:

## Ask friends and neighbors

Asking your friends where their child goes to camp is a good starting point for your research, but remember, each child is different, so a camp that is the right fit for one might not be best for another.

Make sure to do your own research according to who your child is and what your family's values are.

## Talk to the camp director

Call the director and ask some key questions to find out about a camp's philosophy and if it matches your own.

Get to know the camp director through phone calls and correspondence. You want to feel comfortable with the director and feel that you can partner with him or her to ensure your child has a successful summer experience.

## Camp tours

When possible, schedule a tour for the summer prior to the one in which your child is going to go to camp.

Touring allows you to see the camp in action and will give you a good sense about the camp program and culture. Take the time to ask questions about the camp, see the facilities, and meet the director.

## Home visits

Often times, the camp director will come to your home to meet with you and your child. Ask him or her about the camp's mission statement and what type of child is successful at their camp.

The more open families are with the directors, the better informed they will be when it comes to making a decision. A director can help guide you and deter-

mine the most appropriate fit.

## Camp fairs

Camp fairs allow parents to meet representatives from dozens of camps all in one day. It's a great chance to find out about a few different programs, all within an hour or two. Both day and sleepaway camps attend these fairs and give families an opportunity to ask the director key questions about the program.

## Open houses

Many camps have open houses in the spring and fall that offer families a chance to see the camp facilities and get a feel for the camp. These events are a good opportunity for families to get to know the director and ask questions about the camp philosophy and program while in the camp setting. Check with the camps you are interested in to see if they will host any open houses.

## Look at websites, videos, and brochures

Parents and campers can look over a camp's website, social media, brochures, and video. They will give families a sense of what a particular camp is like. Most camp websites have photo slideshows, videos, virtual tours, and maps that will give parents and children a glimpse of the camp and the program.

Many also include a sample daily schedule, so families can see what a typical day at camp is like.

Camps will also send you a DVD (upon request), so you and your child can view the camp and see campers and counselors engaged in activities.

*Jess Michaels is the director of communications for the American Camp Association, New York and New Jersey, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the summer camp experience. Parents looking for a camp for their child can contact the organization for free, one-on-one advice in finding a camp at (212) 391-5208.*



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*Continued on page 16*

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*Continued from page 14*

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# Under the radar

## Yes, autism affects girls, too

BY SALLY J. PLA

When I tell friends I was recently diagnosed with autism, some of them scoff and call it nonsense. They say I function fine — that I smile, laugh, and socialize. I'm a mother who is active in the lives of my three sons, I have published two novels, and have spoken publicly at conferences and schools across the country.

In sum, I don't fit the preconception.

I can understand where they're coming from. Many, when they think about autism, picture an awkward teenage boy who has trouble making eye contact and is obsessed with gaming.

But, as the old saying goes: If you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism.

When I was little, I felt like I watched the world from inside a glass box. It never occurred to me to try to connect with what was happening outside of it. I didn't really

think of myself as having any sort of role to play. I was just a set of eyes and ears.

Time passed, however, and by the age of 10 or 11, I started to want to connect. I observed more carefully. I studied others, their body language, their laughter.

For the most part, my mimicry was unconscious. Other times, it was deliberate. For example, a certain teacher had this bright, happy way of saying "Hi!" that made you feel good inside. I remember deliberately deciding to say "Hi!" to everyone I knew in that same happy way.

Sometimes, I'd get things wrong and be bullied — even by "friends," which was tragic and bewildering. I desperately wanted the world to be a decent, clear, golden-rule-following sort of place. Of course, I learned it wasn't.

Eventually, I more or less shed the glass box. I grew up, got a job, got married, and had three wonderful sons. One of them was diagnosed with Asperger's at age 11.

It took me until my kids were practically full grown in order for me to get it — to look back on my life with a clearer lens,

and realize that it might not be just my son who was bringing the joys and challenges of autism into our family.

I started to figure it out while I was writing "The Someday Birds," my first novel. It's about an autistic boy on a long journey in search of his father, and how he learns to feel more at ease in the world. At first, I thought I was writing as a heart-gift for my son. But I soon realized that the voice emerging from the pages sounded an awful lot like that little girl from long ago.

So-called "higher-functioning" autistic women are relatively rare birds. And the reason for this, I think, is that we remain undiagnosed. We fly under the radar, we blend in.

Growing evidence is telling us that autistic women are sometimes deeply empathetic, and eager to be involved in the world. We observe social cues more carefully than men. We camouflage our symptoms.

We don't fit stereotypes. We can be champion chameleons.

But life as a chameleon can be exhausting.

I need a lot of downtime in which to "detox" from public events. I jump with panic when my phone rings — then take a deep breath, and answer so calmly, you'd never know. Trips to the store often end with me heading home because I can't take the sensory overload.

That's just a very few of the daily surface challenges. But I love connecting out in the world, so I go, and do. I've just got to find the right balance, to learn when to push, and when to recoup.

It's not always easy.

The only one who wasn't surprised by my recent diagnosis was my mother. She took my hand and said, "I always suspected it was something like that." My mom is an extremely sensitive introvert who also had issues as a child. Between you and me, I suspect she also might be somewhere on the spectrum.

But here's the thing: It's a wide spectrum. Autism takes as many different forms as the people it affects. Autism is a human condition, emphasis on the word "human." I hope we can learn to expand our definitions of all the various, beautiful, different, and challenging ways that autistic brains work in this world. To accept them, and make room for them all.

