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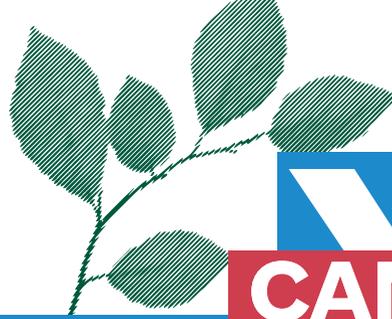
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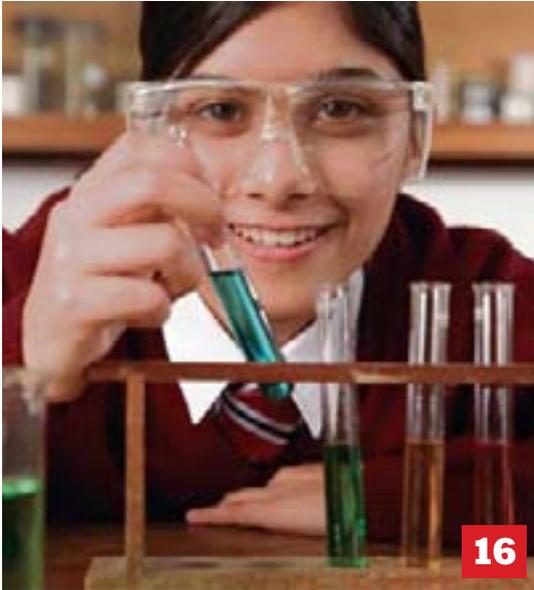


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Family January 2015



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Letter from the publisher

Our multicultural city

If one listened to the news all the time one could get a very dismal point of view about the world today and become largely despondent. There's little doubt as one story after another points out the horrors and the inadequacies



of the global reality that the human experience has room for growth and that outrageous suffering is endured by millions.

Here in New York, however, we are better off in so many ways, starting from the basic fact that we are a pluralistic society that becomes only more so with each passing day. Not that it's perfect here, and we have loads of issues

to deal with and to improve, but it's my contention that if you take warring peoples from far away and bring them here to Coney Island Avenue or the Grand Concourse or Victory Boulevard or Steinway Street or the Lower East Side, they will go into business together and find their brotherhood and commonality.

This is the great beauty of our complex multicultural city and most of the time there is great beauty and one finds displays of human kindness here and sensitivity that surprise the false impression that we are a rude bunch with no manners and a lack of caring.

Raising children in New York City is a breeze actually compared to the isolation of some of the suburbs and/or a rural world where there is less stimulation and far less contact with others.

Our children are sharper, more astute and more worldly. They are more at ease with differences and thrive because of them. They become creative and sophisticated in ways that are copied by every major industry. The fashion world looks to our street kids to find the next wave and the music is created often on those streets, just a few of the trend setting examples of young influence coming out of our neighborhoods.

Life isn't perfect, but human contact is key to the transition from barbarism to conflict resolution.

As New York parents we must provide our children with as much contact as possible because the opportunity here is profound. Meet your neighbors, get involved in the parent association and make sure your children's day to day world is inclusive. Only by knowing each other can the future society rid itself of ancient grudges, vendettas and prejudice.

Happy New Year! Thanks for reading.

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

Community News Group

CEO: Les Goodstein

PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER: Jennifer Goodstein

New York Parenting

PUBLISHER / EXECUTIVE EDITOR:

Susan Weiss

PUBLISHER / BUSINESS MANAGER:

Clifford Luster

OPERATIONS ASSOCIATE:

Tina Felicetti

SALES REPS: Alexis Benson, Erin Brof, Jay Pelc, Stephanie Stellacio, Shanika Stewart

ART DIRECTOR: Leah Mitch

WEB DESIGNER: Sylvan Migdal

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS: Arthur Arutyunov, Raymond Cho, Mauro Deluca, Yvonne Farley, Earl Ferrer, Mariel Perez, Cheryl Seligman

MANAGING EDITOR: Vince DiMiceli

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Courtney Donahue

COPY EDITORS: Lisa J. Curtis, Shavana Abruzzo

CALENDAR EDITORS: Joanna Del Buono, Danielle Sullivan

Contact Information

ADVERTISING: WEB OR PRINT

(718) 260-4554
Family@cnglocal.com or
SWeiss@cnglocal.com

CIRCULATION

(718) 260-8336
TFelicetti@cnglocal.com

EDITORIAL

(718) 260-4554
Family@cnglocal.com

CALENDAR

(718) 260-2523

ADDRESS

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

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FOCUS

on eye health

How to know
if your child
needs glasses

BY ALLISON PLITT

Every parent should be on the lookout for potential problems with her child's health, and vision impairment is no exception. Marc Weinstein, who worked as the Optometric Director for various New York locations of Macy's Vision Express, gives parents some guidelines to help them evaluate

their child's vision.

Although all pediatricians offer some type of vision testing, Weinstein refers to the recommendations of the American Optometric Association, which represents 39,000 professionals in the field of optometry in the United States. According to the Association, the first eye exam a child should have is by 6 months of age, which consists of

a general evaluation that's done to assess the overall health and alignment of the eyes.

Subsequently, the Association typically recommends a second exam at age 3, when the child is able to give some responses. The first full exam for a child will happen usually before first grade. If the child's eyes are healthy, then he will need an eye exam every two years after that.

“If the child doesn’t like the eyeglasses, he’s not going to want to wear them. If he doesn’t wear them, then this defeats the purpose.”

“At the end of the day, children’s performance in school is highly dependent on their vision,” Weinstein says. “If you notice that your child is having difficulty in school, or if they’re complaining that they’re rubbing their eyes a lot, or if they’re complaining that they’re having trouble seeing the board, it’s really important to take them in for a full eye exam.”

A full eye exam should also include a dilated exam, which is when the optometrist puts drops in the eye to dilate the pupil. This allows the doctor to look in the back of the eye and check for any possible conditions that could be causing a decrease in vision.

Weinstein stresses the necessity of the dilated exam.

“Even though people might say, ‘My kid is young and healthy,’ it’s a really important exam to have done on your child,” Weinstein explains. “It gives the doctor baseline measurements, so if anything does change in the future, they can reference previous exams and see what changes have taken place.”

For parents with children who have eyeglasses, Weinstein advises, “Make sure your kid really likes the eyeglasses. At the end of the day, no matter what we all do as professionals and as parents, if the child doesn’t like the eyeglasses, he’s not going to want to wear them. If he doesn’t wear them, then this defeats the purpose.”

Weinstein encourages parents to “really engage their child in the process of choosing the right pair of eyeglasses. Make sure they get something that they really want to wear. Going beyond that, make sure, obviously, that the eyeglasses fit well, that they’re not too loose or too tight, that they’re comfortable for the child.”

As Weinstein advises, an important component for children’s eyewear is that all eyeglasses should always have polycarbonate lenses.

“Polycarbonate is a type of lens. It’s shatter-resistant material,” Weinstein explains. “It includes scratching and ultraviolet

protection built into the lens. You shouldn’t have to pay extra for that. It protects the child’s eye, and it’s also 30 percent lighter and thinner than standard glasses.”

If your children wear prescription eyewear, Weinstein recommends that he should also have a pair of prescription sunglasses.

“People might not realize this, but even at a very young age, exposure to the sun does put us at a higher risk in the future, for things like cataracts,” he warns. “So it’s very important, even at an early age, to wear protective eyewear for the sun.”

Weinstein is the CEO and founder of a company called 39DollarGlasses.com, a website where people can buy glasses for toddlers to adults for only \$39 a pair. Not only does the company provide quality and affordable eyewear, but they work with non-profit organizations to provide free eyewear to children in public schools.

Explaining his charitable work, Weinstein adds, “A lot of times, even when people have vision insurance, if the child loses or breaks the eyeglasses, they don’t have coverage for a second pair. Even if the child did get one pair, if there’s a problem, and children do frequently break or lose their eyeglasses, they need another pair and the parents can’t afford it. That’s where the kids fall through the cracks.”

Weinstein’s 39DollarGlasses.com goes even further to help families who are struggling financially.

“We reach out to schools all over the country, and we try to provide free eyewear for children whose families can’t afford it,” says Weinstein. “The company pays for the eyeglasses directly from its own profits.”

For more information about vision care for your child, visit the American Optometric Association’s website at www.aoa.org.

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



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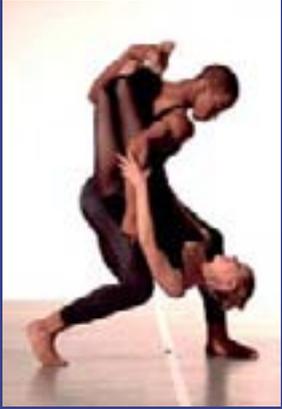
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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Fight colds and flu with these foods

It's back! Cold and flu season, that is. Besides the usual prevention tips — washing your hands often, getting eight-to-10 hours of sleep each night, and drinking plenty of fluids — there are specific foods that can prevent and even help shorten the length of this year's colds and flu.

One of the most important things you can do is to consume foods rich in probiotics. Why? These friendly bacteria promote a stronger immune system by populating the gastrointestinal tract (or gut), the largest organ of immunity in the body.

Yogurt made with live and active cultures, fermented vegetables like kimchi and sauerkraut, fermented soybeans products like miso and tempeh are all rich in probiotics.

It's also important to consume foods rich in prebiotics. These are the foods that fuel our body's friendly bacteria. A plant-based, high-fiber diet that includes artichokes, asparagus, bananas, raisins, onions, garlic, leeks, and oats contains prebiotics and is another way to positively impact your gut microflora.

