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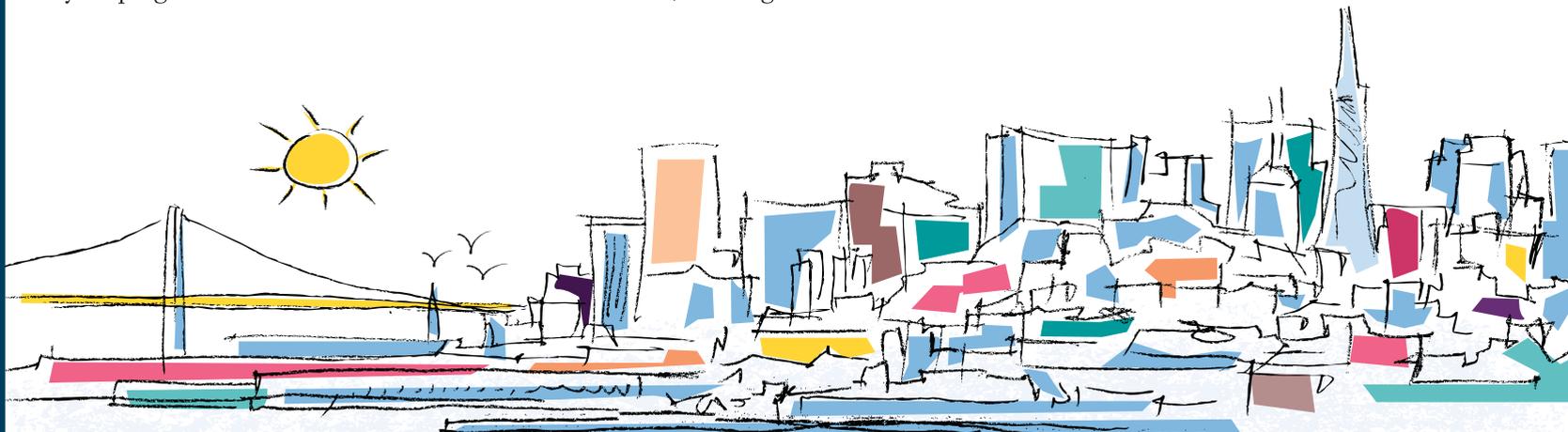
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# Family December 2012



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# Letter from the publisher

## After hurricane, community

**T**his is certainly not the column I had in mind for this issue just a few weeks ago, but that was before Sandy blew into town and uplifted our surrounding waters. That was before the coastal bliss turned into the home-wrecked nightmare and before the lights went out in so many parts of New York.



Many communities inside our larger New York community are devastated; so many families have lost their homes and their memories; some things just cannot be replaced. Still, in spite of the horror and the punch of this storm and it's aftermath, we have learned that our neighbors will not be abandoned; we have learned that thousands

a hard hit, and the people who inhabit them, the residences, and the businesses will not instantly be reestablished. There will be continued suffering and loss. The beaches of Staten Island and the Boardwalk of Coney Island have become rubble and the families who lived there will not live there anymore for now until we sort this out, rebuild perhaps, and reexamine what we need to do down the road to avoid such catastrophe.

of our citizens will rise to the occasion to lend a hand, a heart, and their energy.

From lower Manhattan to Red Hook, from Sheepshead Bay to Howard Beach, from City Island to the Rockaways, our shoreline and shores have taken

As a larger community we will need to relocate, house, nurture, and be gentle with adults and children who have lost a great deal and who have survived through tremendous upheaval and stress. We are capable of this and we have shown in the past that we can and will do this. We have taken hits before, all kinds of hits and we always find a way to move forward through the trauma, through the darkness and into the light of a new day.

We must remember at this holiday time, this ending of the year that we are all vulnerable and that our neighbors need us and will be needing us for months to come. We must also be thankful for the plenty we have and for the ability we have as a community to bounce back and to survive the difficult times, together and with union.

These magazines have the honor

and pleasure of printing throughout our city. We happily have a parent guide in every borough, going to every neighborhood, in every community. We will continue to support our neighbors in every way we can and New York Parenting Media will be there to bring continued information about our families and our children. We will continue to love each other.

I thank our wonderful staff, for their hard work and creativity, and I wish all of them and all of you a Happy New Year!

Thanks again for reading!

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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# From our readers

Dear editor:

I am so glad that your magazine has raised the issue of the amount of homework children receive. The article in your November 2012 issue ("Homework: A conversation with parents and experts"), was very well balanced.

THERE IS MUCH TOO MUCH HOMEWORK! This issue is like the weather: everyone talks about it, but no one does anything about it. Children work hard all day at school. Then, they are expected to get exercise, eat a healthy dinner, and go to bed early after every school day. Those most basic (and most important tasks) cannot be completed given the staggering amount of homework children are given. No wonder there is an obesity crisis! Most of the afternoon and evening must be spent in the sedentary task of homework and study.

Certainly, academic reinforce-

ment is needed. The individual teacher's homework assignment may be reasonable. But place that homework in the context of the six to eight subjects students take, and add in the physical education or after school sports requirement, and the situation becomes untenable and unhealthy. It is spirit-breaking. Children who once loved school became disheartened, frustrated, and exhausted by the workload. I advocate a longer school day, or more specialized assistance after school.

The requirement to do more work at home leads to sad situations, like those discussed in your article. Parents complete the work. Tutors are hired. Dinner is rushed. Bedtime is surpassed. The excessive homework requirement leads to fights and discord between overworked and fatigued parent and child.

I am a tutor, a teacher, and a

## EDUCATION

## HOMework

A conversation with parents & experts

What is its value, and how much is too much?

BY DEBA C. DORNEY

**P**arents and experts are talking about homework, but what is its value, and how much is too much?

The conversation about homework has definitely changed since we last spoke in January 2011. Parents are more vocal about their concerns, and experts are more willing to share their thoughts.

Both parents' work and kids' schedules, "The amount of homework is still a hot topic," says Dr. Robert Taylor, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

**Reports from the homework front**  
The amount of homework assigned to children is still a hot topic, and parents are more vocal about their concerns.

**Parents' really complaining**  
Parents are more vocal about their concerns, and experts are more willing to share their thoughts.

**Parents speak up**  
Parents are more vocal about their concerns, and experts are more willing to share their thoughts.

parents have homework in "black and white" and it's not about the amount of homework assigned, but about the quality of the homework assigned.

Dr. Taylor says that the amount of homework assigned to children is still a hot topic, and parents are more vocal about their concerns.

**Parents' really complaining**  
Parents are more vocal about their concerns, and experts are more willing to share their thoughts.

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PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

mother. I know children need reinforcement of subjects. However, administrators should craft a cross-disciplinary approach to homework. Can't the science teacher talk to the language arts teacher who talks to the sports coach? Couldn't they devise a reasonable schedule based on the curriculum and the school schedule? I advocate for more reading, which was the paramount emphasis in lower school. Reading is still important (and yes, they must read textbooks).

How about more creative, manageable, even relaxing homework? For instance, a good weekend

homework assignment would be to read a biography of Jonas Salk or articles about homelessness. Children and families need to rest after a long week and a long day.

Every child and every family I know states there is too much homework.

Academics are very important, but a well-rounded student needs time to de-stress, exercise, eat right, get rest, and not battle with family over homework!

Thank you again for your consideration of this topic.

Sincerely,

Carla Warne-Marino, Manhattan

# The holiday

Don't despair!  
 Tips to keep  
 on smiling  
 amidst the  
 stress of the  
 seasonal rush

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

**A**re you excited about the holidays, but dreading the end-of-year rush?

If so, you are not alone. Most parents approach the season with equal parts excitement and trepidation, which can lead to difficulties with decision making from moment to moment. That's why I've created this list of 21 reminders to help you preserve your family's good cheer all the way through the most wonderful time of the year.

• **Go for good enough.** If you have an idea in your mind of the "perfect" holiday, you may be disappointed when your imperfect brood can't uphold your image. Aim for "good enough" instead. You'll smile more if you can let unimportant things — like slightly burnt cookies, lights that won't blink in unison, and late holiday cards — slide.

• **Just hit delete.** If you think your holiday schedule is grossly overloaded, call a family meeting and vote on what to scratch off of your joint to-do list. Decide what you don't want to do first. Then, decide what matters most to each family member. A one-gift-per-family-member tradition might be a sanity-saving plan that sticks.

• **Call in fresh recruits.** Even if you don't normally hire a house-cleaner, you probably could use some help now. Why not call in a

## Holiday tunes

Tired of those holiday songs you hear over and over? This season, check out these refreshingly different tunes and albums:

- "Cool Yule" by Bette Midler
- "A Christmas Cornucopia" by Annie Lenox
- "O, Holy Night" by Jackie Evancho
- "And Winter Came" by Enya
- "James Taylor at Christmas" by James Taylor

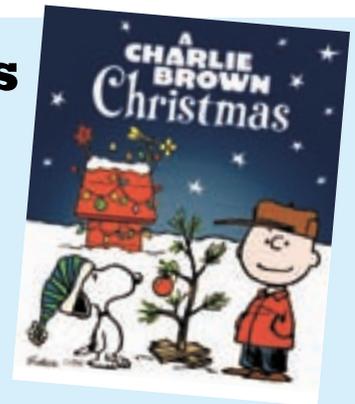


- "A Swinging Christmas, Featuring The Count Basie Band" by Tony Bennett
- "A Lovely Way To Spend Christmas" by Kristin Chenoweth

## Holiday films

Enjoy these fun family movies with your kids this year:

- "A Charlie Brown Christmas"
- "Home Alone"
- "How The Grinch Stole Christmas"
- "A Christmas Story"
- "The Polar Express"
- "The Year Without A Santa Claus"



And don't miss these movies you can snuggle by:

- "Love, Actually"
- "Home For the Holidays"
- "It's a Wonderful Life"

- "A Christmas Carol"
- "The Nightmare Before Christmas"
- "When Harry Met Sally"

cleaning service in mid December and in mid January to bookend the holidays, even if you don't use one the rest of the year? Consider it a holiday present to yourself.

• **Hum your favorite tunes.** Haul out your seasonal music early before you tire of the omnipresent Muzak that is sure to come. Load up your smartphone or iPod and carry headphones in your purse to jolly things up when you are ticking chores and errands off of your to-do list. If your old faves are getting overplayed, jazz up your playlist with some fresh downloads or albums. (See sidebar.)

• **Shop the plan.** First, the plan: write down the names of everyone you truly want to give to and what you think they would like. Then, shop: keep the list in your wallet to jog your memory when hunting down a gift for each person you cherish. For store shopping, pay cash, so you won't overspend. For online shopping, search for coupons before ordering and act early for cheaper shipping.

• **Sip your way to heaven.** When you are having a hectic day, take a time-out. Warm up or buy an extra-hot cup of chai tea with a spritz of whipped cream on top. The spices will put you back in touch with your

senses, and the warmth will spread through your belly and soothe your frazzled cheer.

• **Get bazaar.** Take the whole family to a local holiday craft bazaar. Look for gifts for teachers and other folks who enrich your family life. Give each child a spending limit and enjoy interacting with the vendors. Plan to spend a couple of hours browsing, so you can soak up all the creative energy.

• **Take 30.** Line up winter reads from the library or download them onto your e-reader. Encourage the whole family to take 30 minutes a day to relax and read. Collections of short stories or essays are good choices for moms with very young or multiple children. This is a great way for everyone to decompress after a busy day.

• **Bring Mother Nature inside.** Pine cones, holly, evergreen boughs, twigs, and poinsettias all remind us that there is life hibernating underneath that blanket of snow or wicked frost. Gather reminders of the season from your backyard or local garden shop and decorate the front hall, mantle, and stairway. Remember: simple is as merry as ornate.

• **Huggy holidays.** Use "Happy holidays!" as an excuse to hug your

# trap

loved ones often. Every time you feel stressed, hug or get hugged. Your holiday stress will melt away.

•**Stay healthy.** Put holiday-scented soaps by every sink and encourage plenty of hand washing. Install a bottle of hand sanitizer next to every box of tissues. Chase every “Ah-choo!” away. (But stock up on cold medicines, just in case, to avoid midnight trips to the market.)

•**Lighten up.** Twinkling lights create a comforting mood. Don't limit shimmery lights to the tree and outdoor eves. If it sounds fun, bring some sparkle into the kid's bedrooms, as well as yours.

•**Take a deep breath.** Bring some uplifting scents into your cleaning routine. Check out the Mrs. Meyers brand of earth-friendly cleaning supplies. Your home and laundry will smell winter wonderful.

•**Enjoy spreading cheer.** Save the annual holiday letter composing and Christmas card address labeling for when you can carve out time to relax and enjoy the process. And don't try to do it all yourself. Break the job down into steps and enlist the whole family. Remember: taking everything on without helpers is naughty, not nice.

•**Question tradition.** Traditions are wonderful, but let's face it — sometimes even the fondest can become tired. So, if you don't feel like tromping around all afternoon hunting for the most splendiferous evergreen on the tree farm or frying the most perfect potato latkes, buy a pre-cut tree at your local grocery store or pick up latkes at the deli instead. Use saved time to enjoy tree trimming or dreidel playing instead.

•**Create classic memories.** Play hooky from holiday prep for the day and go ice-skating or frolic in the snow with your kids. Drink hot chocolate. Take lots of family photos. Build a fire. Goof off. Enjoy the grins.

•**Save it for a heat wave.** If you are really feeling a time crunch, don't

donate time to help the less fortunate during holiday time. Give time later during a less hectic time of year. There are people in need throughout every season, after all.

•**Sock it to 'em.** Don't wait until the temperature hits zero to stock up on slippers and socks. You'll keep your heating bills down and your kids smiling if everyone in your brood has warm tootsies as the mercury plunges.

•**Hit the hay harder.** There's less light during the winter. Take advan-

tage of it and put the kids to bed an hour earlier than normal. There's the extra hour you need to keep some hustle in your holiday muscle, or at least wrap some presents without interruption.

•**Pop plenty of corn.** Line up holiday movie classics in your mail-order DVD queue. Watch some with the kids and some with your honey in the wee hours. See sidebar for movie ideas.

•**Deck the bathroom.** Hang up some scented pomanders. Bring in lots of little candles (beyond the reach of little hands, of course). Look for winter-scented bath indulges in juniper, cedar, or musk. Sink into a bubble bath wonderland. Forget your name for 10 minutes.

You'll feel more holly jolly if you can get calm and stay centered all holiday season long. Happy holy days!

*Christina Katz is a freelance writer who adores the holidays. Her latest book is “The Writer's Workout” from Writer's Digest Books.*





Houses on Staten Island after Hurricane Sandy hit the borough.

# Holidays after the hurricane

As displaced families rebuild their lives after Sandy, ways New Yorkers can help

BY MARIE HUESTON

**T**he expression “home for the holidays” conjures nostalgic images of family and friends gathered around a bountiful table. But what if your home — and all that was in it — had been badly damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Sandy? This is the reality for thousands of New Yorkers whose homes were in the direct path of the October super storm. As they continue the arduous work of repairing their homes and rebuilding their lives, their situation is made

all the more challenging by the approaching holiday season. This is especially difficult for households with young children.

Imagine yourself in Cathy Borgognone’s shoes. When the mother of two stood surveying her severely water-damaged home in Staten Island’s New Dorp Beach neighborhood, her 5-year-old son Francesco looked at her earnestly and asked, “Will Santa still come to this house?”

Borgognone’s heart sank.

“Of course I told him that Santa would find him and his sister,” she

recalls, “but at times like that it’s hard to put on a brave face.” With the day-to-day logistics of fixing her house foremost on her mind, Borgognone is currently staying in her brother-in-law’s basement and has had little time to wonder what her holidays will look like this year or where she and her family might go to celebrate them. “I’m trying not to think about it,” she says.