*Sally J. Pla is an award-winning author of two middle-grade books. Find out more about her work at [sallyjpa.com](http://sallyjpa.com).*





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# Getting relief from menstrual cramps

**K**aren Tyson became accustomed to being in pain two or three days out of each month when her regular menstrual cramps would ensue. Most of the time, she could find relief with a hot water bottle and some Motrin. But every third month or so, the pain became intolerable.

"I would do whatever I could to make the pain go away: take over-the-counter medication, lay down, walk around, but nothing helped," said Tyson. "I would just hold my stomach and double over in pain at times, sometimes having to leave work."

She visited her gynecologist, had a sonogram, and blood work, and everything came back normal: no cysts, no fibroids, nothing out of the ordinary.

"It was good and bad, because on one hand, I was so happy that nothing major was wrong, yet at the same time, I couldn't stand the pain," explains Tyson. She was determined to find relief

and started taking vitamins, cleaned up her diet, and began a regular exercise program, along with drinking plenty of water.

"Within a month, I started to notice a change in how I felt, and then I noticed my period was not terrible that month. The following month it was even better."

Tyson can't say exactly what caused her pain to subside, but believes "it was the vitamins that helped more than anything," and says that when she doesn't take them and doesn't eat well, she can feel the difference. Now she has mild cramps and says they are nothing like they used to be, and she can tolerate them without any change in her daily schedule and without taking any medication.

Dr. Prudence Hall, a gynecologist and practitioner of integrated medicine, has successfully treated thousands of women with severe cramps. Dr. Hall covers the



## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

topic in her most recent book, "Radiant Again & Forever," and offers her suggestions for relieving menstrual cramps. Dr. Hall says that painful menstrual cramps are a major cause of time lost from work or school for women in their teens and 20s, and there are more natural remedies that can help rather than just taking Motrin round the clock.

Here are Dr. Hall's five alternative solutions:

**Magnesium:** Take a magnesium supplement at night. Women who experience the most severe menstrual cramps typically have low levels of magnesium.

**Bath time:** Take a warm bath with Epsom salts. These also contain magnesium.

**Sex:** Although it may sound counterintuitive, having sex — and orgasms — will definitely help relieve pain due to the hormones released into the body.

**Oxytocin:** Ask your doctor to prescribe oxytocin, a natural hormone (the same one that is released when women nurse). It has the effect of decreasing menstrual cramps and general body aches, while also producing an overall feeling of well-being. What's not to like about that?

**Omega 3:** Omega 3 can also be very helpful, as it helps to relieve inflammation.

Of course, Dr. Hall cautions that extreme pain should never be ignored and advises that all women check with their physicians to eliminate the possibility of such issues as endometriosis, sexually transmitted diseases, or uterine fibroids.

*Danielle Sullivan is a writer living in New York City. Follow her on Instagram @Deewrite.*

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# Sharing safely

## How parents can share milestones with less risk

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

*Last month we talked about the possible dangers of parental oversharing on social media platforms, and how parents can control themselves. Here's more on the important topic.*

### Tips to stay safe

Michael Osakwe is a NextAdvisor.com writer covering technology. He offers helpful tips on how to stay safe on social media, as well as valuable information about the dangers that lurk there, so parents can share responsibly and avoid potential problems that could put their families at risk.

**Tammy Scileppi:** Many parents out there are probably still wondering, if Facebook is all about sharing, and everybody's doing it, how can too much of it turn into a bad thing? What's your view?

**Michael Osakwe:** Parents who overshare or partake in what's called "sharenting" run the risk of either embarrassing their child, or compromising their child's or family's privacy. Aside from these concerns, the information that parents are sharing about their children, who are too young to consent or know what's posted about them online, is potentially disre-

spectful and harmful to their children's self-esteem. For example, a story about your child's failed attempts to potty train may be funny to you, but it could scar your child's reputation when they're older. Finally, considering that the internet never forgets, it's possible that one day, "sharented" materials could be seen by future dates and employers Googling a child's name.

**TS:** What should parents keep in mind, so they can avoid cyber predators, identity theft, and more?

**MO:** If parents choose to share information about their child, they should make sure to turn off geolocation on all of their social media accounts, use the highest privacy settings online, and ensure that any posts containing images of their children include as little identifying information as possible.

For good measure, they should remove the Exif metadata from their photos if they haven't turned off geotagging on their phones. Exif data includes information like the device the photo was taken with, as well as the exact coordinates where a picture was taken. When photos are uploaded to most major social media sites, Exif data is removed, but in the instance a photo is simply shared through traditional file-

sharing means, like e-mail or Dropbox, the photo will retain its metadata. In a worst-case scenario, a photo retaining Exif data can be copied and shared numerous times by friends and family, or uploaded to sites that don't wipe this information.

*TS: According to an informative NextAdvisor blog: Everything from social media apps to the photos you take and store in your phone uses geolocation data, and most people tend to breeze straight through screens informing them when an app is requesting permission to use their location. The best thing you can do is slow down when installing new apps and pay attention to the permissions screen that pops up informing you what data or features the app will be accessing.*

**TS:** What's behind many parents' need to overshare?

**MO:** The motivations behind parental oversharing are likely the same as any other type of social media sharing — pride, desire of approval, or to bond over shared experiences. Sharing is healthy in controlled amounts, but parents need to be careful. Overuse of social media isn't just harmful for privacy reasons; it can be psychologically unhealthy for both parents and children.