Looking for menu items? These common foods may be in your kitchen right now.

Vegetarian chili

Most chili dishes contain onions, garlic, beans and a variety of spices. Both onions and garlic contain antiviral properties, which can help combat viruses. Kidney beans are packed with vitamin B, which strengthens the immune system and can ultimately help build your defense system against germs. Lastly, spices not only add a hint of flavor to meals, but can clear your sinuses of congestion as well.

Fresh Clementines

Clementines are packed with vitamin C, which we all know is an antioxidant powerhouse. Although loads of vitamin C cannot ensure total cold and flu prevention, it can decrease the duration of both. Two clemen-



tines account for 100 percent of your vitamin C intake for the entire day.

Roast beef sandwich

Both roast beef and whole grain bread are loaded with zinc. This mineral has been known to stop the growth of microorganisms, including harmful bacteria. A half of sandwich with a cup of chicken soup can make for a comforting meal if you are feeling under the weather. Don't forget, chicken soup has been known to help control inflammation and congestion.

Tuna fish

Tuna contains an amino acid, glutamio, which aids in immune health. Spice up this basic lunchmeat with one tablespoon of low-fat mayonnaise and spread on whole grain crackers.

Ginger

Ginger helps relieve congestion and can calm the throat if you have a cough or slight irritation. Make a cup of homemade ginger tea with a bit of honey and a side of ginger snap cookies for a comforting treat.

Don't let the cold or flu get you or your children down this fall. Boost your immune system by consuming both pro- and pre-biotics. These foods provide a greater volume and diversity of microorganisms in the gut which offers a better defense against disease causing invaders.

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

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Show time!

Kids Night on Broadway is a great intro for little folks

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

As a parent, you have to decide the right age for your child to experience his first live theater show. Kids Night on Broadway offers the perfect opportunity to see if your child is ready. Hosted by the Broadway League, the 19th annual Kids Night on Broadway provides parents a chance to expose their kids to this sector of the performing arts. It will take place between Friday, Jan. 9, and Thursday, Jan. 15, and kids between the ages of 6 and 18 can see Broadway shows for free when accompanied by a full-paying adult. As a bonus, a Kids Night On Broadway ticket includes restaurant discounts and educational programs for individual shows, such as activity and study guides.

This event was created in order to introduce young people to live theater and make Broadway accessible to young theater-goers. Kids Night on Broadway is not just happening in New York, but all over the country. Select shows currently touring the United States are offering nights in various cities to welcome young people to Broadway-style shows for free. Kids Night On Broadway is presented by The New York Times and is sponsored by WABC-TV with additional support from KidzVuz and Z100. Tony Award-winning actress Judith Light will serve as the National Ambassador for the 2015 Kids Night on Broadway.

Participating shows include:

“A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder”

<http://agentlemansguidebroadway.com>, Walter Kerr Theatre, 219 W. 48th St.

The 2014 Tony-winner for Best Musical, this uproarious comedy is set in England’s elegant Edwardian era, and shows just how low we’ll go to make it to the top.

“Aladdin”

www.aladdinthemusical.com, New Amsterdam Theatre, 214 W. 42nd St.

Adapted from the Disney film and centuries-old folktales including “One Thousand and One Nights,” the story of Aladdin is brought to fresh



Photo by Kristina Bumphrey / Stampix

Actor Tony Danza, pint-sized theater critic Iain Armitage, and actress Judith Light celebrate the launch of Kids Night on Broadway.

theatrical life in this exuberant new musical comedy.

“Beautiful – The Carole King Musical”

<http://beautifulonbroadway.com>, Stephen Sondheim Theatre, 124 W. 43rd St.

The musical tells the inspiring, true story of Carole King’s remarkable rise to stardom, becoming one of the most successful solo acts in popular music history.

“Chicago”

<http://chicagothemusical.com>, Ambassador Theatre, 219 W. 49th St.

There’s never been a better time to experience “Chicago,” Broadway’s razzle-dazzle smash. A sensational tale of sin, corruption, and all that jazz, “Chicago” has everything you could want in a musical: knockout dancing, an edge-of-your-seat story, and one showstopper after another.

“The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time”

<http://curiousonbroadway.com>,

Ethel Barrymore Theatre, 243 W. 47th St.

Fifteen-year-old Christopher has an extraordinary brain; he is exceptionally intelligent but ill-equipped to interpret everyday life. When he falls under suspicion for killing his neighbor’s dog, he sets out to identify the true culprit, which leads to an earth-shattering discovery and a journey that will change his life forever.

“Honeymoon in Vegas”

www.honeymoonbroadway.com, Nederlander Theatre, 208 W. 41st St.

A regular guy with an extreme fear of marriage finally gets up the nerve to ask his girlfriend to marry him. But when they head to Las Vegas to get hitched, a smooth-talking gambler falls head-over-heels for his fiancée.

“If/Then”

www.ifthenmusical.com, Richard Rogers Theatre, 226 W. 46th St.

“If/Then” is a contemporary new musical that follows two distinct storylines in the life of Elizabeth



The genie is a crowd pleaser in "Aladdin," one of the featured shows.

(Idina Menzel), a city planner who moves back to New York to restart her life in this city of infinite possibilities. When her carefully designed plans collide with the whims of fate, Elizabeth's life splits into two parallel paths. "If/Then" follows both stories simultaneously as this modern woman faces the intersection of choice and chance.

"It's Only A Play"

<http://itsonlyaplay.com/>, Schoenfeld Theatre, 236 W. 45th St.

It's opening night of Peter Austin's (Matthew Broderick) new play as he anxiously awaits to see if his show is a hit. With his career on the line, he shares his big First Night with his best friend, a television star (Nathan Lane), his fledgling producer (Megan Mullally), his erratic leading lady (Stockard Channing), his wunderkind director (Rupert Grunt), an infamous drama critic (F. Murray Abraham), and a fresh-off-the-bus coat check attendant (Micah Stock) on his first night in Manhattan.

"Jersey Boys"

www.jerseyboysinfo.com/broadway

www.augustwilsontheatre.com, August Wilson Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St.

"Jersey Boys" is the Broadway musical based on the life story of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons.

"Kinky Boots"

<http://kinkybootsthemusical.com>, Al Hirschfeld Theatre, 302 W. 45th St.

Inspired by a true story and based on the film of the same title, "Kinky Boots" is a funny, heartwarming musical about being true to yourself.

"Les Misérables"

www.lesmis.com/broadway, Imperial Theatre, 249 W. 45th St.

Set against the backdrop of 19th-century France, "Les Misérables" tells an enthralling story of broken dreams and unrequited love, passion, sacrifice, and redemption — a timeless testament to the power of the human spirit.

"The Lion King"

www.lionking.com, Minskoff Theatre, 200 W. 45th St.

Giraffes strut, birds swoop, gazelles leap — the entire Serengeti is represented in this Disney production about the circle of life. And as

the music soars, Pride Rock slowly rises from the stage.

"Mamma Mia!"

<http://mammamianorthamerica.com/>, Broadhurst Theatre, 235 W. 44th St.

This sunny, funny tale of family and friendship unfolds on a tiny Greek island. On the eve of her wedding, a daughter's quest to discover the identity of her father brings three men from her mother's past back to the island they had last visited 20 years ago.

"Matilda The Musical"

<http://us.matildathemusical.com/>, Shubert Theatre, 225 W. 44th St.

It's the story of an extraordinary girl who dreams of a better life. Armed with a vivid imagination and a sharp mind, Matilda dares to take a stand and change her destiny.

"On the Town"

www.onthetownbroadway.com, Lyric Theatre, 213 W. 42nd St.

The Bronx is up, the Battery's down, and three sailors are hoping to get just a little bit lucky on their one day of leave in the Big Apple.

Three sailors and the high-spirited young women they meet chase love, dreams, and each other during an unforgettable day in the city that never sleeps.

"The Phantom of the Opera"

www.thephantomoftheopera.com/new-york, Majestic Theatre, 245 W. 44th St.

"The Phantom of the Opera" is based on the novel by Gaston Leroux. It tells the story of the hideously deformed Phantom who lurks beneath the stage of the Paris Opera, exercising a reign of terror over its occupants.

"Rock of Ages"

www.rockofagesmusical.com, Helen Hayes Theatre, 240 W. 44th St.

This explosive musical takes audiences on a joyride set to blazing hits from iconic 1980s rockers such as Journey, Bon Jovi, Styx, Reo Speedwagon, Pat Benatar, Twisted Sister, Poison, Asia, Whitesnake and many more.

"Wicked"

www.WickedTheMusical.com, George Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St.

Long before Dorothy drops in, two other girls meet in the land of Oz. One, born with emerald-green skin, is smart, fiery, and misunderstood. The other is beautiful, ambitious, and very popular.

"You Can't Take It With You"

<http://youcanttakeitwithyoubroadway.com>, Longacre Theatre, 220 W. 48th St.

James Earl Jones plays wily Grandpa Vanderhof, leader of a happily eccentric gang of snake collectors, cunning revolutionaries, ballet dancers, and skyrocket makers. But when the youngest daughter brings her fiancé and his buttoned-up parents over for dinner, that's when the real fireworks start to fly.

Tip:

Purchase tickets via Telecharge.com and use the code KIDS2015 when purchasing tickets.

For participating restaurants, visit www.kidsnightonbroadway.com/restaurants

For show dates, visit www.kidsnightonbroadway.com/shows/calendar

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



FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN

New year, new you

There's always something new and #FabULyss happening in New York City. I wanted to bring you a few of my favorites for the moms and tots.