It’s a sentiment shared by Red Hook, Brooklyn, resident Jolene Festa, whose family was also displaced by Hurricane Sandy.

“I haven’t made any decisions about the holidays yet,” says Festa. “Our floors, walls, doors, everything was destroyed. We won’t be back in before Christmas.” On the night of the storm, Festa and her husband frantically pushed towels and rolled-up carpets against their front and back doors, trying to keep out the rising tide, only to watch in horror as water began to seep up through the floorboards from their flooded basement.

Now living in a friend’s apartment, Festa is doing her best to

## Kids helping kids

All across the city, children have been watching their parents and other adults in the community helping people affected by Hurricane Sandy. In turn, many kids are lending a hand themselves. High School sports teams have gone door-to-door offering to help clean up debris, Brownie troops have organized book collections for schools whose libraries were wiped out, and countless boys and girls have parted with beloved playthings and chosen new ones to donate to toy drives.

"It feels good to do something nice for someone else," says 9-year-old Georgia Fu-

musa, a fourth grader at PS 58 in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn, and a founding member of the school's charity bake sale club, Cookie Kids. On a single, sunny Saturday last month, the Cookie Kids raised a whopping \$1,300 to support their peers at nearby PS 15, in hard-hit Red Hook.

Of her club's contribution, Fumusa reflects, "It goes to show that kids really can do something to make the world a better place."

In the midst of a tragedy, these children are learning the true meaning of the holidays — that the deepest joy comes from giving to others.

remain positive for her 8-year-old son, River, but admits that her emotions can catch her off guard.

"There are times when I remember what isn't downstairs anymore, like my son's baby clothes or our bins of Christmas ornaments that held so many memories." As for River, he has been buoyed by the generosity of friends, who have reached out not only with invitations for meals and play dates, but also with thoughtful gifts to replace what is gone. "One parent gave River a new Christmas ornament and a gift certificate to Barnes & Noble since most of his books were ruined. Moments like that fill him, and us, with a huge sense of gratitude."

Indeed, the kindness of friends and strangers alike has made an incredible impact on the lives of storm victims throughout the five boroughs.

"People need to understand that many of the hardest-hit areas were multi-generational neighborhoods," says volunteer Kim Shamoun. "If you lived there, then your brother probably lived down the street and your grandmother lived around the corner. So now if your house is gone, your whole support system is gone, too."

Together with nine close friends, Shamoun mans a Facebook page, [facebook.com/Giving-BackToThoseAffectedBySandy](http://facebook.com/Giving-BackToThoseAffectedBySandy), that has been tirelessly connect-

ing people who want to help with people who need help since the day after the storm. Their experience has been nothing short of miraculous.

"I can't count how many times we talk with one person who needs something and then a minute later someone calls offering just the kind of supplies that are needed. There's a bigger thing happening here."

As the holidays get closer — and with them the hectic pace that generally ensues — it's important for those of us who were only minimally affected by the storm to keep our neighbors in our hearts and to continue helping in any way we can. Whether you can donate a warm meal, coat, school supplies, gift certificates, toys, or an hour of your time, there is truly no end to the opportunities that make a difference.

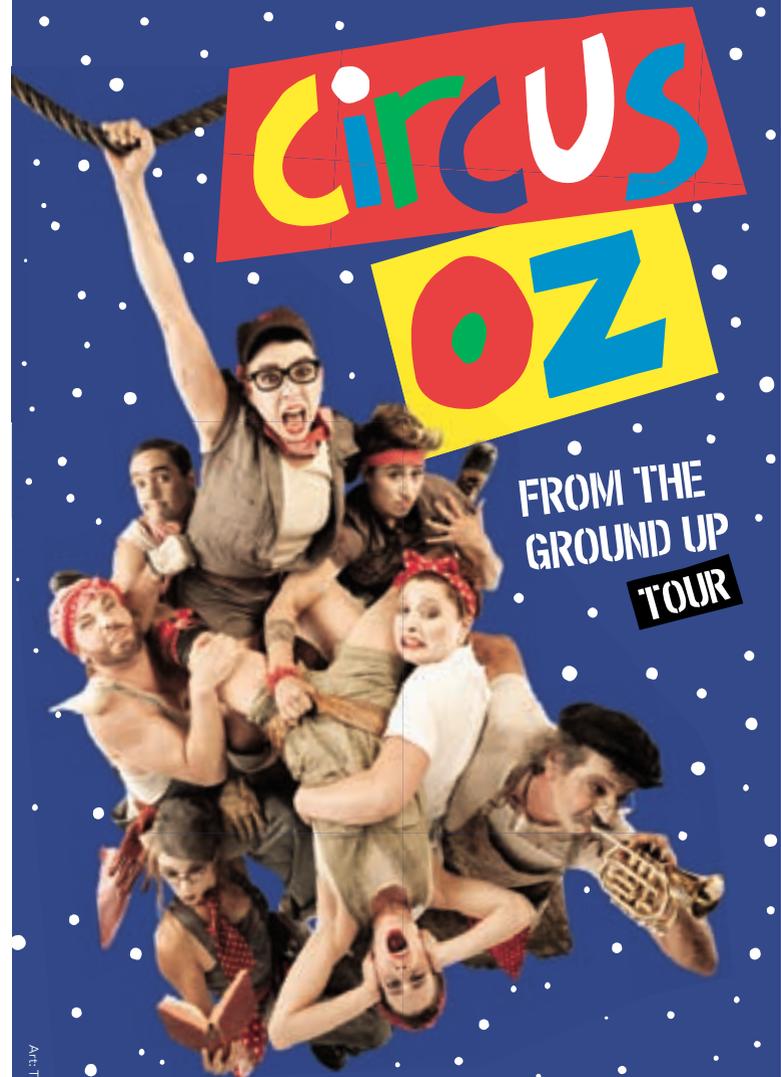
"Americans are always incredibly generous when there is a disaster anywhere in the world," Borgognone points out. "It's important for everyone to remember that this time it's in our own backyard."

To find out how you can get involved, visit [facebook.com/Giving-BackToThoseAffectedBySandy](http://facebook.com/Giving-BackToThoseAffectedBySandy), [nyc-service.org](http://nyc-service.org), [redcross.org](http://redcross.org), [fema.gov/sandy](http://fema.gov/sandy) or call religious institutions or municipal offices in neighborhoods affected by the storm.

Marie Hueston is a freelance writer and a native of Staten Island, who now lives in Brooklyn with her family.

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# Stranded at the AIRPORT

## Tips for surviving a canceled flight with your family

BY HEATHER VAN DEEST

**F**lying long distances with young kids, whether cross-country or abroad, is no easy feat. Between security checkpoints, the umpteenth diaper change, and keeping your kids occupied and fed for hours on end, traveling with young kids could qualify as an Olympic sport for many parents. And that's before you see those dreaded words flashing on the nearest airport departure board: "flight canceled."

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, more than 100,000 flights were cancelled in 2011, affecting 7.5 million passengers. And the demand for air travel is only increasing. Read on for a step-by-step guide to getting you and your family on the next plane

out, and how to prevent a headache or two in the process.

- Reschedule your flight as soon as possible. Don't assume the airline will automatically rebook your ticket. Head to the nearest ticket counter, and while waiting in line, try to reschedule your flight using your Wi-Fi-enabled smartphone or tablet.

- If you're traveling alone with the kids, ask an airline agent about expedited assistance for families with small children. Be polite and assertive. It never hurts to ask!

- Think ahead about your family's needs. How many meals will your family require until your rescheduled flight? What about snacks and extra diapers? Discuss your needs with the ticketing agent, who should be able to provide meal vouchers for the airport.

Some airlines also provide free diapers and baby food to stranded passengers. Be sure to save all receipts for any expenses you incur.

- If you require overnight accommodation, ask an airline agent for details. Does the airline provide hotel vouchers or do you have to pay upfront and submit a receipt later? If so, what is the airline's maximum reimbursement amount? Although airlines are not required to cover hotel costs for events such as inclement weather or traffic control issues, confirm this with an agent. You never know, you might get a hotel voucher just for asking politely.

- Review your updated flight information. Before you leave the ticket counter, check your boarding passes and itinerary. Are you booked on the correct flight? Does

## What to consider when your flight is canceled

### Your family's needs

- How many meals will your family need before your rescheduled flight?
- Do you have plenty of snacks, baby food, and diapers?
- Does the airline provide overnight accommodation? If so, does it offer a hotel voucher or do you have to pay and submit the receipt to get reimbursed?
- What is the airline's maximum reimbursement amount for a hotel stay?
- Which affordable hotel options are closest to the airport? Does the hotel offer airport shuttle service?



### Your rescheduled flight

- Are you booked on the correct flight?
- Does each family member have a seat? Are the seats located next to each other or in different rows?

### After the flight

- Did you submit all expense receipts via the airline website?
- Will you provide feedback to the airline about your experience?
- Did the airline respond with any offers of compensation for your inconvenience?



everyone in your family have a seat? Reviewing the details will save you a headache down the road if the agent makes a mistake during the ticketing process.

- Book your family's hotel room. Once you have tickets in hand and a plan for your family's meals and other items, it's time to secure overnight accommodation, should you require it. Unfortunately, penny-pinching airlines often recommend hotels located 30 minutes or more from the airport, adding to your family's inconvenience. Use your smartphone or tablet to book an alternative hotel as close to the airport as possible, or ask airport services for hotel suggestions. Make sure the nightly rate is within the reimbursement amount the airline

agent earlier quoted you. Or, pay the difference, if you don't mind footing some of the bill.

- Follow up. Once you're back home safe and sound, visit the airline's website to submit electronic copies of your receipts and provide feedback about your ex-

perience. Offer details about staff members who were particularly kind or helpful.

Most airlines will offer some sort of compensation for your inconvenience, such as credit in a rewards program or vouchers for future travel.

Flying long-distances with your little ones is challenging, to say the least, especially when your flight gets canceled. These tips will help get you and your family back on track to your destination.

*Heather Van Deest is a freelance writer and mother of two young sons.*

## Before your trip...

- Avoid booking flights with partnering airlines. If possible, try to travel with one airline carrier for the entire flight, including any connections. This helps avoid reticketing issues, should one leg of your flight get canceled.

- Confirm your flight. Up to a week in advance, contact the airline to confirm your itinerary and other details, or visit the airline website. Seating assignments sometimes change without notice, especially for long-distance flights on large aircraft.

- Pack wisely. In a carry-on bag, bring medicines, extra diapers, your cellphone charger, and iPad or tablet charger, a change of clothes for each family member, and any items that will help soothe young children during an unexpected overnight stay, such as a favorite toy or small blanket.

# A relaxed hostess

Keeping your cool through the holidays in true diva-mom fashion

BY LYSS STERN

**D**o you ever hope the holidays could just happen without you? As if you could sit in the corner with a big glass of wine and watch everyone else do all the work while you take your time to finally relax?

We all know how overwhelming and draining the holidays can become. The stress is always there, no matter how hard you might try to avoid it. But don't fret, because here are some tips to help you find some mommy time and navigate the holidays without losing your mind!

- Have peace of mind. You know there will be lots of yummy food and drink, but don't stress yourself out on the day of the holiday! Let yourself exercise extra hard the week before and after to get yourself mentally and physically prepared. You deserve that indulgence anyway.

- Decide in advance who is cooking what and take charge, so you can pick whatever isn't going to overwhelm you. If you plan things right, you won't have to worry about anything but the green beans.

- Plan ahead for anything that could possibly go wrong, especially travel delays. If you're traveling to your holiday party, make sure you have some travel-sized board games or lots of new apps downloaded for the kids so you have one less thing to worry about.

- Once you arrive to wherever it is you're celebrating the holiday, make sure to immediately put all the kids together with the grandparents. It will give you the chance to enjoy some adult time, and your parents or in-laws will finally see those glowing faces they've missed so much.

- Have a designated camera man. This will let you sit back and enjoy the moments that you will tell stories about for years to come, rather than constantly scrambling for your camera to capture the moment — only to then realize it's already over.



- If you are hosting the holidays at your home, get ready in advance! There is no harm in decorating the night before, or, if you prefer to do the dinner yourself, prepping some of the food, so it's practically ready to be popped in the oven when guests arrive.

- Go buffet style! There is no need to serve everyone his own plate or pile up the dinner table with food. If you put everything in a separate place, then guests can serve themselves. This way, you can keep the table surface simple with some beautiful seasonal flowers as a centerpiece. (Bonus point: if the food isn't right in front of you, it will stop you from reaching over for thirds.)

- Make it fun! Set up a Wii or some kind of fun family game, like charades or a talent show, that everyone can participate in to lighten the mood and get everyone laughing.

- Make cleanup a group effort. Don't do the dishes — if you know that's only going to stress you out, save that for the next day. Until

then, have everyone put the leftovers into containers together, so the time goes by quickly and you keep it social, rather than taking yourself out of the conversation and feeling isolated from the festivities.

- Treat yourself when it's all over. Maybe that means having a warm bubble bath with a big glass of wine, or asking your loved one for a well-deserved foot rub (because I KNOW you weren't wearing comfy shoes).

No matter what your holiday plans are this year, always find something to be thankful for! If it's Christmas, Hanukkah, or New Year's Eve, don't let yourself get caught up in your mental to-do list. Enjoy the celebration and embrace the little things you might have missed otherwise.

Happy holidays, and have a Fabu-LYSS New Year.

*Lyss Stern is the founder of Diva-Moms.com and co-author of best-selling book "If You Give A Mom A Martini ... 100 Ways to Find 10 Blissful Minutes for Yourself."*



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# Keep your baby safe at Grandma's house

Don't forget, a new location can mean new dangers

BY KIKI BOCHI

If you are headed to Grandma's house for the holidays, it may feel like you are returning to the safe haven of your youth. But don't let your guard down when it comes to protecting your little one.

You may have put a lot of energy into making your home baby safe, but that is not necessarily the case at the home of an older relative who no longer has little ones underfoot.

Watch for medications that may be accessible to inquisitive little hands, cleaning products that are not secured, sharp edges on furniture, and breakable items that are within your child's reach.

Keep an eye, also, on Grandma herself. She may have raised several children quite adeptly, but today's recommendations when it comes to child safety have changed. In particular, many older adults are unaware of safety recommendations when it comes to appropriate child sleep position, crib safety, and car seat and walker use, according to a study by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When asked, "What is the best position for a baby to sleep in?" 33 percent of senior respondents chose "on the stomach;" 23 percent, "on the side;" and only 43.8 percent, "the back." The Academy recommends that infants be placed to sleep on their backs to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. When asked about correct car seat positioning, 24.5 percent responded that a 22-pound, 9-month-old child should be facing forward, and yet the Academy recommends that children remain in a rear-facing car seat until age 2.

Last year, the Academy recommended that bumpers, stuffed animals, and blankets be removed from infant cribs, and yet 49 per-



cent of grandparent caregivers thought these items were acceptable. Nearly 74 percent of respondents stated that a walker is a good device to help babies learn to walk. Yet, the Academy does not recommend walker use, and in fact, urges caregivers to dispose of them because of serious safety concerns.

"Pediatric health and safety

recommendations are constantly evolving," said study author Kathryn C. Hines, MD. "Many recommendations are likely to have changed since these grandparent caregivers parented their own children."