### Internet tips for teens

- Be smart about what you post on the web and what you say to others. The web is a lot more public and permanent than it seems.
- Provocative and sexy names and pictures can draw attention from people you don't want in your life.
- Be careful what you download or look at, even for a laugh. Some of the images on the internet are extreme, and you can't "unsee" something.
- Going to sex chat rooms and other sex sites may connect you with people who can harass you in ways you don't anticipate.
- Free downloads and file-sharing can put pornography on your computer that you may not want and can be hard to get rid of. Any pornography that shows children or teens under 18 is illegal child

pornography and can get you in big trouble.

- Adults who talk to you about sex online are committing a crime. So are adults who meet underage teens for sex. Some teens think it might be fun, harmless, or romantic, but it means serious trouble for everyone. It's best to report it.
- Don't play along with people on the web who are acting badly, taking risks, and being weird. Even if you think it's harmless and feel like you can handle it, it only encourages them and may endanger other young people.
- Report it when other people are acting weird and inappropriately or harassing you or others. It's less trouble just to log off, but these people may be dangerous. Save the communication. Contact the site management, your service provider, the CyberTipline, or even

the police.

- Don't let friends influence your better judgment. If you are surfing with other kids, don't let them pressure you to do things you ordinarily wouldn't.
- Be careful if you ever go to meet someone you have gotten to know through the internet. You may think you know them well, but they may fool you. Go with a friend. Tell your parents. Meet in a public place. Make sure you have your cellphone and an exit plan.
- Don't harass others. People may retaliate in ways you don't expect.
- You can overestimate your ability to handle things. It may feel like you are careful, savvy, aware of dangers, and able to manage the risks you take, but there are always unknowns. Don't risk disasters.

Source: Crimes Against Children Research Center



**TS:** How do bad people use photos to do their dirty work?

**MO:** The act of posting a photo online from a personalized social media account provides all the information a would-be predator needs to commit identity theft, stalk children, or engage in other scams. For example, if your account is hacked (or that of a friend's), it doesn't matter if the photos don't have any information about the child, because simply having access to one of these accounts puts the photos in context for a predator or hacker.

But even without infiltrating people's accounts, a predator's job is made easy by the fact that many social media accounts tend to have poorly configured privacy settings. In a recent example, US Military personnel unwittingly revealed the locations of secret bases through a popular fitness app. To be fair, though, in this case and many others, companies tend to make security settings very obfuscating, and most of the default settings these services offer tend to be a privacy nightmare. Furthermore, as these services grow and update, many users assume their settings remain the same, which isn't always the case.

With regards to social media, those

most versed in understanding its effects, especially on children, tend to be psychologists and cyber security experts who disseminate information from their research through media appearances and discussions.

Most recently, the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, which consists of a coalition of privacy advocates, psychologists, doctors and parents, wrote a letter to Facebook to ask the company to discontinue its Messenger Kids app. The controversial app would allow children as young as 6 to have a limited presence on social media. We conducted our own investigation into the app, which you can view at [www.nextadvisor.com/blog/2017/12/12/facebook-introduces-messenger-kids-is-it-safe-for-your-child](http://www.nextadvisor.com/blog/2017/12/12/facebook-introduces-messenger-kids-is-it-safe-for-your-child).

**TS:** Why is social media's hold so powerful?

**MO:** The short answer is because it's a product that was designed to be addictive. Some former Facebook executives have been recently quoted in the media talking about the deliberate design choices and implementations that promote user retention but might be bad for society as a whole.

**TS:** What does the future hold?

**MO:** It's difficult to tell, but with growing awareness of social media's psychological effects and the need for personalized cyber security practices, it's possible that companies might start creating less harmful platforms that engage users organically while promoting safety and security. Even if this doesn't happen, I'm optimistic that knowledge about the effects of these platforms will spread among consumers who can make informed decisions about how they will choose to use (or disuse) them.

• • •

Whenever sharing, parents ought to remember the golden rule: Avoid sharing and posting anything about your children that you wouldn't want shared about yourself. And be careful about who you give personal information to. It's just common sense.

And here's a friendly reminder for everyone: Every post — whether it's on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, or Instagram — is forever preserved in cyberspace.

You can look at this way: In fashion, less is more. On social media, less is best.

*Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer and journalist, parent, and regular contributor to New York Parenting.*

# Calendar

APRIL



Julie Larsen

## Run for the Wild

Lace up your trainers and get ready to run or walk in the annual Run for the Wild at the Bronx Zoo on April 28.

Join in on behalf of your favorite animal or species that inspires you.

This year, runners are lacing up for the big cats, including the five species that Wildlife Conservation Society has identified as priority species for conservation — cheetahs, jaguars, lions, tigers, and snow leopards.

There are new prizes and race-day activities, including a beer garden for the adults, rock climbing wall, music and dancing, face painting, and more.

Run for the Wild participants are encouraged to fund-raise and seek individual sponsors for their effort.

Runners can choose to participate in

the 5K run or the Family Fun Run (strollers allowed).