There's nothing more that I love than starting the new year off with a brand-new calendar. A new year means a fresh start! Are you ready to start 2015 fresh and organized — I wouldn't want it to start otherwise. I found the most amazing organizer, Jodi Starr from Clarity. Decluttering, organizing, and breathing is what the business is all about. Her job is to do one thing: simplify your overwhelming clutter one methodical step at a time. By tailoring her approach to your specific needs, she will create the ideal environment to satisfy your aesthetic while also producing a lasting functionality. Regardless of the project — your home office, bedroom, closets, children's room, kitchen, children's schoolwork, paper management or a pre- or post-move situation — she will initiate a plan to make day-to-day living manageable and productive. Let's face it, less mess is less stress! By taking simple steps created and taught by Jodi, you will feel like you can be organized once again. For more information about Clarity, visit www.claritynyc.com.

Now at the legendary FAO Schwarz is Hiho Batik, an experiential retail store and art studio.

The new shop on the second level of the famous toy store offers customers an opportunity to create one-of-a-kind pieces by participating in the batik process, which uses wax and dyes to create an image.

Shoppers will be able to hand-paint their own T-shirts and tote bags, personalizing each item.

The shop will also sell a special line of premade clothing and accessories, including T-shirts, sweatshirts, and tote bags, created exclu-

sively for FAO Schwarz. I took my younger son and niece to Batik and they had the best time. My son made a DJ T-shirt and my niece made a tote bag. If you are looking for something fun to do, make sure to visit the new shop. It's also #FabULyss for children's birthday parties.

Hiho Batik at FAO Schwarz [767 Fifth Ave. between E. 58th and E. 59th streets in Midtown, (212) 644-9400, www.fao.com/shop/index.jsp?categoryId=3810526, www.hihobatik.com]

"Oh, the weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful, and since we've no place to go, let it snow! Let it snow! Let it snow!" Moms are always asking me about ways to keep their kids active and warm during the cold winter months. Fast Fundamentals, www.fastfundamentals.com, is a wonderful program that keeps the kids active all year long. The program's mission is to provide young and growing athletes with the opportunity to develop and strengthen a customized set of physical skills that will maximize their potential for a lifetime of activity. It prides itself on developing a proactively positive environment throughout all of its training sessions and promoting a philosophy of continual improvement rather than immediate performance when evaluating success. This type of environment is essential in motivating children to try new activities without a fear of failure. Your child will experience not only a noticeable improvement in his athletic performance, but also a huge boost in self-esteem and self-confidence. And besides training with the most wonderful coaches, you can also choose at which location your children will train. If you have a gym inside of your apartment building or belong to a gym, you can bring the coaches to your child. You can also have them meet you in a favorite park close to your apartment. They will work with your child's needs and goals directly.

Breakfast, Babes and Blowouts is a new trend that DivaMoms started at the Louis Licari salon. New York City DivaMoms — and especially working moms — come early to the salon to get their hair blown out while the babies are entertained. Everyone is happy, mom and baby. Louis and I

came up with this idea since I was bringing my baby to the salon since she was three months old. The salon is the most baby-friendly salon in the city. Everyone there loves babies. I felt so comfortable bringing my baby in tow that I of course started to tell all of my other mommy friends with babies to go. Most upscale salons tend to discourage clients from bringing their babies to appointments with them. We decided to embrace it! Make sure to visit www.divamoms.com for the next event. Happy moms equals happy children!

Breakfast, Babes and Blowouts at the Louis Licari Salon [693 Fifth Ave. between E. 55th and E. 54th streets Midtown, (212) 758-2090, www.louislicari.com]

Lastly, moms and dads, do I have a spa for you!

We all want to look and feel our best from the inside out. It's the new year and that means taking better care of yourself. DASHA, a luxury lifestyle brand and Manhattan-based wellness center created to offer a truly holistic approach to wellness, is just the spot. The core of this approach is an understanding that a healthy lifestyle is a result of making positive changes in all areas of life.

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Lyss Stern is the founder of DivaLyssious Moms (www.divamoms.com).



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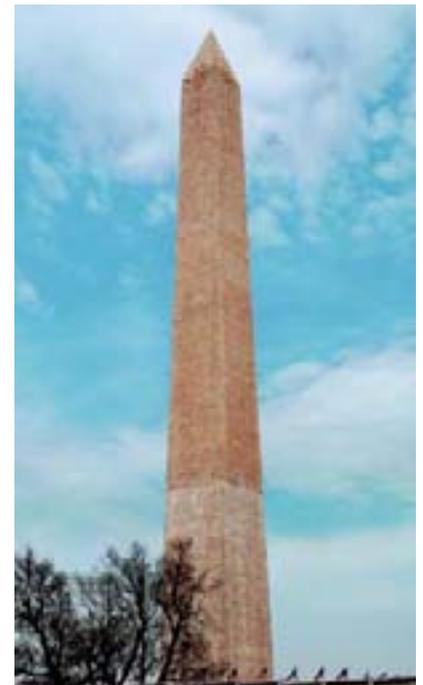
Study will take place at Spectrum Neuroscience and Treatment Institute (Manhattan, New York).

This study is sponsored by Enzymotec, Ltd. Please contact us for more information concerning the study, including benefits and risks.

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The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial on the National Mall (left) is hosting special events this month.

Washington DC

A great weekend for families

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Trying to figure out what to do over the long weekend of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day? Looking to go somewhere that is just a short plane, train, or car ride from New York? Consider Washington, D.C., where you can learn more about the civil rights leader. Although America's capital city is known for its politics, its history, diversity, and accessibility draws families from throughout the country all year long.

Some of the biggest draws in D.C. are the impressive monuments, museums, mansions, and government buildings — many of which are free of charge. As expected, there is heightened security in D.C., but there are concerted efforts to keep the significant buildings open to the general public. With proper planning, you can schedule a visit or even a tour. The opportunity to witness the government in action is equally

thrilling. Imagine walking through the Pentagon, taking a peek into the Supreme Court, or standing in awe of the lavish rooms in the White House. If you are planning to visit the White House, remember that trips must be coordinated through your member of Congress at least 21 days before the planned trip.

The Arlington National Cemetery — and its “sea of stones” that holds thousands of graves of those who served in the U.S. military — will humble you. The gravesites of President John F. Kennedy and his well-known brothers (former Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and former Sen. Ted Kennedy) are also housed at Arlington.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial is grand in scale, and is even more impressive in the evening with its spotlight beaming. By visiting the Memorial (or any of the memorials on the National Mall and Tidal Basin) at night, you will encounter smaller crowds. If visiting on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Jan. 19), you can

witness the parade and peace walk. As part of the celebration for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, you can also attend the Kennedy Center celebration “Let Freedom Ring,” or participate in a day of service to honor the slain civil rights leader.

Throughout D.C., there are statues, plaques, and monuments to honor those who helped shape our country. The most visited sites are on the National Mall, and the National Park Service has conveniently developed an app to navigate the area easily (entitled “NPS National Mall”). Another feature of the app is the “park lens” that aids users in locating nearby monuments. You can follow a recommended tour or create your own. If you plan ahead, you can also print a copy of the useful “Be a Park Ranger” packet for your kids. This will add a sense of adventure to your visit to the National Mall and its monuments.

Washington D.C. is a terrific place for families, and you will be drawn in

by the educational and historical appeal the city offers. There are also tantalizing restaurants that you will want to seek out. During the week of Jan. 19 to 25, you can take advantage of Restaurant Week, when more than 200 restaurants will be offering three-course lunches for \$20.15 and three-course dinners for \$35.15. This will be a great opportunity to experience D.C.'s best restaurants at affordable prices.

Here are 10 places and events that you cannot miss:

Bureau of Engraving and Printing

www.moneyfactory.gov/tours/washingtondc.html, 300 14th St. SW, Washington, DC 20228, (202) 874-2330

Also referred to as the "Money Factory," it offers a self-guided tour that takes approximately 35 minutes. As you would expect, this tour is quite popular, so plan ahead.

Discovery Theater

www.discoverytheater.org, 1100 Jefferson Dr. SW, Washington, DC 20560, (202) 633-8700

A theater devoted to young audiences, it offers 300 programs a year exploring art, science, and global heritage.

International Spy Museum

www.spymuseum.org, 800 F St. NW, Washington, DC 20004, (202) 393-7798

This museum explains the art of espionage and displays cool gadgets. Please note that this museum is best for older kids and teens — strollers are not allowed in the museum.

Mount Vernon

www.mountvernon.org, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon, Va., 22121, (703) 780-2000

Visit George Washington's former home, which is now home to farm animals, a discovery center, and museum. This site is stroller friendly and dogs are welcome. Open all year.

National Air and Space Museum

www.airandspace.si.edu, Independence Avenue at Sixth Street, Southwest, Washington, DC 20560, (202) 633-2214

One of the most popular museums in Washington, it houses 23 galleries that illustrate the story

of aviation, space, and human attempts at flight.

National Museum of Natural History

www.mnh.si.edu, 10th Street and Constitution Avenue Northwest, Washington, DC 20560, (202) 633-1000

This huge museum is dedicated to natural wonders and boasts a great collection on dinosaurs. It also houses an "Insect Zoo," which is home to live insects and other critters.

National Zoo

www.nationalzoo.si.edu, 3001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20008, (202) 633-4888

One of the world's most renowned zoos, it is family friendly and easily navigable with a stroller.

National Gallery of Art

www.nga.gov, Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue Northwest, Washington, DC 20565, (202) 737-4215

During the winter months, there is an outdoor ice skating rink in the sculpture garden. View sculptures while skating with your children.

Newseum

www.newseum.org, 555 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001, (202) 292-6100

This museum houses seven floors of interactive exhibits covering the history of journalism. The exhibits are sure to engage kids of all ages.