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

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## MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SERADOVA

# Oh Christmas tree!

## Passing my mother's holiday spirit to my child

**M**y mother lives for Christmas. Every year, the weekend after Thanksgiving, she starts her holiday tradition of decorating the house. But unlike many moms, my mother has mostly done this alone. I'm ashamed to admit that I haven't always shared her enthusiasm for the holidays (I'm more of a Thanksgiving fan than Christmas), and while I'm sure a big part of her did it for me, I just wasn't always so into it. But that never stopped her. She carried on, filling our house with poinsettias and garlands, candy canes and gingerbread houses, and infusing the house with the smell of apple cinnamon and pine cones.

Part of her tradition is displaying one of my children's books around the house, "Twas the Night before Christmas." She reads it to me every year, as if I were still a kid. A proud mama, she even hangs up the Christmas tree I made for her in grade school; out of green construction paper and full of glitter. The poor tree is ripped in several places, but she's kept it all these years, as if it were a masterpiece. She loves Santa Claus, so I started a tradition of buying her a new Santa for Christmas to add to her collection — or a Grinch. She loves the Grinch, too.

It wasn't until I had my own daughter that I realized why she loves Christmas so much. It's a way for her to relive her childhood and feel some magic. I now feel a certain kind of magic around the holidays, too, that wasn't

there before. My mom made Christmas a happy time for me growing up, and I want Olivia to have that, too.

Luckily, I have a husband who loves Christmas as well. He grew up with his own traditions passed on from his

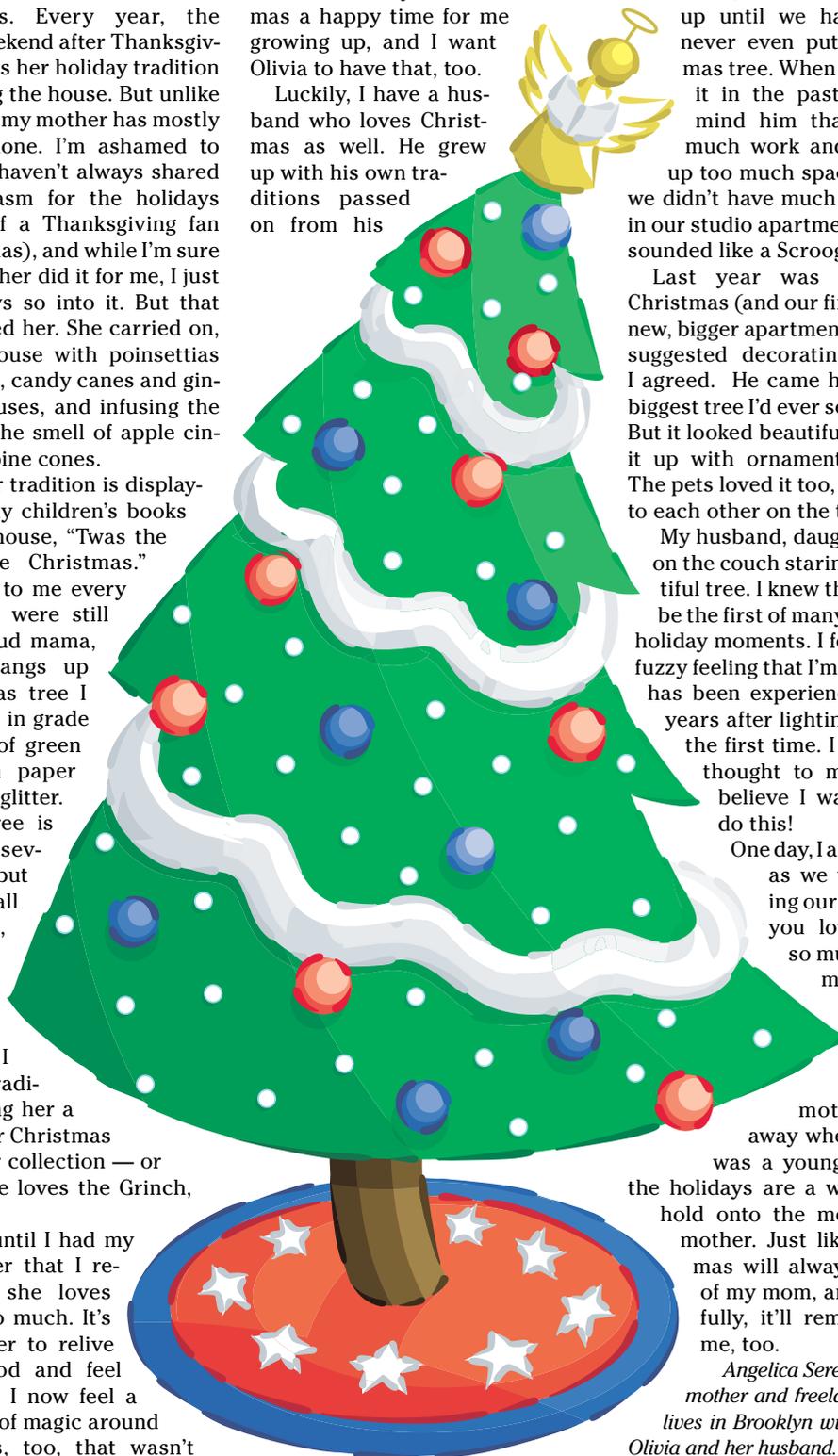
mother, also a single mom. But, up until we had Olivia, we never even put up a Christmas tree. When he mentioned it in the past, I would remind him that it was too much work and that it took up too much space; something we didn't have much of back then, in our studio apartment. I definitely sounded like a Scrooge!

Last year was Olivia's first Christmas (and our first year in our new, bigger apartment), so when he suggested decorating the house, I agreed. He came home with the biggest tree I'd ever seen in a home. But it looked beautiful once we had it up with ornaments and lights. The pets loved it too, cuddling next to each other on the tree skirt.

My husband, daughter, and I sat on the couch staring at the beautiful tree. I knew that that would be the first of many more special holiday moments. I felt that warm, fuzzy feeling that I'm sure my mom has been experiencing all these years after lighting our tree for the first time. I sat there and thought to myself: I can't believe I wasn't going to do this!

One day, I asked my mom, as we were decorating our tree, "Why do you love Christmas so much?" She told me that it was her mother's favorite holiday. My grandmother passed away when my mother was a young girl. I guess the holidays are a way for her to hold onto the memory of her mother. Just like her, Christmas will always remind me of my mom, and now, hopefully, it'll remind Olivia of me, too.

*Angelica Sereda is a working mother and freelance writer. She lives in Brooklyn with her daughter Olivia and her husband.*



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## DEATH BY CHILDREN

CHRIS GARLINGTON

# Santa at the airport

**T**his is a true story. Normally, wild exaggeration is part of my job description. But not now. I've been sitting on this story since my daughter was 7, and now I'm finally comfortable telling the embarrassing, ridiculous, stupid truth: I believe in Santa Claus.

We were headed out for the holidays. A young family, huddled together in the airport's waiting lounge listening to my inexhaustible daughter list her preferred Christmas presents for the 88th time, a list that extended to near infinity, included live animals, and living household items one can only purchase in a cartoon, when the big, white-bearded guy sitting behind us turned around and blew our mind.

It was Santa. Don't stop reading! I know; you've had it up to here with Xmas glurge, I know. But this really happened. I swear.

My daughter's belief in Santa was as strong as my belief in gravity.

Christmas was not a December event for her. Christmas was her life. She sang Christmas songs in June without a hint of irony and when this guy, this plaid-shirted, red-suspended, bald, bearded, gnomish nut turned around, her heart stopped and, moments later, so did her mouth.

"That's a very long list," said Santa.

"Grhm Flurny Nerb," said Sarah.

"It might fill up my entire sleigh," he winked. His eyes crinkled up with little Hollywood special-effects crowd's feet. My daughter's heart restarted and she leapt into an embrace of this stranger followed by an interrogation about reindeer, elves, and the weather at the North Pole. My wife and I smiled warmly and basked in the crazy coincidence. We were starring in our own personal Christmas special. Other passengers leaned in to listen. They smiled and stole glances at each other to check their sudden and mysterious lack of cynicism.

I finally pried my daughter off the

ironically dressed Canadian (I'm assuming — there was a lot of flannel) and she promptly fell into sugarplum dreams, drooling copiously on my wife. I looked at Santa.

"I bet you get that a lot."

"Well, I am Santa. So, yeah."

"Ha ha. Good one. So, uh, seriously."

"Chris, seriously. I'm Santa Claus."

As he said this, he pulled out his wallet. His driver's license read "Chris S.C. Kringle."

And then my inner child exploded. I know, I know, he was listening before and heard my wife call my name and blah, blah, blah. You weren't there. It was December and there was snow and Dean Martin was singing "Silver Bells;" I'd just spent two weeks power-shopping, building a tree, falling off a ladder, and wearing plaid. I was sitting in an airport lounge with Santa Claus. Seriously.

I let loose. As my wife stared at me like I'd lost my very last struggling vestigial shred of sanity, I went wide-eyed, little-kid Mall Santa on this guy. My Christmas list unspooled. I practically sat on his lap. And he listened. He smiled. He asked questions ("A seven iron? Really?").

Ever classy, ever practical, my wife finally reached over and peeled me off of my seat. I tried to catch my breath and become an adult again.

And here's what still sticks in my barren, cynical, wasteland of a mind: he stood up, shook my hand, winked a randy Burl Ives wink at my wife, and walked away.

I got a seven iron (bought it myself — I'm not crazy) and my wife got a lovely diamond tennis bracelet. But after the tornado of torn wrapping paper subsided and we'd put batteries into all the toys and had a cup of coffee, there was a moment in which my wife and I looked at each other and for a moment, briefly, I think even she, the most practical woman in the world, was willing to believe we'd met an elf in an airport.

I still do.



# Education

## DIRECTORY

### Antioch Academy

515 W. 125th Street  
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Antioch Academy, serving the Harlem and surrounding communities for over 30 years, was birthed by Rev. Alfloyd and Helen Alston. We offer an Early Childhood Development Program for ages 2-5 and an Enrichment Program for ages 6-12. We believe a child learns best through hands-on activities which helps to develop their cognitive, physical and socio-emotional skills. At Antioch Academy our promise to our children is to provide a nurturing learning environment where they feel: Cared for and cared about, safe, secure, calm, confident and successful everyday. Likewise, our promise to our parents is to strengthen their families by offering a stable, supportive partnership that delivers trust; integrity, comfort; ease, happiness; helpfulness and peace of mind and heart every day

### Dwight School

291 Central Park West, Manhattan  
212-724-7524 or [www.dwight.edu](http://www.dwight.edu)

Founded in 1872, Dwight School is dedicated to igniting the "spark of genius" in every child through personalized learning so that every student can realize his or her greatest potential. Personalized learning is one of Dwight's three pillars, along with community and global vision. A leader in global education, Dwight was the first school in the US to offer the comprehensive International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum for students from preschool through grade 12. The rigorous IB is recognized as the "gold standard" and one

of the most respected pre-university courses of study in the world. Through the IB, Dwight is educating students to become caring, open-minded thinkers and leaders who can thrive anywhere in the world. The School has a comprehensive college guidance program, and graduates attend some of the finest colleges and universities, including Harvard, Yale, MIT, Stanford, and Oxford. Dwight in New York City is the flagship campus in The Dwight Schools global network, which includes campuses and programs in London, Canada, Beijing, and Seoul all dedicated to educating students who can make a real difference.

### Good Shepherd School

620 Isham Street  
212-567-5800 or [www.gsschoolnyc.org](http://www.gsschoolnyc.org)

Founded in 1925 on the principles of faith, community, and academic achievement, Good Shepherd School (GSS), located in the northern Manhattan neighborhood of Inwood, is a co-ed, parochial Pre-K3 to 8th grade elementary school. GSS offers a rigorous academic program with before and after school care programs serving families who seek to provide their children with an education based on strong moral values that would lead them toward success in family, community, business, service, and beyond. Our Early Childhood Education program is a competitive and selective program overseen by Dr. Patricia Vardin, Professor of Education at Manhattanville College. It is taught in a cutting-edge environment by experienced and credentialed professionals dedicated to guiding your child to success. We welcome children of all faiths.

### The Red Balloon

560 Riverside Drive  
212-663-9006 or [www.redballoonlearningcenter.org](http://www.redballoonlearningcenter.org)

The Red Balloon strives to be a model of exemplary early childhood education practices. We partner with families to create a safe nurturing environment where children are encouraged to reach their full potential while planting the seeds for lifelong learning. Our children learn through hands on experiences driven by their interests, needs, and individual learning styles. We offer a challenging play based curriculum rich in language, exploration, problem solving, and discovery. Our children move on to the city's top Private, Public, and Gifted and Talented programs. We provide a 12 month full day program for children 2-5 years old. Our doors open at 8:00 close at 6:00. We serve breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. We are a community that welcomes and celebrates diversity.

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Robert Louis Stevenson School is a small, supportive, college-prep environment where bright, underperforming adolescents (age 13 - 18) reach their potential. Stevenson believes every student deserves a chance to succeed. Through a structured day filled with interesting, rigorous academics, and reflective social emotional learning, students gain resilience and

learn to meet the challenges of school and daily life. Ready to pursue new goals and dreams, over 95% of our graduates go on to higher education. Small classes (Avg. = 8) allow teachers to tailor instruction and support to individual needs. A keystone of our program, advisors are committed to student growth. Students learn to trust the faculty, each other, and themselves. With year-round admission, we are the best option, when other schools are not working for your adolescent.

### The Weekday School

490 Riverside Drive  
212-870-6743 or [www.theversidechurchny.org/education/?school](http://www.theversidechurchny.org/education/?school)

The Weekday School is a diverse community based on sharing, understanding, and respect where each child's gifts are celebrated. We are dedicated to teaching children to become confident learners, passionate explorers, and discerning risk-takers. The Weekday School curriculum draws from both progressive and traditional approaches to encourage children to use all their senses and skills to learn and grow. Offering compelling learning opportunities for children from two years of age through kindergarten, our teachers work collaboratively to create a loving community of learners. The school resides on The Riverside Church's sixth and seventh floors, which were specifically designed as a learning environment when the church was built. It features bright, spacious classrooms with large, arching windows overlooking the Hudson River and upper Manhattan.

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# Calendar

DECEMBER



Photo by Paul Kolnik

## Plum production

**S**ugar Plum Fairies like you've never seen before are performing now in the New York City Ballet's production of "The Nutcracker," at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts' through Dec. 30.

The holiday favorite features a one-ton Christmas tree that grows from 12- to 40-feet-tall, an on-stage snowstorm and hundreds of fanciful costumes. In ad-

dition to 90 dancers and 62 musicians, this production also boasts more than 60 performers from the School of American Ballet, twirling and leaping across the stage. Tickets begin at \$29; check the website for performance times, now through Dec. 30.

*David H. Koch Theater, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts [10 Lincoln Center Plaza, Upper West Side, (212) 875-5374; [www.lincolncenter.org](http://www.lincolncenter.org)].*

## Submit a listing

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

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

## WED, DEC. 5

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

New parents and family caregivers enjoy adult conversation as docents lead them on lively one-hour tours of the museum. For parents and family caregivers with children ages 0–18 months.

## FRI, DEC. 7

**Shababa Fridays:** 92Y Tribeca, 200 Hudson St. at Vestry Street; (212) 415-5500; [www.92y.org/Tribeca](http://www.92y.org/Tribeca); 9:30–10:15 am; \$10, children free.

Get ready for Shabbat with a joyous intergenerational experience filled with music and dance.

**Navigating Early Intervention:** GiGi's Playhouse/Down Syndrome Awareness Centers, 106 W. 117th St. at Lenox Avenue; (606) 801-7529; [www.gigisplayhouse.org](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org); 6:30 pm; Free.