The price of registration includes parking and general admission to the Bronx Zoo on the day of the event. Total Experience Ticket upgrade is available on site. Registration for the run is \$50 for adults, \$40 for children (ages 3–15), and \$40 for seniors (65-plus). All WCS members receive a discount on registration. All adult and senior participants are required to raise a minimum of \$35 in order to participate.

Registration for the race is required.

Run for the Wild on April 28, registration begins at 7 am, festivities, 1 pm.

*Bronx Zoo [2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road in University Heights, (718) 220-5103; [www.bronxzoo.com](http://www.bronxzoo.com)].*

## Never miss a great event!

Sign up for our FREE newsletter and get twice-a-week ideas for you and your family right in your mailbox. [NYParenting.com](http://NYParenting.com)

# 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@cnglocal.com](mailto:bronxriverdalecalendar@cnglocal.com) — and we'll take care of the rest. Please e-mail requests more than three weeks prior to the event to ensure we have enough time to get it in. And best of all, it's FREE!

## SUN, APRIL 1

### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art Project – Pastel Eggs in Watercolors:** Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; [www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org); 10 am–1 pm; \$8 adults, \$2 children 6-18, children under 6 free. Free admission until noon Saturday.

Not all eggs are created alike. Notice the difference between a speckled turkey egg and the cool, blue eggshell of the American Robin. Listen to the story "An Egg is Quiet," by Dianna Hutts Aston. Then make your own poetic painting with wax-resists in colors of pastel, speckled eggs.

**Birding:** Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 319-7258; [www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers](http://www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers); 11 am to 12:30 pm; Free.

We offer birding programs throughout the year and offer wildlife viewing opportunities during particular seasons. Birding programs are appropriate for all skill levels and beginners are welcome. To enhance your experience bring binoculars, or ask a Ranger to borrow a pair.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Musical Performances:** Eastchester Church, 11 Woodlot Rd., Westchester; (646) 479-6550; [pastor@ericjhall.org](mailto:pastor@ericjhall.org); [www.eastchesterchurch.org](http://www.eastchesterchurch.org); 10:30 am; Free.

"The Resurrection," a dramatic retelling of the death and physical reappearance of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, will be in its sixth run and Eastchester Church is anticipating record-attending performances this year.

## MON, APRIL 2

### IN THE BRONX

**Kids Week Bronx – Orienteering:** Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 319-7258; [www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers](http://www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers); 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Learn how to navigate using a map and compass. The Urban Park Rangers will teach you how to navigate to hidden objects placed around the park.



## Randall's Island in bloom

Randall's Island is in bloom at the annual Cherry Blossom Festival on April 21.

Celebrate the spring season and Japanese culture at the festival hosted by the Randall's Island Park Alliance. Visitors will enjoy paper flower making, face painting, kite flying, Yoyo balloon fishing, origami with Taro's Origami Studio, and

more! There will also be performances by J.D. Patch Band, Taiko Aiko Kai Drumming, and Taisan Tanaka Calligraphy.

Cherry Blossom Festival on April 21, noon. Free for all ages.

*Randall's Island Park [20 Randall's Island Park in the South Bronx, (212) 830-7722; [randallsisland.org/events/cherry-blossom-festival](http://randallsisland.org/events/cherry-blossom-festival)].*

## TUES, APRIL 3

### IN THE BRONX

**Kids Week – Nature Exploration:** Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; [www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers](http://www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers); 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

The natural world is the best playground in New York City. Join the Urban Park Rangers on a hike through the wonders of Van Cortlandt Park.

## WED, APRIL 4

### IN THE BRONX

**Kids Week – Lake Exploration:** Crotona Nature Center, Charlotte Street and Crotona Park East; (718) 378-2061; [www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers](http://www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers); 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Take the kids to the park to enjoy a family-friendly, guided hike filled with learning activities. You never know what you may observe on these exploration hikes lead by the Urban Park Rangers.

## THURS, APRIL 5

### IN THE BRONX

**High School Art Salon:** Pelham Art Cen-

ter, 155 Fifth Ave.; (914) 738-2525; [anki@pelhamartcenter.org](mailto:anki@pelhamartcenter.org); [www.pelhamartcenter.org](http://www.pelhamartcenter.org); 10 am; Free.

See tomorrow's art stars! Pelham Art Center is excited to continue its annual exhibition featuring exceptional student art in the High School Art Salon, on view. Featuring work in a range of media; sculpture, collage, painting, drawing and mixed media, this exhibition captures the unique energy and vision of a new generation of artists.

**Kids Week – Coastal Exploration:** Orchard Beach Nature Center, Orchard Beach; (718) 885-3466; [www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers](http://www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers); 11 am to 12:30 pm; Free.

New York City is home to an amazing abundance of wildlife. Our Urban Park Rangers will guide you to the best wildlife viewing spots in the urban jungle. Join the Rangers as we explore the shore while looking for wildlife living along the bay.

## FRI, APRIL 6

### IN THE BRONX

**Kids Week – Insect Exploration:** Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th Street at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; [www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers](http://www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers); 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

# Calendar

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Don't be afraid of getting your hands dirty as we explore high and low in search of amazing insects to discover their important connection to us.

**First Friday:** Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; [www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org](http://www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org); 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm; \$5 (\$15 non-members; \$10 seniors & students).