United States Botanic Garden

www.usbg.gov, 100 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20001, (202) 225-8333

Located on the Capitol grounds, the garden has living exhibits in the conservatory, such as seasonal exhibits.

Other links:

Be a Junior Ranger: www.nps.gov/kids/jrRangers.cfm

NPS App: www.nps.gov/nama/photosmultimedia/app-page.htm

Washington DC Restaurant Week: www.ramw.org/restaurantweek

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

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The value of Catholic schools

Why parents
choose this
effective
alternative

BY CANDI SPARKS

At a time when the New York City public school system is under so much criticism and revision, working families have found an alternative in the Catholic school system. These schools have historically been the ones to reach out to and support communities in need.

Years ago, hundreds of thousands of immigrants came to the New World to have a fresh start. They put in long hours at low-level jobs, striving for greater opportunity and a better life for their children. It was a financial sacrifice for these immigrants to send their children to Catholic schools, rather than through the public school system, but to them, it was well worth it.

The public schools in their working-class neighborhoods were largely overcrowded and not necessarily providing top-notch education. In order to be more assured that their children would be taught their values — including discipline, which was a rigorous part of their children's life at home — they decided to send their children through a parochial school system, even if it meant struggling to find the extra money to pay for it.

In the early days of the immigration wave, it was primarily Irish and Italian immigrants that sent their children to Catholic parochial schools. As the years went by and new immigrants came from more countries

and continents, the demographic shifted and one didn't necessarily have to be Catholic to choose this educational option. As a result, many Catholic schools throughout the city have continued as an integral part of our citywide school landscape.

Currently, Catholic schools serve more than 160 nationalities. With each wave of immigration — Hispanic, Asian, Slavic and many others — Catholic schools offer diversity. These schools are not just racially diverse; there is also religious diversity in the Catholic school system. In fact, non-Catholics comprise about one quarter of the student body.

“Catholic schools are not just meant for the faithful. We are here to grow faith by building community and reaching out to those in need,” says Tom O'Brien, of the Brooklyn Diocese, which is involved in raising scholarship funds to help families offset tuition. “But not every Catholic school family is in great economic need. Our demographic is changing. We have seen an influx of middle income families who choose Catholic school because of the class size, excellence in education, and for a safer environment than what most parents think the neighborhood public school would offer.”

Patty, a public school teacher from the Bronx, sends her son Ronald to a Catholic elementary school.

“The environment stresses academics and doing the right thing,”

she says. “The teachers set high standards for the children. They are expected to do well and they rise to the occasion.”

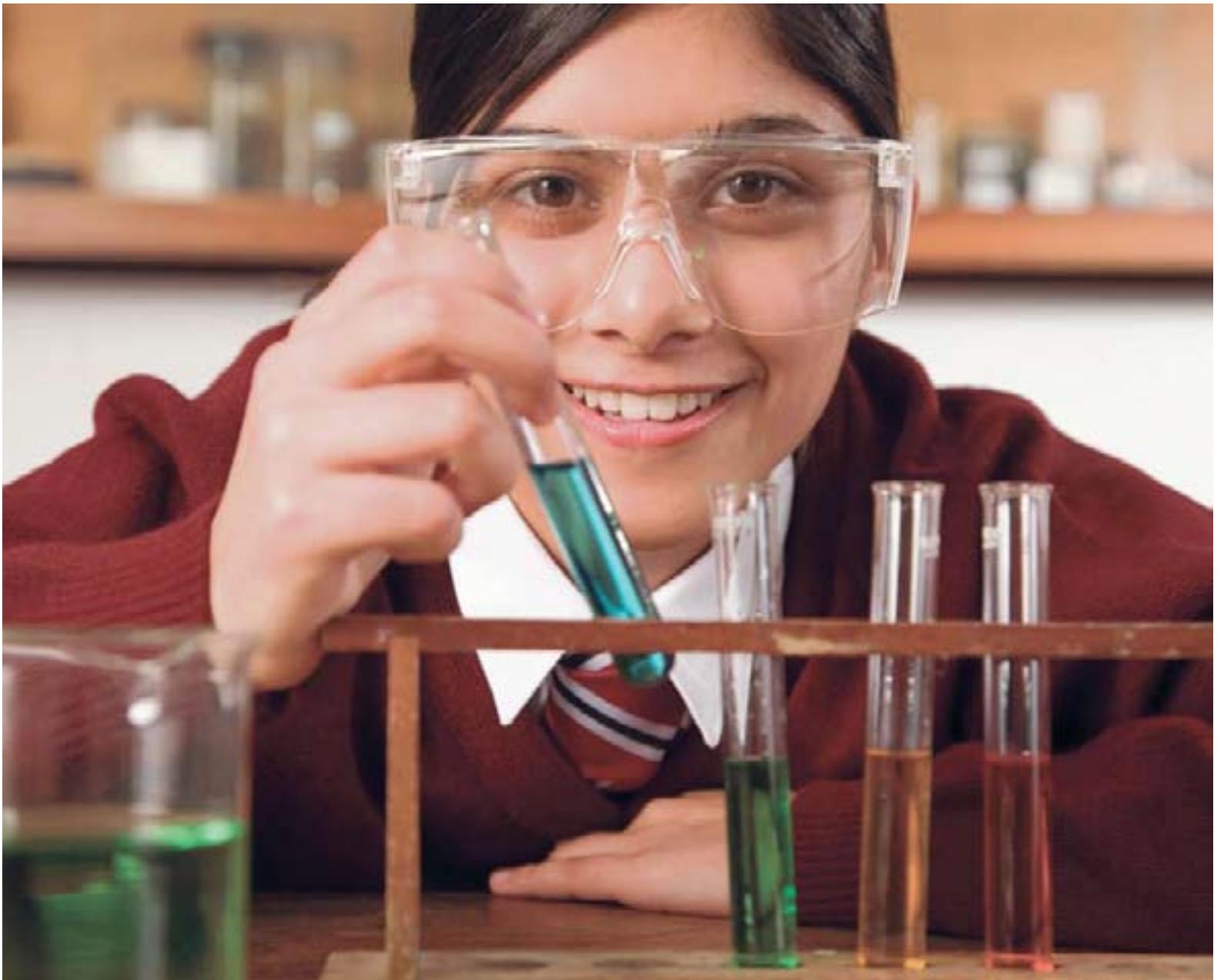
Many Catholic school students are the first ones in their families to graduate from college. In low-income neighborhoods, this means that the school is providing the lion's share of educational support for children who do not have access to private tutoring or help at home.

There is a 99 percent graduation rate for Catholic high schools, followed by a 97 percent college graduation rate for those who graduated Catholic high school. Compared to the 41 percent public high school graduation rate, Catholic school students have a better success rate. They are guided up the ladder of growth and achievement, making a real difference for present and future generations. Overall, Catholic school seems to outperform public school and is a viable, less-expensive system of education in the private sector.

In fact, the only two private schools in New York State that were designated by the U.S. Department of Education as Blue Ribbon — a program that honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools whose students achieve at very high levels, or schools that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap — in 2011 were both Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York. The honorees were St. Ignatius Loyola School on E. 84th Street in Manhattan and St. Ignatius on Mott Street in Manhattan. This year's honorees show the excellence in education and the diverse population served by Catholic schools. The incentives for getting a Catholic school education are different than what they used to be, and this is changing the demographics of Catholic school students.

“Families that don't have money don't usually have many choices. We needed to find a school with the right mix for Benny. He really wanted to play baseball. The only school that we could find to bridge the gap was a Catholic school. We are all very happy with the switch,” says Elizabeth, a Brooklyn mother of two, who chose to send her son to a Catholic school with solid academics and a baseball program.

Likewise, Patty, of East Harlem, sends her daughter Amber to a bilingual Catholic school.



“My daughter goes to a school that gives her [education] in both languages,” says Patty. “Sure, they speak the same languages in the public school around the corner, but it is unofficial. The public school does not have the same structure.” Amber’s Catholic school is also closely related to other parish activities and offers bilingual masses, events and service projects for the community. This makes the Catholic school a great way for Patty and Amber to meet people of similar backgrounds and build a community. Parochial schools celebrate the tradition of faith, family and community.

Unfortunately, keeping these schools open has become a challenge. The Catholic school sector is no different than any other, and closings have been publicized. In response, Catholic

schools are researching and developing new educational business models. Some Catholic schools have closed their doors, only to reopen as academies. For example, in South Ozone Park, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary School and St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr School closed their doors, only to be succeeded by the Divine Mercy Catholic Academy. Because the school involves more than one parish, the school is called an academy to differentiate it from a single-parish school. Since 2005, the Brooklyn Diocese has opened many Catholic academies in Brooklyn and Queens.

The Brooklyn Diocese has also implemented the program “Preserving the Vision.” The name means exactly what it says: preserving what has always been an integral part of Catholic life: the education of chil-

dren. This vision includes developing schools that will be better able to meet the diverse and changing needs of students and parents, and providing competitive compensation and benefits to teachers and staff.

Even though two schools in the Archdiocese of New York have won the 2011 Blue Ribbon Award, the organization is still committed to improving. The Archdiocese has initiated the “Pathways to Excellence” program, aimed at professional development for principals, teachers and staff at schools that already do outstanding work. Because of the diverse population, there is still more than can be done to close the achievement gap. The program is aimed at raising standardized test scores and providing teachers with new classroom tools, such as the digital teaching

program for fourth and fifth grade math, “Time to Know,” which provides online learning, data collection and feedback for the school.

Personally, I am proud to share that my fondest childhood memories revolve around a humble beginning, in a humble neighborhood. My siblings and I attended a Catholic elementary school, Our Lady of Victory, for eight years. I am pleased that Catholic schools are committed to remaining vibrant institutions for generations to come.