Hilda Chusid, LCSW, an Early Intervention Supervisor at Life Start (YAI), answers questions and offers up-to-date information on the realities of navigating the Early Intervention system. Childcare available.

## SAT, DEC. 8

**"Babes in Toyland":** Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts, 10 Lincoln Center Plaza; (212) 875-5374; [www.lincolncenter.org](http://www.lincolncenter.org); 11 am and 1 pm; \$15–\$55.

The Little Orchestra Society presents a rollicking update of Victor Herbert's 1903 holiday extravaganza as an array of beloved characters perform "March of the Toys," "Toyland," and other favorite tunes.

**Flaubert Frog and Friends:** Bryant Park, 42nd Street and Avenue of the Americas; (212) 768-4242; [www.bryantpark.org](http://www.bryantpark.org); 1 pm; Free.

Children 3 to 11 years old sing



Photo by Rob Blackburn

## Aus-some circus

**S**traight up from the land down under, the Aussies of Circus Oz have returned to the New Victory Theater for a month-long stay.

Shout out "g'day" and "welcome back" to the mob from Melbourne as they present their bold, bodacious, and brassy brand of big top zaniness. Featuring live rock music

and larrikin irreverence, musicians double as acrobats, acrobats double as jugglers, jugglers double as trapeze artists, and everybody is a comic. You can't sit still when the Hammond Brothers jump across the stage in their juggling jubilation or stifle a gasp as Shane and Mason swing atop the audience in a death-defying catch-and-release

trapeze act.

"Circus Oz Holiday Show" at the New Victory Theater, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays through Dec. 30. Tickets are \$14–\$36. Performance times are 2 and 7 pm.

*The New Victory Theater [209 W. 42nd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues in Midtown; (646) 223-3010; [www.newvictory.org](http://www.newvictory.org)].*

songs, read stories, and play games with Bryant Park mascot Flaubert Frog at Le Carrousel in Bryant Park.

**Hablemos De La Historia Family Art Making:** New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; [nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org); 2 pm; \$15 admission, children ages 7–13, \$10.

Spanish-speaking families with children ages 7 and up explore history through art making in this educator-led gallery and studio program.

**Kozlova's "Nutcracker":** Sym-

phony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; [www.symphonyspace.org](http://www.symphonyspace.org); 5 pm; \$25–\$35.

Valentina Kozlova's Dance Conservatory Company presents a full-length version of the beloved classic.

**Creating an Effective Individual Education Plan:** GiGi's Playhouse/Down Syndrome Awareness Centers, 106 W. 117th St. at Lenox Avenue; (606) 801-7529; [www.gigisplayhouse.org](http://www.gigisplayhouse.org); 6:30 pm; Free.

Dr. Kelley A. Lassman explores ways to advocate for your student through effective Individual Education Plan development. Parents are encour-

aged to bring a current or recent past copy of their student's plan. Childcare available.

**"Ho, Ho, Holiday Show":** Salvatore Capezio Theater at Peridance, 126 E. 13th St. between Third and Fourth avenues; (212) 505-0886; [www.peridance.com](http://www.peridance.com); 7:30 pm & 9:30 pm; \$5 minimum donation.

The works of 10 choreographers are all set to holiday music in a light-hearted, festive show to benefit Toys for Tots. Bring a new toy for Toys for Tots and a suggested minimum donation of \$5.

*Continued on page 22*

# Calendar

Continued from page 21

## SUN, DEC. 9

### Second Sunday Family Tours:

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street; (212) 423-3587; www.guggenheim.org; 10:30 am–noon; \$15 per family, \$10 members.

Families with children ages 5-10 explore the exhibitions through family-oriented tours and hands-on gallery activities.

**Mister G:** 92Y Tribeca, 200 Hudson St. at Vestry Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org/Tribeca; 11 am; \$15.

Popular international children's music artist, Mister G, brings his holiday spectacular to 92Y Tribeca.

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

Children hear "When Mindy Saved Hanukkah" by Eric Kimmel, the story of Mindy's family, who are anything but the average New York City family.

**Chanukah Family Day:** The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave. at 92nd Street; (212) 423-3200; www.thejewishmuseum.org; Noon–4 pm; \$12, free for children 12 and under.

Highlights of the day include performances by Yosi and The Superdads, a huge art workshop, and gallery tours.

**Le Carrousel Magique:** Bryant Park, 42nd Street and Avenue of the Americas; (212) 768-4242; www.bryantpark.org; 1 pm; Free.

Stellar magicians perform their sleight of hand at Le Carrousel in Bryant Park for children (and adults) of all ages!

**Just Drop In:** Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street; (212) 423-3587; www.guggenheim.org; 1–4 pm; \$22 adult, \$18 students and seniors.

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

## MON, DEC. 10

**Calming Strategies to Help Families Relax:** UCP of NYC, 122 E. 23rd St. between Lexington Avenue and Park Avenue South; (718) 436-7979 X 704; 10 am–noon; Free.

This interactive workshop teaches relaxation techniques to relieve stress and empower parents and caregivers. Also helps teach children how to find a sense of calm among all the chaos.

**New York Philharmonic Very Young People's Concert:** New



## Re-imagining the waterfront

See how kids have reimagined the city's waterfront at the Museum of the City of New York on Dec. 15.

Children 5 to 17 years can listen to middle school students from the Neighborhood Explorers program share their ideas on how to better the East River, its shoreline, bikeways, and roads to serve the needs of contemporary New Yorkers. The tweens and

teens will present their ideas, and everyone will have the chance to make hands-on models to represent their visions.

Reimagining the Waterfront on Dec. 15 from 1 to 3 pm. Admission is \$10; free for children 12 and younger.

*Museum of the City of New York [1220 Fifth Ave. at 103rd Street on the Upper East Side, (212) 534-1672; <http://mcny.org>].*

## SAT, DEC. 15

**"Peter and the Wolf":** The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College, 68th St. between Park and Lexington avenues; (212) 772-4448; www.littleorchestra.org; 10 and 11:30 am; \$15-\$99.

Peter, his animal friends, his grandfather, and the wolf are represented not only by the instruments of the orchestra, but also by the beloved Lollipops characters, Bang the Lion, Buzz the Bee, Toot the Bird, and Bow the Panda.

**Elizabeth Mitchell and You Are My Flower:** Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$15 to \$25.

As part of the Just Kidding season, Elizabeth Mitchell creates gentle, heartfelt music with renditions of songs by Woody Guthrie, Bob Marley, Jimi Hendrix, David Bowie, and more.

**Reimagining the Waterfront with the Neighborhood Explorers:** Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. at 103rd Street; (212) 534-1672; mcny.org; 1–3 pm; \$10 admission fee adults; Free children 12 and under.

Join middle school students from the Neighborhood Explorers program to hear their ideas for the waterfront and share your own through hands-on model-making activities. Recommended for ages 5-17.

**Flaubert Frog and Friends:** 1 pm. Bryant Park. See Saturday, Dec. 8.

**Historic Trains and Toys Weekend:** New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 1–3 pm; \$15 admission, kids ages 7-13, \$10.

After visiting the Holiday Express exhibition of historic trains and toys, families will create train-inspired art, hear tales of the rails, and learn about the history of trains and train collecting.

**"Songs of the Season":** 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 3:30 pm and 7:30 pm; \$25.

To launch its 25th anniversary, the Young People's Chorus of New York City gives two performances of its popular annual winter concert.

**"The Nutcracker":** Salvatore Capezio Theater at Peridance, 126 E. 13th St. between Third and Fourth avenues; (212) 505-0886; www.peridance.com; 5:30 pm and 8 pm; \$30, \$15 children.

A contemporary look at the beloved classic.

## SUN, DEC. 16

**Fifth Annual Strike Out Pediatric Cancer PCF Bowl-a-thon:** Lucky Strike Lanes, 624-630 W. 42nd St. and the West Side Highway; (646) 829-0170; www.pcfbowlathon.org; 11 am–1 pm; \$50 registration fee.

Bowlers can participate in a Charities Design-A-Bag Workshop for children with cancer currently undergoing treatment in local hospitals. Lanes for younger bowlers who may need bumpers and slides are available. Registration fee includes donation to PCF, two hours of bowling, shoe rental, refreshments, entertainment, door prizes and raffles.

**"Chanukah Fever":** Sutton Place Synagogue, 225 E. 51st St. between Second and Third avenues; (212) 593-3300; spsny.org; 11 am; \$30 per family.

Mama Doni and The Mama Doni Band bring their inimitable brand of "funky music with a Jewish twist" to the family show.

York Philharmonic Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. between Amsterdam and Broadway; (212) 501-3330; kaufman-center.org; 10:30 am; \$21.

The program, titled "Strings," launches this season's theme exploring Philharmonic families, for children ages 3 to 6.

## THURS, DEC. 13

**Roadmap to College Admissions:** The Princeton Review, 317 Madison Ave. at 42nd Street; (800) 273-8439; www.princetonreview.com; 7 pm; Free.

An admissions expert will advise students and parents on the college admissions process including topics such as admissions factors, selectivity, college searching, standardized tests, and timelines.

**“Songs For Seeds” Winter Concert:** Stage 72 Theater, 158 W. 72nd St. between Columbus and Amsterdam avenues; (212) 362-2590; stage72.com; 11 am; \$15, \$10 children.

Apple seeds hosts this highly interactive music show featuring original music by Mr. Ray, popular children’s tunes, top 40 hits, and some winter favorites.

**The Rockdoves:** 92Y Tribeca, 200 Hudson St. at Vestry Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org/Tribeca; 11 am; \$15.

This kid-family music group creates music with artistry, intelligence, humor, and respect for kids and their families.

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

We often learn about the Boston Tea party, but who were the Sons of Liberty? Hear the opinions of different patriots in Kay Winters’s book “Colonial Voices.”

**Posadas Y Pastorelas:** Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. at 103rd Street; (212) 534-1672; mcny.org; Noon–5 pm; \$10 admission fee adults; Free children 12 and under.

Join a posada, a singing holiday procession; watch a pastorela, the traditional shepherds’ play; and take part in a party with pinatas. This family celebration promotes the popular traditions of the city’s Mexican community.

**Le Carrousel Magique:** 1 pm. Bryant Park. See Sunday, Dec. 9.

**Just Drop In:** 1–4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Sunday, Dec. 9.

**“Peter and the Wolf”:** 1 and 2:30 pm. The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College. See Saturday, Dec. 15.

**Historic Trains and Toys Weekend:** 1–3 pm. New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children’s History Museum. See Saturday, Dec. 15.

**“The Nutcracker”:** 2:30 pm and 6 pm. Salvatore Capezio Theater at Peridance. See Saturday, Dec. 15.

## THURS, DEC. 20

**“A City Singing at Christmas”:** St. Patrick’s Cathedral, 14 E. 51st St. at Fifth Avenue; (212) 753-2261; www.saintpatrickscathedral.org; 7 pm; Free.

The Young People’s Chorus of New York City will be joined by the Cathedral of St. Patrick Choir, the New York Symphonic Brass, and others in an evening of traditional and contemporary Christmas hymns and carols.



Photo by Michele Garner Brown

## Uncle Rock says ‘Express Your Elf’

**I**t’s a rockin’ holiday show with Uncle Rock, aka Robert Burke Warren, on Dec. 29.

America’s other favorite uncle will perform music that blends Beatles-esque hooks with Grimm fairy tale undertones and Woody

Guthrie folksiness.

This holiday show features songs from Uncle Rock’s “Express Your Elf” CD and other hootenanny, foot stomping, and get-out-of-your seat numbers. So come on down, and rock, hop,

and sway the day away.

Tickets are \$13–\$20 for the Dec. 29 show at 11 am.

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

## FRI, DEC. 21

**Shababa Fridays:** 9:30 – 10:15 am. 92Y Tribeca. See Friday, Dec. 7.

## SUN, DEC. 23

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

After reading about old St. Nick,

head upstairs to view the desk where Clement Clark Moore may have written “A Visit from St. Nicholas.”

**Just Drop In:** 1–4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Sunday, Dec. 9.

## TUES, DEC. 25

**The Macaroons Children’s Concert:** The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave. at 92nd Street; (212) 423-3200; www.thejewishmuseum.org; 11 am, 1 and 3 pm; \$20, \$15 children.

Families enjoy favorite tunes, such as “Hurry Up And Light The Candle” and “Mezuzah.”

## WED, DEC. 26

**Holiday hands-on activities:** Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. at 103rd Street; (212) 534-1672; mcny.org; 10:30 am–3:30 pm; \$10 admission fee adults; Free children 12 and under.

Children can choose one of three ac-

*Continued on page 24*

# Calendar

## Continued from page 23

tivities in this school vacation drop-off program, or participate in each: Winter Wonderland: Collages; Chet the Secret Agent Architect; or Pushing Buttons: Activist New York.

## THURS, DEC. 27

### Holiday Time One-Day Camp:

TADA! Youth Theater, 15 W. 28th St. between Broadway and Fifth Avenue; (212) 252-1619 X 4; [www.tadatheater.com](http://www.tadatheater.com); 9 am–5:30 pm; \$100.

Kids explore the world of acting, singing, and dancing in a special one-day camp that focuses on core elements of musical theater.

### Holiday hands-on activities:

10:30 am–3:30 pm. Museum of the City of New York. See Wednesday, Dec. 26.

## FRI, DEC. 28

### Holiday Time One-Day Camp:

9 am–5:30 pm. TADA! Youth Theater. See Thursday, Dec. 27.

### Holiday hands-on activities:

10:30 am–3:30 pm. Museum of the City of New York. See Wednesday, Dec. 26.

## SAT, DEC. 29

**Kwanzaa Celebration:** American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; [www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org); 10 am–5:45 pm; \$24 (\$14 children, \$18 seniors and students).

Family-friendly all-day event offers African dance, spoken word, live musical performances, and traditional crafts.

**Uncle Rock's Holiday Show:** Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; [www.symphonyspace.org](http://www.symphonyspace.org); 11 am; \$13 to \$20.

Families join America's favorite faux-relative for a performance filled with Beatles-esque hooks, Grimm's Fairy Tales depth, and Woody Guthrie folksiness.

### A Concert for Children of All Ages:

Trinity Wall Street Church, 74 Trinity Pl. at Wall Street; (212) 866-0468; [www.gemsny.org](http://www.gemsny.org); 3 pm; \$25.

Sinfonia New York, the period-instrument orchestra that specializes in historically informed, vibrant performances, puts on a holiday concert for children.

## SUN, DEC. 30

**Sunday Story:** New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; [nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org)



Photo by Joshua Miller

## A special Chanukah program

**B**ring your dreidel and Chanukah gelt and come on down to the Museum of Jewish Heritage on Dec. 2 to enjoy a special holiday program of “Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins.”

The dynamic “Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins” is the story of the miracle of lights set to lively klezmer music. The entertaining and international duo Uri Sharlin and Maya Blank invite the audience to participate in the storytelling of how Hershel outwits

the goblins that haunt the old synagogue. Following the performance children 3 to 10 years old create holiday-inspired crafts.

Tickets are \$10 and \$7 for children 10 years old and younger. Members pay \$7 and \$5. The performances are at 10:30 am for infants to 3 year olds, and 2 pm for kids 3 to 10.

*Museum of Jewish Heritage [Edmond J. Safra Plaza, 36 Battery Pl. in Lower Manhattan, (646) 437-4202; [www.mjhnyc.org](http://www.mjhnyc.org)].*

org; 11:30 am; \$15 admission, kids ages 7-13, \$10.

Cecil the snake wants to be at the same party as all of his friends, but the invitations say that guests should wear shoes in “Cecil’s New Year’s Eve Tail” by Marie Fritz Perry.