Bartow-Pell is kicking off its 2018 First Friday series with Hudson Valley Sally! Enjoy the music, explore the museum, and stroll the garden; light refreshments available. The free trolley makes an hourly loop starting at 5:25 pm from the 6 train Pelham Bay Park subway station to the museum to City Island.

## SAT, APRIL 7

### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art Project – Rock with the Rock Pigeons:** Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; [www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org); 10 am–1 pm; Free with admission. \$8 adults, \$2 children 6–18, children under 6 free. Admission is free until noon on Saturday.

Learn how rock pigeons have made urban centers home and helped humans by carrying secret messages. Costume yourself in hand-made, fabric feathers to make silvery wings. Then join your flock for a rockin' pigeon sing-along with special guest guitarist Todd Falberg and storyteller Rama Mandel.

## SUN, APRIL 8

### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art Project – Rock with the Rock Pigeons:** 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, April 7.

## THURS, APRIL 12

### IN THE BRONX

**High School Art Salon:** Pelham Art Center, 155 Fifth Ave.; (914) 738-2525; [anki@pelhamartcenter.org](mailto:anki@pelhamartcenter.org); [www.pelhamartcenter.org](http://www.pelhamartcenter.org); 6 pm to 7:30 pm; Free.

Featuring work in a range of media; sculpture, collage, painting, drawing and mixed media, this exhibition captures the unique energy and vision of a new generation of artists. For many, this will be their first exhibition experience. Pelham Art Center is delighted to offer this learning and career-building opportunity for students from eight Westchester schools.

## SAT, APRIL 14

### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art Project – Budding Birdwatchers:** Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; [www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org); 10 am–1 pm; Free with admission. \$8 adults, \$2 children 6-18, children under 6 free. Admission free until noon Saturday.

## Back to the 'Island'

Enjoy a book reading of "Islandborn" on April 13 at the United Palace Theater.

Pulitzer Prize winner and MacArthur fellow Junot Díaz reads and signs his debut children's picture book with a question and answer to follow.

The story explores diversity and imagination through the eyes of young protagonist Lola. After her teacher asks students to draw a picture of the places where their families immigrated from, Lola struggles to remember the island that she left when she was just a baby. With help from family, friends, and imagination, Lola takes an extraordinary journey back to The Island.

Book signing, April 13 at 5:30 pm. Admission: \$25 includes a copy of the



book, \$15 does not. \$5 children 12 and under and seniors 65 and older (does not include book).

*The United Palace Theater (4140 Broadway at 175th Street in Washington Heights, [www.unitedpalacearts.org](http://www.unitedpalacearts.org)).*

Learn to compare size and shape — the first step in bird identification. Make binoculars out of cardboard tubes to help spot avian species at Wave Hill, with drawings and cut-outs of various species to help ID them. And use colored pencils in multiple thin layers to create rich, feathery effects and exciting likenesses of birdy qualities.

**Survival Series – Pack and Prepare:** Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 319-7258; [www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers](http://www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers); 11 am to 12:30 pm; Free.

Our Urban Park Rangers are well-versed in outdoor lore. Learn tips and tricks that will enhance your knowledge of the natural world, and that might just save your life. Whether you are preparing for an extended journey through the woods or just want to be more prepared for any situation, a survival program is perfect for you.

**"Henry V":** Williamsbridge Oval Recreational Center, 3225 Reservoir Oval East; (718) 543-8672; [bronxacf@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:bronxacf@parks.nyc.gov); 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Obie Award-winning director Robert O'Hara — "Bootycandy," "The Brother/Sister Plays (Part 2)" — brings a warring king and his band of brothers to communities all across New York with Mobile Unit's spring production. Seating is limited so please RSVP to [bronxacf@parks.nyc.gov](mailto:bronxacf@parks.nyc.gov).

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Sou Sou:** Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, 120 E. 125th St., Manhat-

tan; [cccadi.org/sousou](http://cccadi.org/sousou); Noon to 4 pm; Free.

The family-oriented program is inspired by the savings clubs tradition of the African Diaspora with a twist — a culture savings club for the entire family. Attendees get to enjoy art, dance, music workshops, and many more activities that elevate the history and traditions of the African diaspora. Callaloo Kids is on residency, a children's media brand that promotes culture literacy, social awareness and puppet theater. This month, Sankore Sou-Sou, plus, bring a book, take a book.

## SUN, APRIL 15

### IN THE BRONX

**Damon Runyon 5K at Yankee Stadium:** Yankee Stadium, 1 E. 161st St.; [runyon5k@damonrunyon.org](mailto:runyon5k@damonrunyon.org); [runyon5k.org](http://runyon5k.org); 9:25 am; \$45-60.

The Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation will hold the 10th Annual Runyon 5K at Yankee Stadium, with 100 percent of funds raised directly supporting innovative cancer research. Participants are encouraged to raise funds for cancer research. The Runyon 5K is the only event of its kind held inside the iconic stadium. The course winds through the ballpark's concourses and ramps, and upstairs between levels. The 2018 Runyon 5K is presented by MetLife Foundation. Participants can register for \$45 through April 4. The entry fee will increase to \$60 on April 5. A reduced entry fee is available for children ages 5 through 12. For registration and additional details, please visit [runyon5k.org](http://runyon5k.org).