Candi Sparks is the author of children’s books about money including “Can I Have Some Money? Educating Children About Money,” “Max Gets It!” and “Nacho Money.” She is a Brooklyn mother of two and is on Facebook (Candi Sparks, author) and Twitter (Candi Sparks, author). Her website is www.candisparks.com.



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Time for creativity

Why innovative thinking is not just for kids

BY JESSICA MEYER

There is no denying how important imaginative and creative play is for our children. As a freelance teaching artist for Lincoln Center for the past 15 years, I lead hands-on experiential music workshops to get children and adults ready to see particular concerts. I have seen firsthand time and time again how students interact more effectively with the world around them, after engaging in activities where they are making artistic decisions.

We learn our first lessons about the world around us by tinkering with how things work and imagining what could be. Children learn about how other people work by inventing games on the playground, role-playing, or collaboratively building with whatever they can find. However, when they make art, they get to take things one step further. By virtue of taking different sounds, shapes, lines, colors, words, movements, or objects and transforming them into

something else, they are processing (consciously or subconsciously) how they themselves work.

The workplace is catching on — recruiters are starting to seek out innovative thinkers with Masters of Fine Arts rather than Masters of Business Administration. Why is this? Because the muscle that gets strengthened the most during creative play is our capacity to endure and process the unknown. We live in a time where we can find out almost anything in just a matter of seconds. Whether it's information to feed a curiosity or distraction to help escape from life for a while, it's only a couple of clicks away. School curriculum has also fallen prey to sacrificing long-term benefits in favor of short-term results: students all the way through college have spent the last decade being shown that preparing for the test far outweighs the ability to think independently and imaginatively.

However, there are plenty of articles out there that talk about what we can do for our children to help them be more creative and connected beings. What about us parents?

There are very good reasons for “putting your oxygen mask on first before putting it on your child,” as the card tucked into the back of every airline seat instructs. With a seemingly endless checklist from work, family, friends, and society of what we should and should not be doing with our lives, it is increasingly hard to find time to authentically process, acknowledge, and celebrate what matters to each of us as individuals. Without this time to process, being truly “there” for your children becomes a challenging, if not downright impossible, task.

I found this out the hard way about five years ago. I was struggling to balance career, motherhood, and marriage, all while trying to maintain (or attempting to find) my

own sense of self. I spent much of my childhood making up songs on the piano, before then switching to the viola, and ultimately studying at Juilliard and becoming a professional musician. We were trying to find an appropriate educational setting for my son, and I just could not emotionally process all that I was feeling. I found myself looking for a piano for our small apartment, remembering what a companion it was through my angst-ridden teenage years. As a musician and composer, I learned that I was just a better version of myself when I had that small period of time every day to make stuff up, instead of just finding distractions to escape from all that I was feeling.

We tend to think that making art should be reserved for those who show a particular talent — which is typical for the outcome-oriented world we live in. But, what if the resulting “stuff” was not as important as just being part of the process? Our bodies thrive during times when we are fully in the zone, have no sense of time, and making choices on the fly. Regardless of the medium — food, fabric, flowers, whatever — engaging in a creative activity helps you process not only what you are experiencing at the time, but also builds the mental and emotional muscles needed for when something way more serious gets thrown in your path.

If we can find the requisite 20 minutes a day to take care of our bodies, we can certainly find another 10 to 20 minutes a day to genuinely take care of our souls. So do something every day that makes you come alive, and go get lost in the process — and you may very well find what you, and your kids, really need.

Jessica Meyer is a violist and composer who just released her first solo CD titled “Sounds of Being,” in which she turns her viola into an entire orchestra of emotion to embody a different state of being for each piece: joy, anxiety, anger, bliss, torment, loneliness and passion. Call (212) 989-9319 for her next performance in New York City at Cornelia Street Café [29 Cornelia St. between Bleecker and W. Fourth Street in the West Village].



The author leads a hands-on music workshop.

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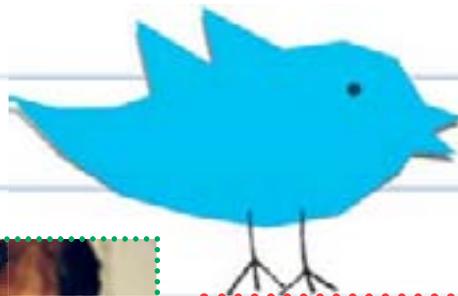


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Recycled love

Talking with Sasha Lipton, founder of Second Chance Toys

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Her desire to help kids in need went hand-in-hand with her green attitude, and gradually evolved into a vision. And it all started with a couple of discarded, rescued, and recycled plastic toys that she donated for the holidays.

Sasha Lipton grew up in a New Jersey town, about a half-hour outside of Manhattan. In 2006, at age 15, she looked around her and saw a lot of sadness — families living in nearby communities who were struggling to put food on the table and couldn't afford to buy toys for their kids. She felt compassion for them and decided to take action.

Fast forward eight years. Thanks to Second Chance Toys, the organization that Lipton founded as a teen, nearly 200,000 gently used, donated toys have been distributed to local organizations serving kids in need, like Head Starts and family shelters. In so doing, Second Chance Toys has helped keep 40 tons of non-biodegradable plastic out of our landfills.

Lipton calls her movement “recycled love and a second chance.”

Due to its partnership with Kohl's early on, Second Chance Toys got much-needed funding to create a website and hire a full-time employee.

And on Thanksgiving Day 2014, in the spirit of gratitude, Lipton, now 24, appeared on “Good Morning America” to talk about her life's work and Second Chance Toys abcnews.go.com/GMA/video/chance-toys-recycles-unwanted-toys-27218383.

Standing beside a ginormous box overflowing with an array of rescued toys, Lipton, who currently lives on the Upper West Side, described the impact her organization has made on so many kids' lives, and reminded viewers to donate toys for the holidays.

The Second Chance Toys story

NY Parenting spoke with Lipton about Second Chance Toys and what's next.

Tammy Scileppi: What were the circumstances that led to Second Chance Toys?



Sasha Lipton at a Second Chance Toys event.

Sasha Lipton: I came up with the idea for Second Chance Toys in high school, while driving around on a big garbage collection day. I noticed that so many people were throwing away plastic toys and I knew that there were so many kids in towns not far from mine (in New Jersey) whose parents couldn't afford those toys. Additionally, I knew the toys were headed straight for the landfill — and that throwing out these plastic toys presented a hazard to our environment.

When I began collecting plastic toys, I enlisted my mom (and her sports utility vehicle, since I couldn't drive yet) and we started retrieving these toys from the curb, one by one, until our basement was filled. We then cleaned and tagged them with notes for the new owners, and delivered them to a family violence shelter in Newark.

TS: How can people get involved?

SL: The small idea I had really took off and has become contagious because anyone can join in and help! Whether you want to donate, collect, or receive toys, just visit our website, www.secondchancetoys.org, for information.

And we couldn't have expanded without the help of corporate partners like 1-800-Got-Junk, Kohl's, and Old Spice.

TS: Describe your “Good Morning America” experience.

SL: It was so exciting for me to be able to share the Second Chance Toys story with millions of viewers watching “Good Morning America.” I especially loved the big toy box they created and I thought it was awesome that they held a toy drive of their own, with all of the producers, so that we would have toys for the segment and so that they could



make a donation to children in need.

TS: So, what's next?

SL: We want to continue expanding across the US and make Second Chance Toys a household name. I hope that someday people everywhere will know that they can donate their toys to other children and that there is no need to throw them away. In order to do this we are looking to connect with a national retail partner that would hold collections during the holidays or Earth week. We are also always looking for new corporations to partner with that will help us grow.

TS: What do you do in your spare time?

SL: I love to workout (mostly barre and spin classes), cook or bake, try new restaurants, and get outdoors as often as possible!

While Lipton sits on the board of Second Chance Toys, she also has a "day job," working as a digital producer at Everyday Health for the past year and a half. Each summer, her company hosts an event in which employees divide up amongst various organizations and spend their day volunteering.

Recycled love and pro-social millennials

Millennials like Lipton are eager

to make a difference. She is a shining example of how pro-social behavior benefits others by changing people's lives for the better and helping make the world a nicer place in which to live. With Second Chance Toys, she says she has the ability to put smiles on children's faces — and that's a powerful thing.

The Millennial Generation (about ages 18 to 33) is made up of extremely ambitious young people who believe in good causes and have high expectations for themselves, as well as for those around them.

In fact, one in-depth, worldwide study by Deloitte revealed that many millennials, like Lipton, tend to be very charitable: 63 percent donate to charities, 43 percent actively volunteer or are a member of a community organization, and 52 percent have signed petitions. And a new study on millennials in the workforce shows that 88 percent — especially young women — gravitate toward companies with strong corporate social responsibility programs. More and more companies have been focusing on addressing a variety of social and environmental issues.

Solange Charas, a gender-in-the-workplace expert, weighs in why young women like Lipton are leaders in the business of helping others.

"Women want their work to have meaning and purpose — for them to have a feeling of usefulness and worth, to feel like they make a difference, that they have some control over their jobs and lives and that they are socially included," she explains. "There is a draw for women to work at organizations with a strong culture of giving back because of what those organizations stand for — namely, providing a context for purpose and meaning of their work. I think this is particularly important for women, as they have a natural (and learned) propensity to take care of others, and organizations that align their mission and vision with taking care of others, naturally resonates with women."

"Organizations that have strong corporate social responsibility cultures are good at connecting the dots of what employees do in their work, and how it impacts the world — or provides a social good, like Toms, [a company that matches every pair of shoes purchased with a pair of new shoes for a child in need]," she adds.