**Just Drop In:** 1–4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Sunday, Dec. 9.

## WED, JAN. 2

**Stroller Tours:** 10:30 am. The Morgan Library & Museum. See Wednesday, Dec. 5.

## SAT, JAN. 5

**Meet the Artist Saturdays:** Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts, 10 Lincoln Center Plaza; (212) 875-5374; [www.lincolncenter.org](http://www.lincolncenter.org); 11 am; Free.

Families meet the Saung Budaya Indonesian Dance Group in this family-friendly event that includes audience participation.

## LONG-RUNNING

**“Hava Nagila,” A Song for the People:** Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Place; (646) 437-4202; [www.mjhnyc.org](http://www.mjhnyc.org); \$10, \$7 children 10 and under.

This exhibition transports listeners through memories of celebrations across generations. It features vibrant modular carpets, donated by FLOR, that are used for wall treatments and flooring. Some of the tiles are embedded with photographs, artifacts, and video screens, while others are laser engraved with graphics and text. Now through spring 2013.

**WWII and New York City:** New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; [nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org); \$15 admission, children ages 5-13, \$5.

Exhibit explores the impact of the war on the metropolis, which played a critical role in the national war effort, and how the city was forever changed. Runs through May 27, 2013.

**Big Apple Circus Legendarium:** Lincoln Center’s Damrosch Park, 62nd Street between Amsterdam and Columbus avenues; (888) 541-3750; [www.bigapplecircus.org](http://www.bigapplecircus.org); \$25 and up.

The Big Apple Circus Legendarium invites you to witness the nostalgic thrills of bygone big tops and get a first-hand view of beauties, daredevils, and clowns from another era. This annual engagement at Lincoln Center is the 35th season production.

**Holiday Express, Toys and Trains from the Jerni Collection:** New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park

West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; \$15 admission, children ages 5-13, \$5.

Magnificent model trains, train stations and sheds, bridges and tunnels, carousels and Ferris wheels — all populated with toy figurines in colorful 19th-century dress, will be on view this holiday season.

**Fair:** Soho, 100 Varick St. (914) 295-4794; varicksflea@gmail.com; www.meetup.com/varicks; Daily, 10 am–4 pm; Now – Sat, Dec. 29; \$55/Space.

Enjoy shopping and schmoozing in the all day market.

**Picasso Black and White:** Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street; (212) 423-3587; www.guggenheim.org; Daily, 10 am–5:30 pm; Now – Wed, Jan. 23, 2013; \$18 (\$15 students).

Picasso Black and White marks the first major exhibition to focus on the recurrent motif of black and white throughout the artist's career.

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

This exhibition features 34 striking and dramatic images of moths, displaying the arresting beauty and surprising diversity of moths from Ottawa-based photographer Jim des Rivières. Runs through September 2013.

**Creatures of Light:** American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; awang@amnh.org; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am–5:45 pm; Now – Sun, Jan. 6, 2013; \$24, \$14 children, \$18 seniors and students.

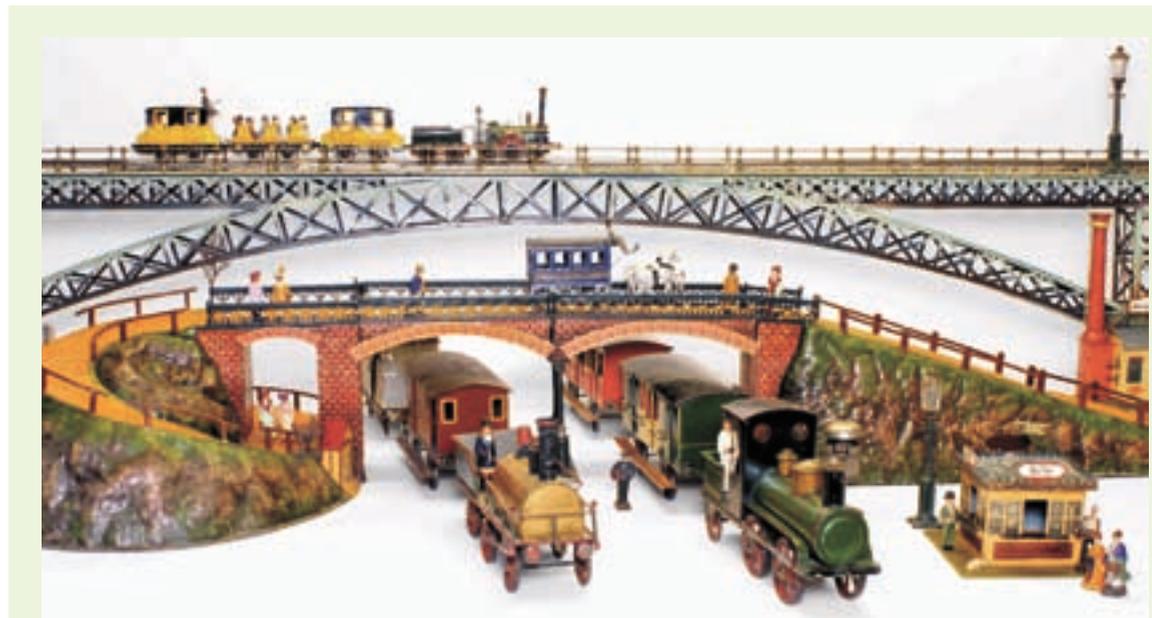
This interactive exhibit explores organisms that produce light, from the flickering fireflies to alien deep-sea fishes.

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

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

**Holiday Express:** New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Daily, 10 am–5 pm; Now – Sun, Jan. 6, 2013; \$15 admission, Children ages 7-13, \$10.

In "Can You Spot It?" visitors spot the intricate details in the amazing model train scenes, composed of miniature trains, stations, people, and decorations made by the Märklin model



## Terrific trains on display

**C** hoo choo — all aboard! Come see the magnificent model train display on view at the New York Historical Society, now through Jan. 6, 2013.

Holiday Express: Toys and Trains from the Jerni Collection is a must-see for any model train or train buff.

The beautifully created miniatures artfully depict train stations, sheds, bridges, and tunnels true to scale. Dioramas are complete with Ferris wheels, carousels, and toy figurines in colorful 19th-century dress.

Admission to the Society is \$15; children 5 to 13 years old, \$5. Daily

now through Jan. 6, 2013. The society is open Tuesdays through Fridays from 9 am to 3 pm, and on Saturdays from 10 am to 1 pm. Closed Sunday and Monday.

*The New York Historical Society*  
[170 Central Park West at 77th Street  
(212) 873-3400; www.nyhistory.org].

train company.

**Holiday Train Show:** New York Botanical Garden, 200th Street and Kazimiroff Boulevard; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Fridays, 10 am–6 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–7 pm, Now – Sun, Jan. 13, 2013; \$20 (\$25 holiday pricing) – \$10 (\$15 holiday pricing).

The annual show is celebrating its 21st year of showcasing a spectacular display of iconic landmarks in miniature. New this year, the exhibit has cable cars that travel over vignettes in the conservatory's reflecting pool. Children delight as the miniature train (set to scale) travels through the meticulous diorama of the city. Closed Christmas Day (Dec. 25).

**"The Three Bears Holiday Bash":** Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, 79th Street and West Drive; (212) 988-9093; Daily, 10:30 am and noon, Mon–Fri. Additional 2:30 pm performance each Wednesday. Saturday and Sunday at 1 pm. Now – Sun, Dec. 30; \$8, \$5 children.

This variety show celebrates the holiday season in song, dance, and puppetry. Closed Christmas Day.

**George Balanchine's "The Nutcracker":** Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, 10 Lincoln Center Plaza; (212) 875-5374; www.lincolncenter.org; Daily, 1, 2 and 8 pm; Now – Sun, Dec. 30; \$29 and up.

This acclaimed holiday tradition features a one-ton Christmas tree that grows from 12 to 40 feet, an onstage snowstorm, and hundreds of elaborate costumes, as well as more than 60 children from the School of American Ballet, the official school of New York City Ballet.

**"The Nutcracker and The Mouse King":** Beckett Theatre, 410 W. 42nd St. (212) 239-6200; www.telecharge.com/behindTheCurtain.aspx; Tuesdays, 7 pm, Wednesdays – Fridays, 8 pm, Saturdays, 2 and 8 pm, Sundays, 3 pm, Now – Sat, Dec. 15; \$25.

This fantastical show will take you on journey to another world, where there are life-size mice, talking dolls, swords fights, magic, true love and of course, a happy ending.

**Cross Stitch Circle:** New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org;

Thursday, Dec. 6, 3:30 pm; Thursday, Dec. 13, 3:30 pm; Thursday, Dec. 20, 3:30 pm; Thursday, Dec. 27, 3:30 pm; \$15 admission, children ages 7-13, \$10.

Children ages 6 and up drop in to try their skills at one of the oldest forms of embroidery in the world.

**Little New Yorkers:** New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Tuesday, Dec. 4, 3:30 pm; Friday, Dec. 7, 3:30 pm; Tuesday, Dec. 11, 3:30 pm; Friday, Dec. 14, 3:30 pm; Tuesday, Dec. 18, 3:30 pm; Friday, Dec. 21, 3:30 pm; Tuesday, Dec. 25, 3:30 pm; Friday, Dec. 28, 3:30 pm; \$15 admission, children ages 7-13, \$10.

Each class includes story readings, time with historic toys, free exploration, a special Little New-Yorkers hello song, and time in DCHM OR a craft project.

**"The Velveteen Rabbit":** DR2 Kids Theatre, 103 E. 15th St. at Union Square East; (212) 239-6200; www.DR2KidsTheatre.com; Fridays, 5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am, 1 and 4 pm, Now – Sun, Jan. 27, 2013; \$39.

This classic tale comes to life for a

*Continued on page 26*

# Calendar

*Continued from page 25*

whole new generation in this wonder-filled production created by Kevin Del Aguila.

**Circus Oz:** The New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues; (646) 223-3010; [www.newvictory.org](http://www.newvictory.org); Fridays, 7 pm, Saturdays, 2 and 7 pm, Sundays, Noon, Now – Sun, Dec. 30; \$14-\$36.

The awesome Aussies of Circus Oz return with its bold, bodacious and brassy brand of big top zaniness. Featuring live rock music and larrikin irreverence, musicians double as acrobats, acrobats double as jugglers, jugglers double as trapeze artists and everyone's a comic.

**"Fancy Nancy":** The McGinn-Cazale Theatre, 2162 Broadway at 76th Street; (212) 579-0528; [vitaltheatre.org](http://vitaltheatre.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am and 1 pm; 3:30 pm after Now – Sun, Jan. 13, 2013; \$29.50 regular; \$49.50 premium.

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

**"The Very Merry Holiday Musical":** The McGinn-Cazale Theatre, 2162



## Heavenly voices

**T**he angelic voices of the Young People's Chorus of New York City, along with the Cathedral of St. Patrick Choir and the New York Symphonic Brass, will perform at St. Patrick's Cathedral on Dec. 20 at 7 pm.

The chorus, led by artistic director and founder Francisco Nunez, returns for the 33rd annual concert and performs tradi-

tional and contemporary Christmas hymns along with carols and holiday tunes for this special "A City Singing at Christmas" program.

Tickets are free. Performance is on Dec. 20 at 7 pm.

*St. Patrick's Cathedral [14 E. 51st St. at Fifth Avenue in Midtown; (212) 753-2261; [www.saintpatrickscathedral.org](http://www.saintpatrickscathedral.org)].*

Broadway at 76th Street; (212) 579-0528; [vitaltheatre.org](http://vitaltheatre.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am, 1 & 3 pm, Now – Sun, Jan. 13, 2013; \$29.50 regular; \$49.50 premium.

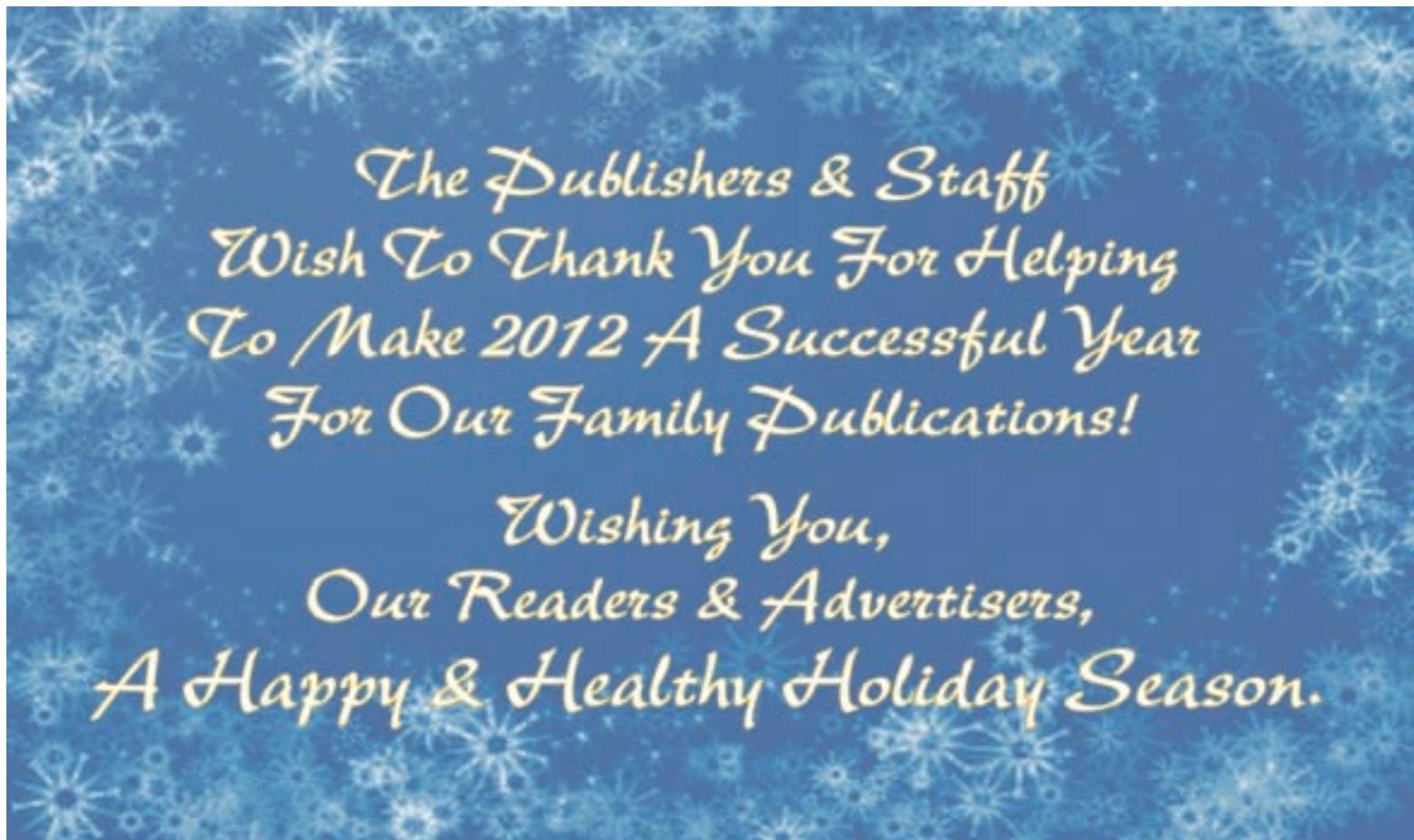
Angelina Ballerina and her friends are planning an absolutely positively spectacular holiday dance pageant — the best in all of Mouseland.

**"Pinkalicious":** The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. between Lafayette and Mott; (212) 579-0528; [www.iseats.net](http://www.iseats.net); Saturdays, 1:30 pm, Sundays, Noon, Now – Sun, Feb. 24, 2013; \$29.50 regular seats/\$49.50 premium seats.