Our online calendar is updated daily at [www.NYParenting.com/calendar](http://www.NYParenting.com/calendar)

**Family Art Project – Budding Bird-watchers:** 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, April 14.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**Spring Family Fair:** The Morgan Library & Museum, 225 Madison Ave. at 36th Street, Manhattan; (212) 685-0008; tickets@themorgan.org; www.themorgan.org/programs/spring-family-fair; 2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate art and literature at our annual Spring Family Fair! Inspire your family's love of books with a visit to Mr. Morgan's historic library, explore our spring exhibitions, compose your own poetry on our poetry wall, make crafts inspired our collections, and through an interactive performance, meet Belle da Costa Greene, Pierpont Morgan's librarian and the first director of the Morgan Library. The Morgan's family programs offer a unique and engaging museum experience to learn more as a family about the process of creative expression. Our innovative art workshops are designed for adults and children to complete together. They are limited to families with children and due to the use of special art materials are intended for the ages listed.

## MON, APRIL 16

### FURTHER AFIELD

**NYC Autism Charter Schools Board Meetings:** NYC Autism Charter Schools, 433 E. 100th St. in Manhattan; 977 Fox St. in Bronx; (212) 860-2580; csecharan@nyccharterschool.org; www.nycautismcharterschool.org; 5 pm; Free.

The NYCA Charter Schools Board Meetings are open to parents, staff and any other members of the public.

## SAT, APRIL 21

### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art Project – Earth Day Gratitude Garden:** Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10am-1pm; Free with admission. \$8 adults, \$2 children 6-18, children under 6 free. Admission free until noon Saturday.

Reflect upon the abundance of this Earth. What are your favorite things that grow? Sculpt a miniature garden using oil clay in bright colors. Then share what you are thankful for on a paper flag, and plant it in Wave Hill's outdoor, communal "gratitude garden."

**Cherry Blossom Festival:** Randall's Island Park, 20 Randall's Island Park, (212) 830-7722; Jennifer.wainwright@randallsisland.org; https://randallsisland.org/events/cherry-blossom-festival-2; Noon; Free.

Celebrate the spring season and Japanese culture at the festival; enjoy paper flower making; face painting; kite flying; Yoyo balloon fishing; Origami with Taro's Origami Studio. Try on a kimono with New York de Volunteer. Plus crafts, games, and more! Performances J.D. Patch Band, Taiko Aiko Kai Drumming, Taisan Tanaka Calligraphy.

## March for Babies

Walk for babies, walk for families, and raise awareness and funds at the annual March for Babies, hosted by the March of Dimes, on April 29 on the Upper West Side.

Nearly half a million babies are born premature or with birth defects in the United States, and March of Dimes is hosting its annual walk to spread awareness and raise funds for these infants and their families.

Join in with family, friends, corporate partners, and supporters, and take to the streets to walk in support of moms, dads, and babies. The Walk is approximately three miles long. Pre-registration is required, and strollers are welcome.

March for Babies on April 29, sign in at 8:30 am, with walk beginning at 10 am.



Registration fees apply.

Lincoln Center area (Columbus Avenue between W. 65th and W. 62nd streets on the Upper West Side; [www.marchforbabies.org](http://www.marchforbabies.org)).

**Jumpstart for a Day!:** Phipps Recreation Center, 1700 Fulton Ave., Crotona Park Entrance; (212) 868-2526; luisana.segu@jstart.org; www.jstart.org/our-work/locations/new-york; Noon to 3 pm; Free.

JFAD highlights the importance of literacy and family engagement with enrichment activity tables and stations that are designed to help children develop the language and literacy skills necessary for school success. Many of the activities will introduce a children's book and offer activities related to the book. The anticipated attendance is 200 children over the course of four hours at each particular event. The anticipated and targeted age range for children is ages 3-9. The festival is open to the general public.

**Earth Day Celebration:** New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Rd.; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Noon to 5 pm; Included in All-Garden pass. Weekends: \$28 adults, \$12 children 2-12, children under 2 free. Weekdays: \$23 adults, \$10 children 2-12, children under 12 free.

The Orchid Show closes with an Earth Day celebration that highlights the garden's central work to save the plants of the world. Meet scientists and students to learn how they collect, study, and conserve plants and fungi, from the Bronx to Brazil. Join behind-the-scenes tours of the Plant Research Laboratory, where cutting-edge studies probe

plants' molecular mysteries. Participate in the Open House of the Steere Herbarium to view myriad historic and modern preserved plant specimens not normally on public view.

## SUN, APRIL 22

### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art Project – Earth Day Gratitude Garden:** 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, April 21.

**Go fly a kite:** Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org; Noon to 3 pm; Free.

Celebrate Earth Day by crafting a one-of-a-kind kite using recycled materials, willow branches, and newspapers. Come be a part of the celebration and experiment with wind directions and elevations on the front lawn of the mansion.

**Earth Day Celebration:** Noon to 5 pm. New York Botanical Garden. See Saturday, April 21.

## FRI, APRIL 27

### IN THE BRONX

**Japan Study Day:** New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Rd.; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; 9:30 am to 3 pm; Free.

This special Study Day celebrates Japanese

# Calendar

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arts and sciences in the field of natural history and garden design, featuring an international team of experts, including Federico Marcon (Department of East Asian Studies, Princeton University), Harm Beukers (Scaliger Institute, Leiden, the Netherlands), and Ryosuke Kondo (Landscape Architecture, Tokyo University). Topics of exploration include the development of natural history and Dutch-Japanese exchanges in medical botany from the 17th-century onward, as well as the role of trees in Japanese garden design. After the presentations, participants can enjoy a viewing of rare Japanese works from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library and a tour of the cherry blossom trees across the garden's historic landscape. There is no fee required, but RSVP is required.