Reputational Institute has identified the top-10 corporate-social-responsibility-organizations as:

- Microsoft
- Google

- Disney
- BMW
- Apple
- Daimler (Mercedes Benz)
- VW
- Sony
- Colgate-Palmolive
- LEGO Group

Making a difference

It's the dawn of a new year, so in the spirit of giving back and de-cluttering, why not ask your kids to donate their gently used toys, as they make room for all those cool, new gifts they got over the holidays?

The process can also serve as a teaching moment: You have to give to get.

Second Chance Toys holds two toy drives annually: One in December and another for Earth Day, in April.

Visit www.secondchancetoys.org and click "donate" for drop-off locations in New York City and other areas. There will be plenty in the spring and you and your family can celebrate Earth Day by recycling plastic toys and giving them a second chance.

Don't see a drop off location near you? Consider starting a collection. It takes just 50 toys to be matched with an organization.



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Cut the mean girls out of your circle

Do you have a toxic friend? If you are a woman, chances are you have had a toxic friend, and surprisingly, you may have kept that friendship for a while. Self Magazine and Today.com asked 18,000 readers about their experiences with toxic friends. 84 percent of women said they'd had a toxic friend at some point, and 1 in 3 surveyed said they had a toxic best friend.

The disturbing part is that 83 percent said they had held onto a friendship longer than was healthy simply because it was hard to break up with that friend. Yet a dysfunctional relationship is still dysfunctional, even if it is between two female friends, so why is it so difficult to end the friendship?

"The reason it's hard to dump a toxic friend is the same reason people stay in all kinds of dysfunctional relationships," says Dr. Gail Saltz, associate professor of psychiatry at New York Presbyterian Hospital. "There's something in it that you find compelling or familiar. Depending on the nature of what's going on in the relationship, you may feel guilty [about breaking things off]. Or it could be that the person has implied you need them in some way — that you would be a bad person to walk away."

It's worth noting that women's friendships are centered on feelings where as men's friendships mostly focus on joint activities and business. Some of the toxic friendship types include those who are chronic downers, self absorbed, overly critical, undermining, and unreliable.

The popular movie, *Mean Girls* that focuses on high school social cliques and the detrimental effect they can have on girls, reflects not only high school. Unfortunately often cliques form in elementary and middle school, and continue into adulthood, in friendship circles, family get-togethers and even the workplace.

What we should teach our young girls is that if anyone treats them poorly on a consistent basis, they probably shouldn't be their friend.



Furthermore, they shouldn't feel bad for ending a friendship; they should feel empowered for protecting themselves. Of course, most of us don't want to be intentionally mean, but setting boundaries for what you accept from others is one of the very most important ways you can teach your kids self-love.

I am just now learning how to do this over the past few years. Growing up, I was always taught to be polite, help others, and extend yourself, which are all good things. It's just that I never learned how to set boundaries for myself or even realize when I was being taken for advantage in my friendships, and being helpful can quickly turn into being an easy target. It's amazing how many of us can recognize when

a boyfriend or a boss is being insincere or sneaky, but don't immediately see it in our girlfriends.

The ironic part is that my friends, my best friends in adulthood, have showed me through example how to be set boundaries without being mean and how to cut off those female friends who are there for the wrong reasons, or in other words, toxic. It's the most freeing thing I've done. Have you had a toxic friend? Did you stay friends longer than you should have?

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

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PEACE ON EARTH

Tips for choosing, promoting and teaching peace in your life

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

Pace, as with most aspects of the human condition, is a choice. It may not be obvious or even conscious, but it is always an option. For every instance or occasion when cruelty, abuse, or violence occurs, a more peaceful solution existed.

The thing about peace, though, is that it is hard. It typically requires giving something up — having the last word, making a point, believing your way is the right way, winning at any cost, or getting what you want. There are even those who have given up their lives in the pursuit of peace. Peace is not compatible with selfishness, competitiveness, prejudice, or arrogance. These obstacles to peace grow out of vulnerability, fear, ignorance, and insecurity.

Peace requires personal discipline, courage, patience, tolerance, and grace. An essential prerequisite for peace is empathy — as Atticus Finch explains to Scout in “To Kill a Mockingbird,” “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.” When we can

look into the eyes of others and see all the ways they are like us rather than the ways they are different, we are primed for peace. When we accept the equality of all humankind, we can promote peace.

Unfortunately, we are living in a time when being kind, polite, considerate, decent, respectful, and peace-seeking is not “in.” These qualities are not considered sophisticated, edgy, or trendy. Those observed exhibiting these characteristics are scorned for their naivete and assumed lack of worldliness. But these individuals are not strangers to controversy and conflict. For peace is not merely the absence of conflict. Peace is both the means as well as the desired end of conflict resolution.

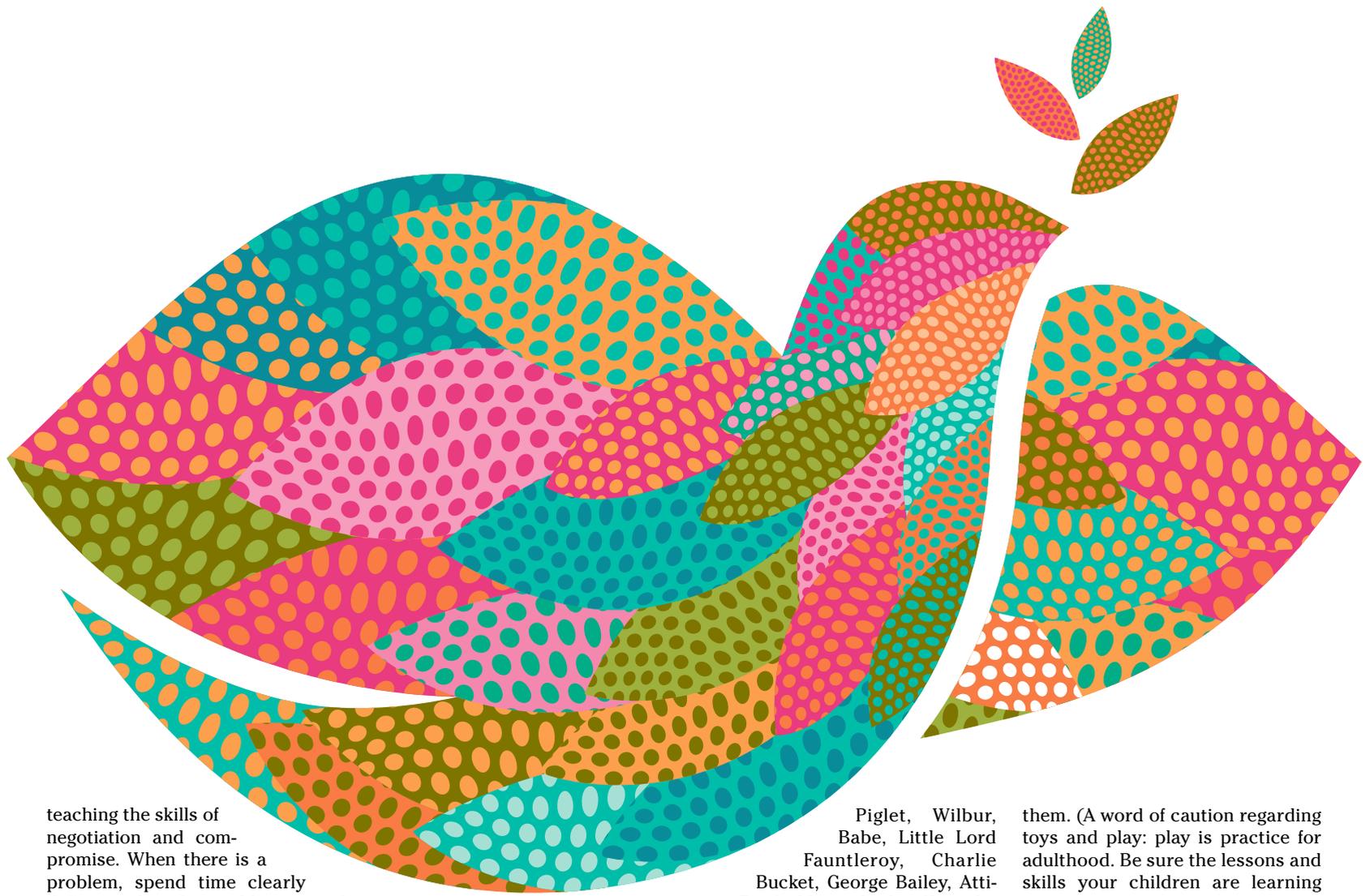
Eleanor Roosevelt said, “It isn’t enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn’t enough to believe in it. One must work at it.” How do we choose peace? What can we do to promote peace in our lives? How do we teach our children peace? Here are a few suggestions for how we can be models of peace in our families, for home is where peace begins:

Study peace. Familiarize yourself with the meaning of peace. Explore the lives of those you would

describe as peaceful individuals. Identify those qualities and practices that exemplify peace. Decide what peace means to you. Evaluate your position on it. Choose words and actions that reflect your beliefs. Share your position with the other significant adults in your child’s life. Develop a plan for peace.

Practice peaceful communication. Remember: communication includes listening as well as speaking, so listen carefully to what others say. Listening does not mean you agree, approve, or give permission. It just means you are listening. Try to identify the feelings behind others’ words. Try getting “into their skin.” Increase your peaceful vocabulary. Think before you speak. Ask yourself how you would feel if someone said to you what you are about to say. Speak without raising your voice. Learn to be honest in a way that expresses caring and concern. It is possible to be honest without being cruel. Make saying something kind a habit. Keep a smile close at hand.