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

**Sunday Storytime in Mr. Morgan's Library:** The Morgan Library & Museum, 225 Madison Ave.; (212) 685-0008 X 560; [www.themorgan.org](http://www.themorgan.org); Sundays, 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, Now – Sun, Jan. 27, 2013; \$15 admission fee, children \$10.

This one-hour drop-in program offers families a refresher on the beloved tales before viewing the exhibition Beatrix Potter: The Picture Letters. Appropriate for ages 2 and up.



THE MAGIC BEGINS NOVEMBER 16



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# Longing to be lean

What to do if  
you suspect  
your teen  
has an eating  
disorder

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

**E**ating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia seem to be in vogue today. Demi Lovato, Britney Spears, Nicole Richie, Mary-Kate Olsen, Paula Abdul, and Lady Gaga are among the many celebrities who suffered from them. Their disorders are glamorized on magazine covers and professionals wonder what effect stars' disclosures have on our children.

In *Psychology Today's* October 2011 issue, Dr. Judy Scheel distinguished between stars who disclose their ailments for mere publicity and those who share their private struggles to help fans better understand eating disorders. But no matter whether these celebrities are trying to help or not, Scheel tells me that vulnerable teens believe a disorder is no big deal if it helps them lose weight, look like their idols, and garner similar attention.

"In our pop-culture existence, teens think if they look a certain way they will feel good, preferring to share their idols' symptoms and behavior, and focusing on someone else's life, rather than tackling their own emotional issues," Scheel explains.

## Spotting an eating disorder

Concerned parents often have trouble differentiating between finicky eating and an eating disorder. Eating disorders are illnesses that seriously disrupt an everyday diet, most often characterized by severe distress about weight, according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

"Parents are going to miss the signs," says Dr. Ira Sacker, former director of Eating Disorders at Brookdale University Hospital, who observes that parents' busy lives make the signs almost impossible to spot.

"Eating disorders often start as



weight loss diets," writes Sacker in "Regaining Your Self-Understanding and Conquering The Eating Disorder Identity," but change as body image and exercise become the focal point for girls' anxiety and ultimately their identity. Some common signs include: eating very little or extreme dieting, having a distorted body image (incorrectly believing one is fat), lying about eating, excessive exercise, avoiding social situations where eating is involved, withdrawing from friends, excessive weight loss, a decline in grades, and a sudden penchant for baggy clothing.

Dr. Susan Bartell, author of "Girls-Only Weight Loss Guide," tells me that eating disorders are sometimes misdiagnosed as attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, mood swings, or are overlooked totally.

Still, Bartell notes that bulimics can hide their problem for years. According to "Dying to Be Thin," which Sacker co-authored, "symptoms can develop little by little, day by day. And if you initially approved of the dieting or the exercising, then you may find it difficult to withdraw your approval, especially if your child seems pleased with his or her accomplishments."

Bartell once treated a patient as young as 9, as eating disorders often start before high school.

Rebecca Allen, a 20 year old from Long Island who was treated for an eating disorder, tells me it started in seventh grade when there was a "dieting trend" amongst the girls. As a dancer, she spent hours in front of a mirror daily, which only exacerbated her situation.

One out of every five eating dis-

order sufferers die, according to Sacker. In fact, eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any emotional disorder, he says. Impressionable adolescents with immortality complexes don't recognize this, as they watch most of their idols recover. More than one patient confided in Sacker that she never realized how sick she was before treatment. And, recovery can take years.

## Not just a food thing

Parents may incorrectly assume that an eating disorder is strictly food-related, and that monitoring a child's intake can solve the problem, but that's not the case.

"It's the catalyst, not the cause," says Scheel, who serves as director of Westchester's Cedar Associates Eating Disorder Treatment Centers.

"Eating disorders are complicated," Bartell tells me, and there's never just one trigger, but many, including low self-esteem, poor self-image, and social issues. Sacker agrees, noting that even a fear of bullying can lead to an eating disorder, as adolescents can be critical of peers' weight.

Scheel notes that both nurture and nature contribute, and stresses parents' role in helping their child grow emotionally. Once this is done, a child is able "to weather the storm" by learning to cope with disappointments and negative feelings. In this way, young people are no longer dependent on others to tell them how they feel. She also explains "there is no eating disorder gene, but it is more common amongst those kids with a predisposition to anxiety and depression."

A teen lying about how much food she eats is not a breach of trust, say experts. Sacker explains that an eating disorder patient will not see hiding her disorder as lying, but rather as not being understood, and parents' accusations of mistrust will push her away more. Moreover, eating disorder patients truly believe they need to be thin or they're nothing, adds Scheel.

"As an adolescent becomes more and more restrictive of her food intake, the brain starts to be starved of needed nutrients like fat and protein," Scheel says.

"Being in a state of semi-starvation causes changes in the metabolism and brain chemistry that reinforce the restricting behavior by creating a natural high," writes Sacker. This "dieting success" can be very satisfying and self-perpetuating.

## Cover stories?

When my daughter entered 11th

grade, seemingly half of her girlfriends turned vegan or vegetarian, and parents some wondered if these regimens were a gateway to an eating disorder.

Fortunately, parents need not necessarily panic if girls exhibit no other signs of a disorder. Veganism or vegetarianism can be healthy diet options for teens whose diets are balanced with sufficient vitamins and nutrients. But, for others, it can be the start of an eating disorder or orthorexia, which strikes healthy eaters who do not consume enough calories. Significantly, Sacker has treated many patients who have used veganism or

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"So trust yourself. If something about the way your child deals with food worries you, then you have nothing to lose by talking with your child, asking a doctor, checking with a specialist, or going to the library or bookstore to find reading material that will give you the information you need to be helpful for everyone concerned-including yourself."

— "Dying to Be Thin" by Ira M. Sacker and Marc A. Zimmer

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vegetarianism to help conceal their extreme eating restrictions.

## Parents' words can reinforce dangerous behavior

Parents who always demand perfection think they are protecting their children against feeling vulnerable, but instead they are running the risk of contributing to a possible eating disorder.

"Young people really need help dealing with life's disappointments, including not looking like a celebrity," Scheel advises. "There's beauty in imperfection."

Allen warns against complimenting girls on how they look when they lose weight, lest they suffer from a disorder. "You are losing weight," can be received as a compliment and motivation to lose more. Unfortunately, many girls already have strong peer reinforcement for their behavior, as friends undoubtedly tell them they look great and ask them how they did it. Additionally, comments normally considered criticism, like "you look too thin," continue to reinforce the behavior, says Sacker. Bartell advises parents to refrain from criticizing or complimenting their daughter's body,

but instead talk about what she is eating.

## Eating disorder incubators

As girls' bodies develop curves, their clothes tighten uncomfortably and the media bombards them with size zero airbrushed images, all of which can make them particularly vulnerable to eating disorders. In addition, girls' preoccupation and anxiety about their bodies are magnified by the technology that is now a permanent fixture in their lives. The 24-seven Internet and Facebook world permeates their lives everywhere, and photos, videos, and tweets can

---

be unforgiving and relentless.

In addition, academic hypercompetition and overscheduling, coupled with often unrealistic expectations, plague teens caught in limbo between childhood and adulthood. Some feel the only control they have is over their bodies.

And parents can be clueless, as Scheel notes, "we live in a quick-fix culture, which fosters the white-washing of underlying problems, encouraging parents to buy things for their kids instead of allowing them to feel bad when they need to."

## How to help

Concerned parents should not hesitate to follow-up on reasonable suspicions for fear they are "invading their teen's privacy" by checking if their child is purging or hiding food. Bartell equates a parent's need for surveillance with that of drug or alcohol issues, as these disorders too can present a mortal danger.

She adds, "it our responsibility as parents to keep our kids healthy and safe."

Sacker tells me that parents should not assume they are paranoid merely because eating disorders seem so commonplace now.

"If you are not a parent who is

forearmed, then you are an ostrich with your head in the sand," he advises. "Parents need to be cautious and aware."

Still, micromanaging every morsel can backfire.

"If parents suspect an eating disorder, they should never assume they can handle it on their own by monitoring food. If they take that approach, then their child will go underground," according to Bartell.

Instead, Sacker encourages parents to create an ongoing non-threatening dialogue with their teens.

"Parents need to understand their child's interests, although not necessarily be part of them," Sacker tells me. Moreover, he emphasizes the need for parents "to give up the guilt and the blame" in order to help.

The first step in treatment would be to locate an eating disorder specialist, preferably a medical doctor, to do a physical and mental evaluation, notes Sacker.

This decision may likely need to be made despite protestations from your child, Allen points out. If the patient is not medically stable, then inpatient treatment by a pediatrician, nutritionist, and a psychologist may be required. Although a parents' first reflex might be to consult her trusted pediatrician, Sacker notes that pediatricians have varying levels of experience diagnosing and dealing with eating disorders. He reminds parents that they have to be prepared to ask their pediatrician about his background in these, if they are to rely on his advice or referrals.

Bartell also points out "the longer an eating disorder patient waits for treatment, the harder the recovery and cure."

If one could say there is any benefit to having an eating disorder, Scheel would say it is that treatment can be instructive in helping patients and their families begin to concentrate on the real underlying problems.

Now that you know what to look for and what to do, pay attention to your kids and be aware of the signs. Parenting can be very challenging, but watching out for our children is just part of the job description.

*Risa C. Doherty is a parent, attorney and award-winning freelance writer. Read more at [www.risadoherty.com](http://www.risadoherty.com).*

*For more information contact the National Eating Disorders Association [(212) 576-6200; Helpline (800) 931-2237; [www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org)]; Academy for Eating Disorders [(847) 498-4274; [www.aedweb.org](http://www.aedweb.org)].*



## ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,  
ESQ.

# Preparing yourself for disasters to come

*The aftermath of Hurricane Sandy has made me concerned about what I would do if my home were flooded or destroyed. How can I be better prepared to keep my family safe and minimize the impact of the aftermath of a natural disaster?*

**H**urricane Sandy and its devastating aftermath have once again reminded us of the need to implement a crisis plan for ourselves and our families. Having a crisis plan gives us peace of mind that we can act calmly under pressure and to expect the unexpected. Here are some quick and easy steps you can take in your quest to be prepared.

### Create a plan

Develop a written crisis plan. Samples and guidelines are available on the city's Office of Emergency Management website located at [www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/get\\_prepared/prepared\\_plan.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/get_prepared/prepared_plan.shtml).

Share the plan with your family. Better yet, upload the plan to a document share site on the "cloud" like Dropbox or Google docs, and download it to your phone, so you and others can access it even if the computer goes down. Your plan should cover:

- Where your household and family members will reunite after a disaster. Identify two places to meet: one right outside of your home and another outside of your neighborhood, such as a library, community center, or place of worship.
- Identify all possible exit routes from your home and neighborhood.
- Designate an out-of-state friend or relative who your household members can call if separated during a disaster. If New York City phone circuits are busy, long-distance calls may be easier to make. Your out-of-state contact can help you and your



Photo by Paul Marinka

family communicate when local land lines and cell towers are down.

- Identify a place where you could get to in the event of a flood.
- Account for everyone's needs, especially seniors, people with disabilities, and non-English speakers.
- Ensure that household members have a copy of your household disaster plan and a "short form" card with emergency contact information to keep in their wallets and backpacks.
- Pack a "go" bag that has sufficient emergency supplies for all household members and pets. Make sure your bag includes cash for immediate money needs. (Like gas stations, ATMs do not operate in power outages.)
- Decide how you will handle caring for any pets and whether you will take them with you. Have a copy of your veterinarian's contact information and any pet insurance policies in your "go" bag.
- Your children are never too young to review the plan with you. Instruct them on exit routes in the event of a fire and reinforce the neighborhood meeting place.

### Evacuate when you're told to do so

Too many people stayed where they were during Hurricanes Irene and Sandy, despite clear evacuation orders. This was also what was so

disastrous with Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The issue is not just surviving the storm, but being able to weather the aftermath if rescue teams cannot get to you.

Know your flood zone and those around you. (To see if you are in a flood zone, check [www.freeflood.net](http://www.freeflood.net).) The saying "better safe than sorry" is all too applicable. During Hurricane Sandy, a family reportedly remained in the evacuation

zone, because its house was looted during Irene, only to have the mother and son perish in the flood.

You can replace the stuff. You can't replace a life. Be smart, be safe, be prepared to leave when necessary.

### Make a personal financial crisis management plan

Mitigate the mess. Are you insured? Where are your insurance policies (homeowners, life, auto, disability)? Are they up to date? Are all your valuables on your homeowner rider? Are you covered in cases of flood or hurricane, or do you need a separate rider?

Confirm that you do not need any additional insurance to protect you. Take an inventory of all your home, auto, disability, and life insurance policies, put it in writing, upload it to the cloud and keep written copies in your "go" bags. You should also keep a detailed list of your bank accounts, investments, trusts, titles and deeds, mortgages and home equity loans, credit and debit cards, and tax records in a safe and secure place, together with all contact information and online passwords.

### Make a legal plan

Everyone should have a Last Will and Testament, Healthcare Proxy, and Power of Attorney. For those

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with children, an appointment of a Standby Guardian and Medical Authorization is also helpful to have. Review the documents every few years or anytime you or a close family member experiences a significant life change such as marriage, divorce, or the birth of a new family member. Every review should ensure appropriate beneficiary designations and titling of assets are up to date. Keep copies in your "go" bags and online.

### Put it online

Many companies offer "online vaults" to give you secure access to your legal and financial documents from any location with an internet connection. Many financial service companies and financial planners offer this as a courtesy to their customers and clients. Putting everything in a secure online database is a great way to back up your original and photocopy records.

### Mind your business

If you own a business, you must have a business disaster plan. It should include the following:

- A business continuity plan. Make sure your business can continue to run as smoothly as possible in the event that you or your employees cannot get to there, or when the power goes out at the business or your employees' homes.

Organize your contact database, keep a regularly updated client and customer list and open items; have a written procedure manual detailing the normal workflow of your business and all emergency procedures; keep your billing and time records up to date if applicable; and execute estate planning documents for your business such as limited powers of attorney or appointing a successor managing member in your corporate operating agreement. You may want to consider moving your files or at least an automated backup in the cloud, so that you can access files remotely even if power goes out in your office.

- Insurance information. Hurricane Sandy caused significant damage to many businesses. Without the right insurance, you might not be able to recoup those losses. The owner of powerHouse Books in DUMBO was reported to have as much as \$100,000 in inventory losses. Without insurance to cover such loss, your business might not be able to survive.

If you are (hopefully) properly

insured, should any of your business assets be affected by a natural disaster, you need to be able to contact your insurer immediately to ensure maximum coverage under your policy. You should also take photographs of any and all damaged assets, and save receipts for any work done in repairing or replacing business assets. Now is the time to make sure you have the right insurance in the event your business is flooded or inaccessible. Look into business interruption insurance, which can help cover losses incurred as a result of natural or unanticipated disasters.

- Loan information. If you need a business loan following a disaster, you can contact the SBA Office of Disaster Assistance at (800) 659-2955 or e-mail [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov) for loans that may be available to your business.

- Additional support. Additional support for businesses can be found at the Department of Small Business Services ([www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/html/home/home.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/html/home/home.shtml)) and the Economic Development Corporation ([www.nycedc.com/bactobusiness](http://www.nycedc.com/bactobusiness)).

- Contact information maintenance. Be sure to retain all contact information in a safe and accessible location so that you can act quickly and efficiently towards business recovery. This should include not only all disaster-related recovery services, but also alternative and emergency contact information for your employees. In our age of smartphones, there is no excuse for not having your contacts synched to your password-protected device.