## SAT, APRIL 28

### IN THE BRONX

**Run for the Wild:** Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; [www.bronxzoo.com](http://www.bronxzoo.com); 8 am; Registration for the run is \$50 for adults, \$40 for children (3-15), and \$40 for seniors (65 and up). All WCS members receive a discount on registration. All adult (and senior) participants are required to raise a minimum of \$35 in order to participate.

This year celebrates big cats with new prizes and race-day activities, including, a beer garden for the adults, rock climbing wall, music and dancing, face painting, and more. Runners and walkers will be participating on behalf of the five species of big cats that WCS has identified as priority species for conservation — cheetahs, jaguars, lions, tigers, and snow leopards. Run for the Wild participants are encouraged to fundraise and seek individual sponsors for their effort. The price of registration includes parking and general admission to the Bronx Zoo on the day of the event. The 5K run for individual runners will begin at 8 am; casual runners and walkers can take part in the Family Fun Run/Walk at 8:45 am.

**Family Art Project – Barking up a Wave Hill Tree:** Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; [www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org); 10am-1pm; Free with admission. \$8 adults, \$2 children 6-18, children under 6 free. Admission free until noon Saturday.

With wax crayons and paper in hand, visit some of Wave Hill's treasured trees and have a tactile experience making simple, but rich, bark rubbings. Using these inspired rubbings, work with burlap, cheesecloth, bits of leather, craft paper and yarn to create a collection of rich textures and bark-inspired designs.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Sakura Matsuri 2018:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); 10 am to 6 pm; \$25, \$20 for seniors and students, free for children under 12 and members.

Sakura Matsuri offers more than 60 events and performances that celebrate traditional and contemporary Japanese culture. The fes-

tival celebrates the Japanese cultural tradition of enjoying each moment of the cherry blossom season.

## SUN, APRIL 29

### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art Project – Barking up a Wave Hill Tree:** 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, April 28.

**Haiku Sunday:** Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; [www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org](http://www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org); 3 pm to 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

April is National Poetry Month, the perfect time to learn all about the Japanese form of verse called haiku. Discover how 17 syllables can uniquely describe an observation or express a feeling. Museum educator Linda Sacewicz will share her unexpected journey of writing haikus for pure enjoyment, which resulted in the publication of her book "Life in My Garden." As a coda, have some fun writing your own haikus.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**March of Dimes' March for Babies:** Lincoln Center area, Columbus Avenue between W. 65th and W. 62nd streets, Manhattan; [www.marchforbabies.org](http://www.marchforbabies.org); 8:30 am (10 am); Registration fees.

Nearly half a million babies are born premature or with birth defects in the United States; March of Dimes is hosting its annual March for Babies to raise funds and spread awareness. Join in with family, friends, corporate partners and supporters and take to the streets to walk in support of moms, dads and babies. The walk is approximately three miles.

**Sakura Matsuri 2018:** 10 am to 6 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, April 28.

## LONG-RUNNING

### IN THE BRONX

**The Orchid Show:** New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Rd.; (718) 817-8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am-6 pm, until Sun, April 22; Included in All-Garden pass. Weekends: \$28 adults, \$12 children 2-12, children under 2 free. Weekdays: \$23 adults, \$10 children 2-12, children under 2 free.

Beautiful flowers, art, and architecture combine for this New York tradition. Now in its 16th year, The Orchid Show has thousands of dramatically displayed orchids in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, featuring a series of installations crafted by floral designer Daniel Ost. Each display is a living sculpture that celebrates the complex beauty of these stunning flowers.

**Spring Fun:** New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Rd.; (718) 817-8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Tuesdays – Sundays, 1:30-5:30 pm, until Fri, May 18; Included in All-Garden pass. Weekends: \$28 adults, \$12 children 2-12, children under 2

free. Weekdays: \$23 adults, \$10 children 2-12, children under 12 free.

Watch the Garden's plants and animals wake up from winter with buds bursting, birds nesting, and seeds sprouting. Investigate the ways that nature signals spring and help feathered friends build their nests with special nesting bags to take back to your neighborhood. Activities in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**"Frozen" on Broadway:** St. James Theatre, 246 W. 44th St., Manhattan; (866) 870-2717; [frozenthemusical.com](http://frozenthemusical.com); \$100 and up.

A musical worth melting for! If you loved the movie "Frozen," you'll love seeing Anna, Elsa, Kristoff, and Olaf come to life on stage to tell the timeless tale of two sisters who are pulled apart by a mysterious secret. Of course, there's the classic song "Let It Go," plus many new numbers for this new production.

**New York International Auto Show:** Jacob Javits Center, 11th Avenue between W. 34th and W. 40th streets, Manhattan; [www.autoshowny.com/tickets](http://www.autoshowny.com/tickets); Mondays – Saturdays, 10 am to 10 pm, Sundays, 10 am to 7 pm, until Sun, April 8; \$17 (\$7 children under 12).

Come on down and get a gander at the latest in automotive trends; take the opportunity to sit behind the wheel and experience the newest models and current models in motoring.