Seek peaceful solutions to conflict. Share the plan for peace with your family. Discuss what the expectations are for resolving conflict peacefully. Spend time learning and



teaching the skills of negotiation and compromise. When there is a problem, spend time clearly defining what the problem is and who is involved. Include all family members in the peace process, when appropriate. Create an atmosphere of trust among family members. Empower family members with the courage to take responsibility for their words and actions as well as the consequences. Take responsibility for whatever part you have played in starting or continuing an argument. Apologize if you have said or done things that have caused another pain. Explore alternatives to unacceptable behavior. Expect everyone to cooperate in instituting the agreed upon peaceful solution. Look for common ground. You are a family. You love each other. That's a good place to start.

Employ peace-compatible discipline. Adopt a preventive approach to discipline. Be sure expectations for behavior are age-appropriate, clear, and understood ahead of time. Be sure consequences are also age-appropriate, related to the offense, consistent, and occur in a timely manner. Whenever possible, make consequences for failure to comply clear ahead of time.

Instead of telling your children what they can't do, try telling them what they can do. Make compliance and cooperation more desirable than misbehavior by expressing appreciation when they occur. We — children, too — tend to respond more favorably to fans than to critics. In her book, "Positive Parenting," Jane Nelsen reminds us, "Our children do not have to be made to feel worse in order to do better." Remember that *you* — your time, attention, approval, and affection — are your child's greatest reward.

Provide age-appropriate models for peace. In addition to modeling peace for your children, point out examples in the world around them with whom they can identify. Introduce them to age-appropriate role models from sources such as history and literature. Knowing that others their age have made peaceful choices in difficult situations can inspire and encourage them when they face the inevitable challenges to peace. (Some of our favorites are Winnie the Pooh and

Piglet, Wilbur, Babe, Little Lord Fauntleroy, Charlie Bucket, George Bailey, Atticus Finch, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Gandhi.)

Choose peaceful forms of entertainment. Pay close attention to the messages your children are getting about relationships, conflict, violence, and peace from television, movies, toys, games, music, and literature. When the messages they are getting go against the values you are trying to teach, speak up! (If you do not believe your children are influenced by what they are watching and listening to, then why do companies spend billions of dollars on advertising? Don't fool yourself. Take control of the influences on your children's lives.)

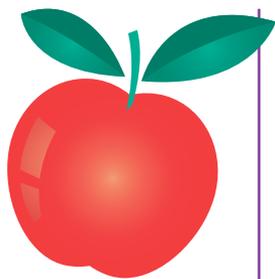
Take advantage of the opportunity to explain your views regarding what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable messages and behavior. Engage your children in a dialogue about how situations could be addressed in a more peaceful manner. Make it clear how you would expect them to behave in a similar situation. If there are shows, movies, or toys that do not meet with your approval, refuse to let them be viewed — refuse to buy

them. (A word of caution regarding toys and play: play is practice for adulthood. Be sure the lessons and skills your children are learning will be useful to them as peace-seeking adults.) Take the time to explain your position.

Have the courage to make unpopular decisions. After all, we expect our children to do so when they are pressured to participate in bullying, alcohol, drugs, or promiscuity. Practice the peace you preach.

If you fall short of your efforts, forgive yourself, make amends, and try again. Peace is worth it. There is a beautiful song, composed by Sy Miller and Bill Jackson, that proclaims, "Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me." Imagine what might happen if each of us made this our New Year's resolution? Peace be with you.

Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman has degrees in Child Development, Family Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy. Waterbury-Tieman has been married for 29 years and has two sons, ages 24 and 14. She spent 15 years in various agencies and clinics as a family therapist and parent educator and has written extensively on the topic of parenting. To contact her, please e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.



DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

Worries with writing

Signs your child is struggling with the written word

Dear teacher,

My kid does not like to write. How do I know if he has a problem with writing?

Dear parent,

The nature of writing is changing, with children texting and e-mailing friends throughout the day. Writing is a very important part of their lives.

Not liking to write does not necessarily mean that your son actually has a writing problem. By studying his written work and talking to his teachers, you can get a good idea of if he actually has a writing problem. If it appears that he does have a problem, it may be related to one of these causes:

- Reading and writing are tied closely together. Good readers are usually good writers, and vice versa. Is your child currently reading on grade level?
- Can he talk about what he knows but cannot express it well in writing? He is losing points on his work because of an inability to state what he knows in writing.
- His writing is unreasonably slow. He is writing a couple of sentences when other students are writing 10 times that number.
- He is trying to pack too much information in a single sentence.
- He is a perfectionist trying to write the perfect sentence or paragraph.

- He is easily distracted after writing for a short period of time.

- He avoids writing -- even using it in social media.

- He makes a lot of mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar in his writing.

Improving reading comprehension
Dear teacher,

My son, a fifth-grader, is a good reader; however, he does not comprehend what he has read. He cannot tell you what a story is about after he has finished reading it. How can I help him comprehend what he has just read? -- Needs to Understand

Dear parent,

Reading comprehension is the number one reading skill you want your children to have. Your son does not have this skill, so he cannot be considered a good reader. Here are some things that you can use to help him improve his reading comprehension:

- Preview a story and then read it to your son, or have him read it to you. Before reading the story or part of a story, ask him to find the answer to a question about the setting, characters or problems that the characters are facing. This will help him learn to focus more on the content.

- In order for him to learn how to read school textbooks, teach him the SQ4R study technique, which is explained in great detail under "SQ4R" on our website, www.dearteacher.com. It involves surveying what is to be read, writing questions to be answered, reading content, answering the questions aloud and then writing the answers and finally reviewing what has been read. Because this technique involves a lot of steps, your child will need to practice it many, many times to master it. If you use the technique with him, he will master it faster and quickly see the advantage of using SQ4R.

Handling a learning disability
Dear teacher,

What should you do if you sus-

pect that your child has a learning disability?

Dear parent,

First of all, keep in mind that children with learning disabilities usually have normal IQs; their problem lies in how their brains process and use information. They could have an auditory processing, visual perception, communication or other disorder. There is no one description that describes all children with learning disabilities.

If you suspect that your child could have a learning disability, your very first step is to find out as much as you can about what learning disabilities are. This is quite easy to do because many websites will give you good descriptions of learning disabilities. Two helpful sites are: LDonline at www.ldonline.org and the National Center for Learning Disabilities at www.ncl.org.

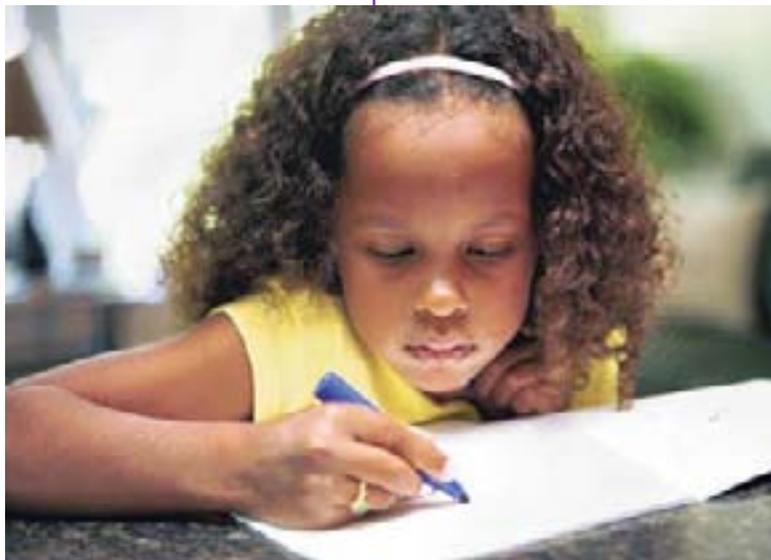
Your second step is to gather as much information as you can about your child that makes you think that he or she may have a learning disability. Then take your concerns to your child's teacher. If the teacher agrees with your concerns, the next step is to ask for a formal evaluation of the child. Should the teacher not agree, talk with the principal.

The next step is an observation of your child in the classroom. On the basis of this report, a decision will be made on whether or not the school will have a psychometrist test your child for a learning disability. When the testing has been completed, you will receive a copy of the results and a meeting will be scheduled to completely go over everything in the written report. At this meeting, you will find out whether or not your son has a learning disability and if the child qualifies to receive special education services.

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

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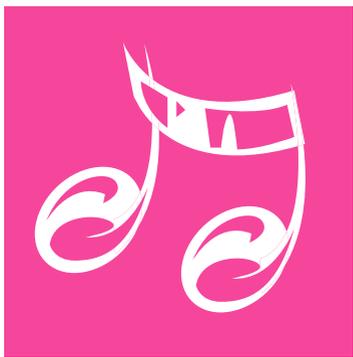
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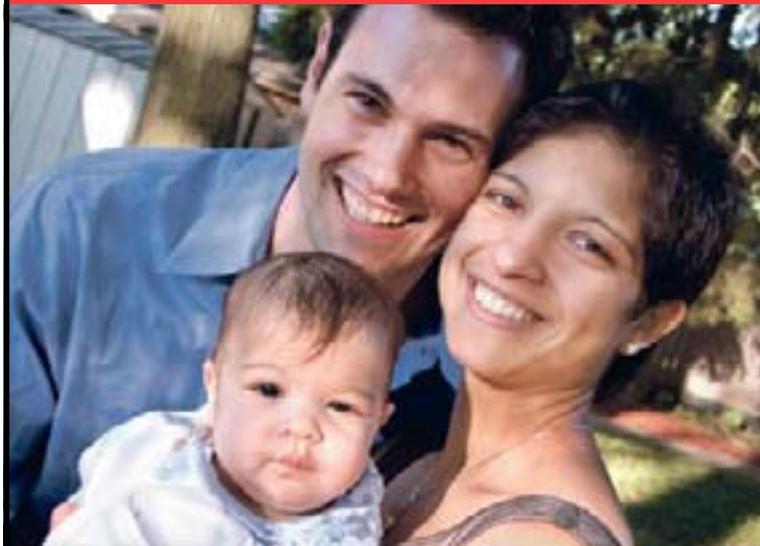
Where every family matters and where New York parents find help, info and support.