It is worth the investment of time to prepare a reliable strategy that allows you to be prepared when faced with economic and natural disasters. Be well, stay safe, and do not get lulled into complacency that we won't see a storm like Sandy again.

*More information about how you can be prepared and make a plan is available on the Office of Emergency Management website located at [www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/get\\_prepared/prepared\\_plan.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/get_prepared/prepared_plan.shtml).*

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# The joy of getting

Learning why receiving is important for giving

BY MEAGAN J. MEEHAN

**W**hen I was a child, I loved presents; getting gifts was the focal point of my birthday and Christmas. Whenever it was a friend's birthday, my parents came to the toy store with me and helped me select a gift that would suit my friend's personal tastes. We wrapped the gift carefully and enjoyed watching the receiver smile as she un-

wrapped her present, but to me, all of that was purely a formality. The real joy was the thrill of opening my own gifts and getting my own things.

I can still recall the crinkling sound of the wrapping paper, the anticipation of opening the box, and the elation of revealing some wonderful new toy that was all for me!

And that was only part of the fun — the real joy was the hours I got playing with my new toys. Most of the presents I received were cherished for years. I especially got untold hours of fun out of my dollhouses, Legos, and video games, and all of those fond memories began as soon as I tore open the wrappings. As a child I could not fathom that ridiculous adult adage: "It is better to give than to receive." I used to snicker when I heard it, assuming that all adults were insane.

Alas, as I got older, the appeal of receiving gifts faded. I still smile if I get a gift, but the difference is that as I grew up, the thrill of presents gradually lessened. I learned there was no Santa (except for the goodwill of others — a concept I actually find more touching) and then I started to lose that "I want it, I want it, I want it!" drive that most small children possess.

As I got into my teens, I started appreciating the other aspects of the holidays more: decorating the house, touring around neighborhoods looking at lights, marveling at store windows in the city, baking, giving to charity, listening to the endless stream of Christmas songs on the radio — all the festive, yet, gift-free aspects to the season. Now, instead of presents being the focal point of the holiday, they are merely a delightful extra.

Some people see children's love of presents as an indication of a shallow, consumer-driven culture. These same individuals view children as bratty and ungrateful, and even go so far as to discourage parents from buying their children presents. Granted,

some children do behave ungratefully and they should be reprimanded before their poor attitudes develop into bigger problems. However, the majority of children are excited AND grateful to receive gifts, and should not be painted with the same brush as those who are unappreciative.

Similarly, I agree that the spirit of Christmas — goodwill — should always be conveyed to a child first and foremost. However, gift giving and receiving are integral parts of the celebration process that actually motivate children to be more generous and giving later in life.

The human mind is a complex thing, and it largely bases its processes upon past experiences. Thus, if someone recalls the joy that receiving gifts gave them in their younger years then, as adults, they are far more likely to have the desire to create the same sense of joy for younger generations. Likewise, someone who has no good memories of receiving presents is less likely to partake in the seasonal custom due to long-standing feelings of isolation, bitterness, and regret.

We learn from memory, and our personalities are molded from our experiences. A vast portion of our memory relies on the recollections of the emotional reactions that we experienced during certain events or times. In short, if we recall pleasant things about the holidays, then we are more likely to enjoy them every year.

Parents must realize that what seems like children being selfish is actually a normal foundation-laying process for what will later become the basis of selfless and giving behavior. All of that starts with making holidays special, both materially and spiritually.

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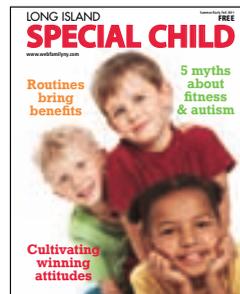
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## DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

# Dad's extended trip gives mom jitters

## Seeks help after absentee pop's surprise

I received a call from “Sharon,” a single mom concerned about her 4-year-old daughter’s contact with her father, a man largely absent from the girl’s life. The parents had never married. Our conversation was informal, in part because I am not familiar with the laws of her state.

Sharon was apprehensive. The father, “George,” was to take their child “Elisa” away for several days during a holiday break. But then, without discussion, George told Sharon that he was adding extra days to the trip — during time not his, according to their parenting schedule.

The mother had many concerns: will Elisa be safe? George has never gone away with Elisa. A lot of driving, part of it well into the night, is planned. Would George get drowsy and into an accident? Would he even bring their daughter back?

Additionally, Sharon didn’t want to set a bad precedent. She felt that she has been very flexible and accommodating to George during the past year, when he had been around more, but now she feels that he is taking advantage — something that she could eas-

ily imagine being repeated.

I wondered if George might be immature, as opposed to being a bad father. Certainly, he was inexperienced. Sharon agreed that immaturity was an issue; perhaps a good sign, since maturity and experience can be acquired.

After discussing these matters, I shared my thoughts and we spoke about her options, and the approaches she might take. I suggested that Sharon:

- Focus on her child’s welfare: what is best for Elisa? What does a child her age need, and what causes Sharon’s fear and disappointment? Focusing primarily on Elisa’s needs, rather than her own — which are also valid — may meet with less resistance from George.

- Make use of a mutual acquaintance: I asked Sharon if she and George have a mutual friend, a family member or a clergyman, who she might be able to discuss her concerns with, and who in turn could discuss them with George. Likely, George has trouble listening directly to Sharon; but he might be open to hearing her concerns if expressed by a third party. Sharon said there was no such person to turn to.

- Go with George to a child psychologist or other parenting expert: a parenting expert can address concerns such as how a trip of several days away from her mother (here including lengthy car travel and some by plane) might affect a 4-year-old — especially a child who has not spent much time alone with her father; and how sticking to a routine makes a child feel secure. It’s one thing to tune out your ex, who may be accusing and negative; and another to ignore an impartial expert.

- Consider mediation: as discussed in my March and November 2012 columns and more fully on my website, mediation is a process

through which many couples learn to communicate better and work together to get what they need. Sharon was unaware of what mediation entails.

I gave a brief description and then put on my mediator hat, asking questions and reframing her responses, and confirming that I had understood her.

When I then told Sharon that she had just experienced what she likely would in an actual mediation session, she seemed pleased, and felt capable of doing it for real.

- Speak with an attorney: I have hope that legal action can be minimized in this case, if not avoided. Still, with her concerns, I offered that it might be wise to meet with a local attorney who is knowledgeable about her state’s laws. Sharon, wanting to know her “recourse,” could learn this from such a meeting.

Sharon was very grateful for our having talked, believing that she had a lot more information than an hour before. Energized, Sharon ended our conversation, wanting to immediately follow-up and find individuals and groups that might help her move forward constructively.

Postscript: Two weeks later, Sharon said that “Things are going better. I am armed now with more information, and feel like I am tuning into my intuition, and more capable of making powerful decisions.”

*New York City and Long Island based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin, Esq., helps clients end their relationships respectfully and without going to court. Contact him at [lee\\_chabin@lc-mediate.com](mailto:lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com), or (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/home>.*

Disclaimer: All material is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Discussing your particular circumstances with a legal professional before making important decisions is strongly encouraged.



# Gifts for travelers

Ways to  
make your  
globe-trotter  
happy

BY STACEY ZABLE

**W**e took a look at products that make perfect gifts for friends and family who like to travel. Some of our favorites are below, and they all feature one common element: each and every one is easy to pack when it's time to hit the road.

## Pretty in a box

Skin needs to be especially pampered when you travel, and with the "Glitz & Glow" Holiday Box by Image Skincare, you'll get everything you need in handy travel sizes in a beautiful box for gift-giving. The Holiday Box features a three-step day and night regimen for all skin types, including four of Image Skincare's top-selling products in convenient, one-ounce travel sizes, along with lip gloss and mineral shimmer powder for a little extra "glitz." The suggested retail price is \$79.90.

Visit [www.imageskincare.com](http://www.imageskincare.com) for details and call (800) 796-SKIN to find the nearest spa that sells Image Skincare.

## Natural odor elimination

Nothing is worse than getting home from a trip with a suitcase full of dirty laundry that, well, stinks. The new mini 50-gram Moso bags are great as stocking stuffers that you can place in luggage to remove odor and moisture.

Moso bags are fragrance-free, natural, air-purifying bags that contain moso bamboo charcoal, which absorbs and filters odors, harmful

pollutants, allergens, and bacteria while dehumidifying to prevent mildew, mold, and moisture. They are great for the car, too. A two-pack is priced at \$9.95.

Visit [www.MosoNatural.com](http://www.MosoNatural.com) for more about the product and stores where you can purchase them.

## The gift of travel

What travel lover wouldn't love the gift of a hotel stay? Gift cards from Fairmont Hotels and Resorts can be used for overnight stays and in hotel restaurants. Willow Stream gift cards that give the gift of pampering at Fairmont's destination spas are also available. The cards can be purchased online or at any Fairmont hotel starting as low as \$50. The Fairmont website also allows you to



## A bag with a giving message

Give the gift of giving as part of your holiday season this year. For every When In Need of Kindness toiletry bag that is purchased, the company will donate one bag to Ronald McDonald House Family Rooms.

The bags are filled with a selection of three luxury toiletry items that can include organic breath spray, bath salts, lip gloss, hand lotion, hand sanitizer, or solid perfume.

When In Need of Kindness bags were created by a mother inspired by her 3-year-old son's near drowning.

A portion of the proceeds also go to the company's non-profit arm, the C.L.A.Y. Foundation, which advocates for CPR training, swim instruction, automated external defibrillator availability, and a year-round warm water swim facility.

The company is also encouraging consumers to only buy socially conscious products for their holiday gift-giving.

The \$25 bags can be purchased at [www.winkbags.com](http://www.winkbags.com).

*Stacey Zable is an award-winning veteran travel writer and family travel expert who has written about destinations, resorts, and cruise lines around the world. Her favorite trips are those that she shares with her husband and two daughters. Send travel questions and comments to her at [info@family-traveltrails.com](mailto:info@family-traveltrails.com).*



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# When a child is sick for the HOLIDAYS

## How to adapt your family celebrations in times of illness

BY LARA KRUPICKA

**I**t starts out with your child being tired and looking a little under the weather.

But it's a holiday, so you chalk it up to the extra activity and some richer foods than normal. Soon enough, you realize what's really happening: your child is sick and tomorrow is another celebration.

Most families face illness during a major holiday at some point in time. Given the right attitude and a good Plan B, you can still make holiday memories.

Here are a few tips on celebrating through (and in spite of) varying degrees of illness.

### Short-term illness

Sarah Williams's family enjoyed a holiday with relatives, but they still had a special event on the calendar when two of her children came down with the stomach flu.

"We had tickets to a play that my aunt had given them. They were going to be gone the whole day," she explains.

Instead, they stayed home to allow the sick children to recuper-

ate. But rather than mope around the house, Williams planned a special activity: game day. Her three children each picked a favorite game and together they played all three.

"It was fun. It actually forced us to do something we would not have done on a normal day," Williams says.

Not every family may be able to have a game day with sick children, but the holiday doesn't have to be a complete bust.

Follow your regular traditions, albeit in a more subdued form, out of respect for the person who is ill. Include her as much as possible, while giving her space to simply be sick.

Your Plan B could include a second celebration once the child (or parent) has recovered. Because it's not the actual holiday, it won't be exactly the same. So don't try to make it that way. Find opportunities to make it uniquely special — like the Williams's game day.

### Hospital stays and more serious illness

No one wants to consider a hospital stay during a holiday. But sometimes it can't be avoided, whether due to an accidental injury or chronic illness.

The best resource for coping with a special date on the calendar while in the hospital is the hospital's staff. Find out from your child's doctor or the medical center's social worker what activities are planned for the holiday. And discuss the expectations your family might have.

"We work with families on an individual basis to encourage them to continue their traditions, just looking a little different," says Rose Seelenbinder, a child life specialist at

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Different is an operative word in this case. There's no getting around the fact that your child or other sick family member won't be at home for the holiday. Don't try to ignore it. Instead, address kids' hopes for the holiday.

Seelenbinder urges parents to be appropriately honest with their children.

"We recognize it's hard to be away from home, and these are hard conversations for parents to have."

Encourage your child that "different" doesn't have to be bad. In fact, with some planning on your part, it can be exceptionally memorable.

"Think about 'how can we translate what we do at home,' in a different environment," Seelenbinder says.

It's also important not to go overboard to compensate. It may seem like a good idea, but often ends up backfiring during the transition back home.

Remember to give yourself space. Holidays can be crazy even without a sickness. Add on the challenges of caring for your home while making frequent hospital visits, and you'll be primed for a meltdown.

"What we really encourage parents to do is take a moment for themselves and look at their whole family and how they can support everyone," says Seelenbinder.

This may mean leaving the holiday preparation to someone else. Your Plan B could include engaging in the activities available through the hospital and keeping the bedside celebration simple.

Focusing on the meaning behind the celebration and not the calendar date can also free up your family to observe the holiday in a more

## Holiday to go

Create a holiday basket that takes your tradition to the sick room, whether in your house or at a hospital. Include these elements to make the day special:

- A traditional symbol of your family's holiday (a cornucopia at Thanksgiving, or a menorah for Hanukkah)
- A holiday story book, particularly if it's one you've enjoyed together before
- A gift that can be enjoyed in bed, such as a new CD or music download
- If the patient can eat, include one or two of her favorite holiday foods that are easy to transport, like a plate of cookies.





traditional sense once the hospital stay ends.

### **Terminal illness**

More than 1.6 million people use hospice services each year. So it's not uncommon for a person to be approaching death before or during a holiday.

This doesn't make it any easier, but there are approaches parents can take to help. The first is to acknowledge the situation and how that impacts the holiday.

"Don't expect it to be the same as every other year," says Dr. Don Schumacher, president and CEO of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. "You have to acknowledge that some change is coming. With every death, a new family is born. You have to figure

out how to go forward."

Schumacher suggests starting a new tradition right away. You don't need to scrap your old traditions, but it is important to begin the transition.

Talk with your children about how life will be changing and ask their input on what new tradition they would like to start. And if possible, include the ill person in creating the plan.

"Incorporate them in the discussion without saying they'll be gone," says Schumacher. "It shows them that you're taking on the burden."

Make sure to include visits with the sick family member in your holiday observances. Schumacher points out how this can particularly aid children as they work

through issues of separation. Holiday traditions provide a great avenue for sharing memories. Talking about those memories and the role the family member has played can be powerful for enabling the child to walk toward closure as death nears.

•••

When it comes to holiday preparations, accepting that there might come a time for Plan B can be a helpful process. Then, when you encounter a sickness in your family, you won't have to waste energy on shifting gears.

You'll be ready to find your own Plan B for adapting your celebration.

*Lara Krupicka is a freelance writer who found new ways to enjoy a holiday during a daughter's bout of bronchitis.*

Follow your regular traditions, albeit in a more subdued form, out of respect for the person who is ill.



## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# Bake up memories

**M**oms are about making holiday memories, and there's no better activity for instilling them than baking with your children. Revel in this sweet-smelling activity and invite the aunts and cousins over for even more fun.

### Benefits of baking with children

If you're worried about your children's literacy and math skills, break out the mixing bowls. Baking helps reinforce what they're learning every day. It also covers a wide array of life skills including shopping for ingredients, sequence of steps, measuring, and even cleaning up.

#### Reading

"Your kids will actually become more literate just by reading and going thru the recipe," explains Sharon Davis, a family and consumer sciences educator who teaches at HomeBaking.org and WheatFoods.org.

#### Science and math skills

Explain the role of baking soda and powder in baked goods and how they differ from yeast. Recipes may involve multiplication or fractions.