**Fourth annual Scholastic Art & Writing Award Exhibition:** The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education, 1000 Fifth Ave., Manhattan; [alivingston@scholastic.com](mailto:alivingston@scholastic.com); [artandwriting.org](http://artandwriting.org); Daily, 11 am to 6 pm; until Tues, May 29; Free.

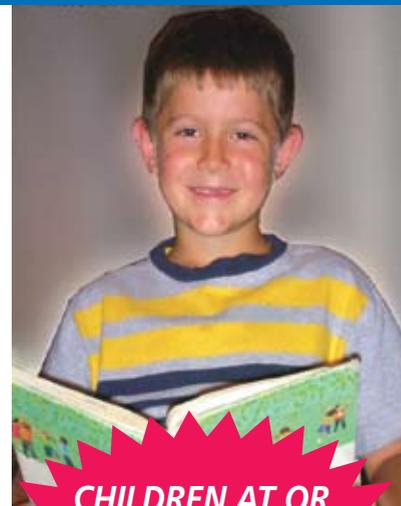
The nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers and The Metropolitan Museum of Art will hosting an opening reception for the fourth annual New York City Scholastic Art & Writing Awards exhibition at The Met's Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education. The exhibition features more than 600 original works of art and writing from New York City-based Gold Key recipients in the 2018 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, the country's longest-running and most prestigious award and recognition program for creative teens.

**"Neverland: Peter Returns:"** Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, W. 79th Street and West Drive, Manhattan; (212) 988-9093; [www.cityparksfoundation.org](http://www.cityparksfoundation.org); Tuesdays – Fridays, 10:30 am and 11:30 am, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, \$12 (\$8 children).

The City Parks Foundation presents the original marionette play based on J.M. Barrie's iconic Peter Pan tales. This version is a spin on the beloved children's classic. Leaving their parents behind, the Darling children follow Peter Pan back home to Neverland for the adventure of a lifetime. When the cunning Captain Hook turns Peter's pals Tiger Lily and Tinker Bell against him, the children team up with the Never Boys to save the day, learning the value of forgiveness and friendship.

# SOLVE YOUR CHILD'S READING PROBLEM

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## Let kids get dirty for good gut health

**T**his month we celebrate Earth Day, a day to honor the good earth and all it does for us. Our food — from grocery stores, farmers markets, and perhaps our own gardens — grows in its soil, teeming with microbes. Some of these microbes can provide health benefits. But how?

Microbes are an ancient and vital part of human physiology. Yet never before have children grown up so “clean.” Recent changes in our lifestyle — a Western diet, over-sanitization, the excessive use of antibiotics — have altered the specific microbes within our digestive tract.

Establishing good gut health in our children is important and can have lifelong consequences. In addition to a strong immune system, a healthy mix of bacteria within our digestive tract can lead to less inflammatory disease such as allergies, asthma, and inflammatory bowel disease. Sadly, these conditions are being diagnosed more frequently in children.

Thousands of microbial species — the microbiome — thrive in the human intestine, helping people digest fiber and make vitamins and other molecules. The right mix of microbes can even affect our metabolism.

While what we eat alters our micro-

biome, the microbiota appears to influence what we eat. The wrong mix of gut microbes can trigger cravings for less than stellar foods.

Eating a variety of natural foods is the best way to increase microbial diversity, and there’s no better time to do this than during the first few years of life. For example, rather than feeding your baby only rice cereal for weeks until the package is empty, offer a variety of grains, including barley, rice, oats, and quinoa.

Think of dietary fiber as food for your gut microbiome. But not from a drink or pill. Eat a diverse array of fibers from a lot of different plant materials. Whole grains are better than refined ones.

Leafy green vegetables contain an enzyme that’s been found to feed good bacteria while limiting bad bacteria. Protein-rich legumes — such as lentils, beans, and peas — have lots of fiber and can be easily mashed for tiny mouths. Try starchy veggies such as parsnips, sweet potatoes, or cassava (tapioca) rather than just sticking to low-fiber veggies. As children get older, add fermented foods such as yogurt, buttermilk, kefir, kimchi, miso, sauerkraut, and pickled vegetables.

Serve your family less sugar, animal fat,



## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

and refined grains.

Here are some other ways to boost your child’s diversity of gut bacteria:

1. Encourage your children to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days. Research in mice suggests that physical activity, especially early in life, may help promote a beneficial gut microbiota.

2. If it is safe to do so, encourage the kids to spend time outside. At least one study shows that people who are regularly exposed to natural settings have a more diverse microbiota, suggesting a little dirt may be good for us.

3. Spend some time in a rural area.

4. Take the kids to a petting zoo.

5. Get a dog.

6. Give your child a probiotic, especially when your child is taking an antibiotic.

7. Grow foods or herbs in a garden. This could even be a container garden on your balcony. Let the kids poke around in the dirt.

8. Avoid antibacterial soap.

We are only beginning to scratch the surface of the importance of the microbiome for human health. The good news is that we can influence the compatibility of these microscopic, single-celled houseguests by altering our environment and our diet. Indulge your children’s natural impulse to get good and dirty.

*Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist and Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She suspects her childhood, largely spent outdoors, may have helped her avoid allergies. Find her at Christine Palumbo Nutrition on Facebook, @PalumboRD on Twitter, or ChristinePalumbo.com.*



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