#### Self-sufficiency

You can prepare your own baked goods, and they can be better for you.

#### Problem solving

What happens when you run out of an ingredient? Perhaps you can substitute another similar ingredient. Or you may lack the exact sized pan the recipe recommends. Your child will learn how to solve these little problems, which is practice for tackling bigger ones later in life.

### Healthful ingredients included

Davis says a higher nutrition profile is one of the principal reasons people bake at home. Take sodium, for example.

"In general, food companies are trying to reduce it in soups [and] baked goods." She suggests using unsalted butter and halving the salt in most recipes with the exception of yeast breads.

•Portion control is easier at home. Davis says, "They'll see an option [that is] not like what they see when they're eating out. You can cut that piece of pie into the right size."

•Any recipe you make yourself can be made with whole grains. In addition to wheat, whole grains include oatmeal and whole-grain cornmeal. It's easy to substitute whole grain for half the flour. Consider white whole-wheat flour or the new ultra-grain whole-wheat flours

if taste and texture flags go up.

•For liquids, consider substituting 1/4 to 1/3 cup of pumpkin, cooked sweet potato or squash, grated carrot, apple or zucchini, or pureed banana.

•Add dried fruits to almost anything including yeast or quick breads and cookies.

•Sprinkle toasted nuts on top of pancakes or muffins, or knead into yeast breads.

### Tips for getting started

1. Pick out a recipe and read it together during story time the night before.

2. Get tools that are easy to use with young children. Look for large numbers, visible lines, and sturdy spoon handles. A whisk, two baking sheet pans, three nested mixing bowls, nine-by-13-inch cake pan, nine-inch square cake pan, 12-cup muffin tin, and two bread loaf pans can get you started. A rolling pin is helpful, but a one-inch by one-foot dowel rod works just as well for kids.

3. Store the tools in a low cupboard or drawer and let the children help you get them out. Allow time to read the recipe together and assemble the ingredients and pans before you start.

4. Teach your children the difference between dry and liquid measuring cups. Measure liquids flat on the counter with a liquid measuring cup. To measure dry ingredients, fluff into dry measure cups, then level off.

5. The website [www.homebaking.org](http://www.homebaking.org) provides over 130 "how-tos" for getting started baking, ingredients, methods and pans.

Baking is about making memories, which is reason enough to risk getting flour onto your kitchen floor. Yet it's also about literacy and life skills. And nothing beats the smell of freshly baked goods emanating from your kitchen — especially during this magical time of year.

*Christine Palumbo is a dietitian from Naperville, Ill., who plans to bake her usual repertoire of ethnic Christmas cookies using real butter. Follow her on Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, on Twitter @PalumboRD or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.*

## Country Fruit Cobbler

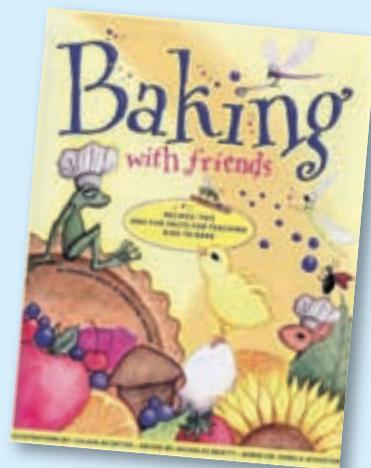
**PREP TIME:** 30 minutes

**BAKING TIME:** 50 minutes

Makes eight servings

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups sliced fresh or frozen peaches (about 8)
- ½ cup fresh or frozen blackberries
- 1 cup sugar, divided
- 1 tablespoon corn starch
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup yellow cornmeal, whole grain
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup 1 percent milk
- ¼ cup unsalted butter, melted



**DIRECTIONS:** Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease or spray a 13- by nine-inch pan, baking dish or cast iron skillet. In a large mixing bowl, combine peaches and blackberries with a

mixture of ½ cup sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon. In a separate medium mixing bowl, combine remaining ½ cup sugar, whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, cornmeal, baking powder, and salt. Combine and add milk and melted butter to dry mixture. Blend just until all dry ingredients are moistened. Pour or spoon batter over peach mixture. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes until crust is crisp and golden brown. Serve hot with whipped cream or ice cream.

**NUTRITION FACTS:** Each 6 ounce/174 gram serving provides 257 calories, 4 grams protein, 48 grams carbohydrate, 3.5 grams dietary fiber, 6 grams fat (4 grams saturated), 72 milligram calcium, 182 milligram potassium, 229 milligram sodium.

Source: Adapted from "Baking with Friends: Recipes, Tips and Fun Facts for Teaching Kids to Bake" by Sharon Davis and Charlene Patton.



## JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# Hurricane Sandy casts shadow over holidays

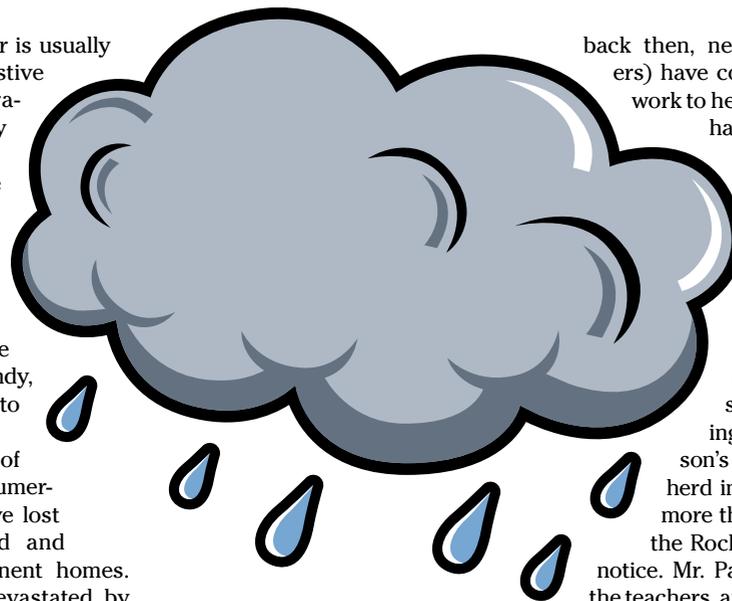
**T**his time of year is usually afloat with festive lights, decorations, and seemingly non-stop parties. Often, whether we want to or not, we engage in these over-the-top festivities to commemorate the particular holiday we celebrate. But in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, it doesn't seem right to go all out this year.

For starters, many of us can't. There are numerous families who have lost everything they had and still have no permanent homes. Others have been devastated by immense debt, and lost businesses and jobs as a direct result. Worst of all, there are those who lost loved ones in the natural disaster and will carry on through the holiday season without them.

On one hand, it doesn't seem correct to go overboard with merriment when so many of our friends and neighbors have been devastated, but on the other hand, we still need to celebrate the holidays with our kids, pointing out how lucky we are to have what we have, and most of all, each other.

My family was minimally affected, our basement and everything in it was destroyed. To say that the water rushed in fast is an understatement. One minute we had a dry house and the next minute, four feet of the sea was rushing down our block.

Everything in our basement was wrecked: the furnace, boiler, washing machine, and dryer. Expensive, but replaceable. Then, there are things that cannot be replaced: my kids' baby albums, baptism videos, my wedding album, wedding video, countless videos of trips to my parents' house, holidays, and special events. Also, my daughter's high school yearbook, some of my first published academic pieces, and notes to and from my uncle who passed away.



But we are lucky, because we are still here to make more memories. Others aren't, and that is a fact that plagues me most nights. Sleep for many has become a cloudy, disillusioned mix of exhaustion and scattered release.

We are still just trying to get back to normal, and the good people of New Orleans who braved Katrina tell us New Yorkers that it is to be expected, and it is not something that will vanish overnight. I visited New Orleans back in 2009, and although it was years after their disaster, there was still a feeling that the land and the people had been through something significant. The residents were eager to share their personal stories with out-of-towners, and their tales were devastating. I can't help but see and feel the similarities here in New York. The helplessness and despair in the days following was palpable.

So, it has been a little over a month now as we try to plan this year's festivities, and it is with a sense of resolve that we will endure it all, as we have done before. There is no exact comparison between Sandy and 9-11, but the mood of the city in the affected areas seems a bit like it did back in 2001, that we have been shaken but not broken. And, like

back then, neighbors (and strangers) have come out of the woodwork to help those who need it. I have received messages from readers all over the country sending prayers and well wishes, and it warms my heart every single time.

I have witnessed first-hand the generosity of the human spirit, and it is nothing short of uplifting. My son's school, Good Shepherd in Marine Park, took in more than 200 students from the Rockaways at a moment's notice. Mr. Paparelli, the principal, the teachers, and students welcomed the new students with open arms.

Mr. Pap (as the kids and parents affectionately call him) showed by example what should be done when something this catastrophic happens: offer help in any way we can. I have never been prouder to be part of the Good Shepherd family. We have also seen countless volunteers from various states heading to New York to help hand out food, supplies, help clean, and offer comfort. Every bit helps.

While we are collectively recovering, we all still want the holidays to be a special time for our families. Our collection of Christmas decorations was lost in the flood, so as we start brand new this year, we will begin with a few, solemn pieces to signify the season and a couple of white lights to welcome hope, love, and light back into our lives, as we send prayers of comfort for all those affected, and prayers of thanks for all those who helped and continue to assist.

Wishing you all a warm and loving holiday season.

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



# Breathing easy

How to avoid  
allergy and  
asthma  
triggers  
during the  
holidays

BY KIKI BOCHI

**T**he last thing you need during the holiday season is for someone in your family to experience an asthma or allergy episode. But mixed in with the mistletoe, miles of garland, and mounds of food, there lurk many hidden holiday triggers.

Whether you are concerned because someone in your family is among the 40 million children and adults who suffer from allergies and asthma, or you just want to make sure your home is safe for yuletide visitors, you can make your holidays enjoyable and symptom-free by following these tips from the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology.

- Opt for natural aromas. While pumpkin, gingerbread, and pine-scented candles and air fresheners can help create a cozy atmosphere, they can also be hazardous to some people. About one third of people with asthma report health problems from scented air fresheners, which

contain volatile organic compounds.

Studies show that an exposure to these compounds that is even below accepted levels can increase the risk of asthma in children. Open the windows to air out the house, or let the scents from the oven provide natural aromas.

- Be selective when you deck your halls. Everyone loves a festive house, but hidden allergens can lurk in decorations. If you didn't store your decorations in airtight containers, last year's items may be moldy, dusty, and full of allergy-triggering dust mites. The tree can also be a problem; some people are allergic to terpene found in the sap of pine trees, or are bothered by the mold that lurks on the trees.

If asthma or allergies are an issue in your home, consider an artificial tree, wreaths, and garland — and store them carefully. Also, watch out for poinsettias, which are problematic for people with latex allergies, since the plant is part of the rubber tree family.

- Feast cautiously. Food allergens can show up in the strangest places — soy in mock caviar, peanuts in pie crust, shellfish in stuffing — so be cautious about what you put on your plate (or the plates of your guests) during the holidays. Even turkey can be risky. Allergens in stuffing can be absorbed into the meat, so try cooking your bird unstuffed. You also may want to stick to a natural turkey, which contains only turkey and water, since self-basting turkeys can contain soy, wheat, and dairy.

- Select gifts carefully. Exchanging gifts with allergic friends can be tricky. Nickel, a common cause of contact dermatitis, can be found in earrings, necklaces, and watches. Candy can include nuts or other allergens, and perfume and other items with strong scents can cause asthma episodes and rashes. Instead, play it safe with gifts such as clothes or books.

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

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# New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

## Fit for a queen

If your little diva has been very good this year, why not give her a holiday dress fit for a queen? Queen Elizabeth I, that is.

The pleated bodice of Laura Ashley's red taffeta dress evokes none other than the British Tudor queen, fruit cake, and Christmas crackers.

With lovely details such as velvet ribbon at the waist, your little one will be the belle of the yuletide ball in this dress, which comes in sizes 2T, 3T, 6, and 6X.

*Pleated bodice with velvet ribbon toddler dress, by Laura Ashley, \$52, [www.lauraashleyusa.com](http://www.lauraashleyusa.com).*



## Keep them forever warm



Handmade gifts are often the best, especially when it comes to accessories that keep little ones warm and healthy, like the infinity scarf for children knitted by Julie Giustino for her Frayd Clothing Company on Etsy.com. Because the Massachusetts-based textile artist uses a "super soft" yarn to crochet the thick, chunky V-pattern stitch, Giustino's scarves are both stylish and practical. The scarves are available in pink or purple marble, but the designer can accommodate requests for your little fashionista's favorite hue. And don't despair, Frayd Clothing Company sells them in Mom's size, too, for \$38.

*Children's Infinity Cowl Scarf by Frayd Clothing Company, \$28, [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com).*

## Sweet read

Start a new family tradition this December with the help of Bakerella's "Cake Pops Holidays" cookbook. Bakerella, aka Angie Dudley, takes these balls of crumbled cake and frosting coated with candy melts to amazing holiday heights. And you can, too, with the help of her clear, encouraging instructions on how to form, store, decorate, display, and wrap your pops. Even small children will enjoy helping to roll the balls, but it will take a



more patient, older child to pop them on the lollipop sticks and help you transform these confections into the fantastic polar bears, ornaments, snowmen, or dreidels depicted in the gorgeous photographs.

*"Cake Pops Holidays" book, by Bakerella, \$14.95, [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com).*

## Merry mix hits high note

Santa will be filling those stockings a little faster this year with the help of Laurie Berkner's new Christmas CD. Her renditions of 15 holiday classics like "Jingle Bells," "Little Drummer Boy," and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" are joined by three original tracks, such as the lively "Candy



Cane Jane" and short-but-sweet "Christmas Lights." All are sure to win the hearts of little ones who will recognize Berkner's voice from her music videos that play on the Nick Jr. television channel. Do you hear what I hear? The sounds of an even merrier Christmas!

*"A Laurie Berkner Christmas" CD, by Laurie Berkner, \$10.79, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*

## Share the joy of 'One' story

Parents are their child's first storytellers, so why not be the best you can be with the "Little One Inch Story Box." Designed by educator-artist Steve Light, the keepsake wooden box (measuring 8-inches wide by 11.25-inches deep by 3-inches high) holds a story booklet and five hand-painted, resin characters that enable the storyteller to act out the classic Japanese folktale, "Little One Inch," about a little boy who is short on stature but long on courage as he battles his way out of the belly of the "oni," or demon. Visit [www.guidecraft.com/SteveLight](http://www.guidecraft.com/SteveLight) to watch Light show you how



it's done. For ages 4 and older.

*Little One Inch Story Box by Guidecraft, \$50, [www.cricketmag.com](http://www.cricketmag.com).*



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Find out more at [ny529directplan.com](http://ny529directplan.com). Or call 1-800-420-8580.

<sup>†</sup> USA Today, "Average cost of 4-year university up 15%," Christine Armario, June 13, 2012.

Investment returns are not guaranteed, and you could lose money by investing in the plan.

\* *May be subject to recapture in certain circumstances — such as rollovers to another state's plan or nonqualified withdrawals.*

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New York's 529 College Savings Program currently includes two separate 529 plans. The *Direct Plan* is sold directly by the Program. You may also participate in the Advisor Plan, which is sold exclusively through financial advisors and has different investment options and higher fees and expenses as well as financial advisor compensation.

**For more information about New York's 529 College Savings Program *Direct Plan*, obtain a Program Brochure and Tuition Savings Agreement at [www.ny529directplan.com](http://www.ny529directplan.com) or by calling 1-800-420-8580. This includes investment objectives, risks, charges, expenses, and other information. You should read and consider them carefully before investing.**

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