**Online Activity Guide
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Once in the proper gear, kids can enjoy the zip line at the Mount Snow camp.

Summer camp the **family** way

Get away this
summer at
Mount Snow
Family Camp

BY STACEY ZABLE

Head for the Green Mountains of Vermont this summer for a chance to combine the best of the camaraderie of summer camp — time shared with your kids and other families, and the comfort levels we grown-ups like for our vacation accommodations and amenities.

At Mount Snow Family Camp, only a four-hour drive from New York City, families can do as little or as much as they want of the offered group activities, with simply spending time together as the most important part of the trip. Electronic devices take a back seat to the traditional joys of

outdoor activities and games, eating meals family-style at long tables and making s'mores around a camp fire each night. Plus, mom and dad can lock their wallets away in the hotel safe at the beginning of their stay and simply focus on the fun because the all-inclusive rate includes everything.

My family and I were lucky enough to have a preview of the new program last summer before it officially rolls-out this year with three-, four- or seven-night all-inclusive packages available from July 12 to Aug. 9. One single rate includes accommodations, three meals, wine, beer, snacks, and all activities (except spa treatments), offering exceptional

value. The age range for kids during our week started at 18 months and went up until 19, with the 10 to 12 range being the most dominant.

Our home for the week was a three-bedroom/three-bathroom duplex in Seasons Condominiums with full kitchen, dining room, balcony and living room with a fireplace; not that we spent a lot of time besides sleeping there. All family condos were located walking distance to the large Sundance Base Lodge, which served as Family Camp's home base/dining hall/game central. It housed the family camp office, long tables for dining that turned into craft centers in between meals, ping pong





The author's daughters at the Mount Snow Family Camp.

tables and a pool table. A separate lounge area was set up for watching videos and the kid's talent show at the end of the week.

We started each day at Sundance Lodge with a delicious breakfast buffet, before heading out for an action-packed day of adventures on and off the mountain. A boxed lunch was provided, and anytime snacks and drinks were also available at the lodge. Each morning was divided into kids programs and adult programs, which differed each day but included mountain biking (everyone is fitted for their own bike to use for the week), craft time, guided hiking, chairlift rides, shopping excursions and yoga or aqua aerobics classes. Most days had at least two choices each for kids and adults, and the incredible staff was always available to tweak any options or come up with new ones on the spot for anyone not interested in the offered activities. Shuttle service to the nearby golf course was also available each morning, and my husband was able to join other dads to either hit balls at the driving range or play a round — also included in the rate.

Most afternoons were dedicated to family together time activities, often off-property. We would climb into vans and away we'd go to the nearby Lake Whitingham for an afternoon of kayaking and paddleboarding one day, a boat ride another day that included tubing, and an afternoon of swimming, games and t-shirt tie-dyeing another day. The kids loved the short drives where they would pile into their own vans and sing top 40 tunes as loud as they could. Some afternoons, we just hung out at the condominium's outdoor pool, relaxing, or popping into the condo clubhouse for our own family epic football games. The condos also had tennis courts, a basketball court,

a full exercise room and an indoor pool and hot tub for our use.

The highlight of the week for most of the families was the full-day excursion to Ramblewild, an aerial adventure course featuring ziplines and rope climbing in Massachusetts. Alternate activities were arranged for families with children too young to participate.

At night, the families would meet up again before dinner for a cocktail or two for parents and volleyball or backyard games for the kids. One night, the head chef at Mount Snow gave a wine and cheese "party" for parents in the bar on the second floor of the Sundance Lodge, while our children played gleefully with the counselors below and outdoors. Dinners were served family style, with two or three entrée and side dish options, including kid-friendly favorites, plus salad and desserts. After dinner, we had our choice of games and movies, or just enjoyed the time to relax by the outdoor fire pit toasting marshmallows and making s'mores.

As with most camp experiences, it is the energy and spirit of the counselors that can make a fun time exceptional. The Mount Snow Family Camp staff went above and beyond to keep the fun on high and to mold the group into one big happy family. We can't wait to return for more adventures this summer.

For additional information or to book your Family Camp stay, visit www.mountsnow.com/the-mountain/family-camp or call 800-290-1823 or 800-245-7669.

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 Stacey at info@staceyzable.com.



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Windows & wheels

Learning to let go when your child grows up

CHERISH THE MOMENTS

BY PATRICK HEMPFING

Why did I have to see that when I peered out from my in-laws' patio on Christmas morning? It could have been anything else — a rambunctious squirrel, a trespassing dog, or low-flying vultures. Instead, I saw a teenage girl run across my in-laws' backyard to the rear window of the neighboring house. She paused at the window and looked toward the street. She blew two kisses to, I'm guessing, the friend who dropped her off. Then she carefully lifted the window from the outside, crawled into her house, and closed the window and blinds behind her.

As a parent, I had trouble processing what I had just witnessed. If my daughter was sneaking out of the house for who-knows-what-kind of get together, I'd want to know about it. I'd certainly rather deal with it now than nine months later when there could be additional issues. However, I didn't know the people, and wouldn't want to cause trouble between my in-laws and their new neighbors. I decided to mind my own business; yet, I couldn't get it out of my head.

About an hour later, I was helping my 8-year-old daughter, Jessie, with her new purple dress. As I buttoned it up in the back and tied the bow around her waist, I flashed back to the teenage girl I had seen earlier that morning. It feels like I was just changing Jessie's diaper. Now she's wearing size 10 dresses and stands as tall as her mother's chin.

I felt it was time for a talk. No, not "the talk" as her mother, Mattie, will cover that one. This one I could handle. I told Jessie that she must never sneak out of the house. Her response didn't put me completely at ease, though I accepted it. She said, "I'll check with Momma." Maybe she knows that Dad will say "no" more quickly when it comes to dating decisions.

Later on Christmas Day, Jessie opened a special gift — a pair of roller skates. The next day we went to the park to break them in. Mattie was on one side holding her hand while



I was a steady force on the other side. Even though Jessie had on her helmet and elbow and knee pads, it was still stressful for me. We went back to the park to practice again the following two days. Jessie improved dramatically each day. On the third day, Mattie just watched while I held my daughter's hand. Then Jessie said it. "Daddy, you need to let go."

Reluctantly, I released her hand but remained within catching distance behind her. Mattie's brother, who was with us, laughed at me as I zoomed in ready for the catch each time Jessie flailed her arms. His laughter didn't bother me, though, because I was right where I needed to be.

Later, I again thought about the teenage girl in the window, knowing that Jessie's teenage years aren't that far away. I realize that more "letting go" times are ahead. I also know it's not possible to catch all the falls. I'm hoping that because I've stood beside Jessie when she learns to

skate, and for many of the other important times of her childhood, that I'll never have to stand guard outside her bedroom window.

I've concluded that parenting requires seeing your child through a series of wheels — stroller, wagon, tricycle, training, bicycle, scooter, and now roller skate wheels. I'm going to enjoy the pink skate wheels stage to the fullest. Something tells me that seeing Jessie behind the wheel of a car will be much harder. When that time comes, I'll be beside her in the front seat. Then it will be time for Daddy to let go again, and Mattie and I will find ourselves peering out the window, waiting for her safe return home.

Patrick Hempfing had a 20-year professional career in banking, accounting, and auditing before he became a father at age 44. He is now a full-time husband, stay-at-home dad, and writer. Follow him at www.facebook.com/patricklhempfung and on Twitter @PatrickHempfung.

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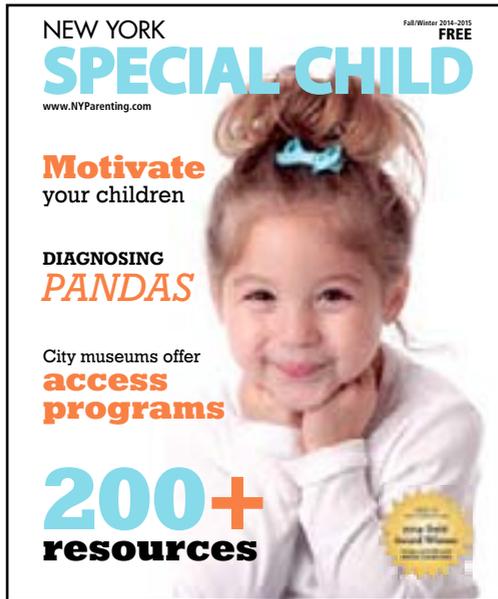
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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Mediators versus divorce attorneys

I'm talking with someone at a networking event, and he asks about the work I do. "I'm a mediator," I say. "I help people — often people who are getting divorced — resolve their conflicts without going to court." He responds, "I wish I had known about you when I was going through my divorce. It was horrible."

How many times has someone said this to me? Many times.

I'll often ask, "Did you have a lawyer for your divorce?" Almost everyone answers "yes."

"Did your lawyer tell you about mediation?" Almost always, the answer is "no."

Some mediation clients tell a similar story. They started with a divorce lawyer, didn't like where it was going, and then learned about mediation, but not from the lawyer. The attorney didn't say anything about the process.

Mediator colleagues have told me of similar experiences. The stories are anecdotal, but I believe that they are indicative of a widespread problem; namely, that when potential clients consult with lawyers, the lawyers fail to provide them with information that they might find important and helpful.

I want to acknowledge the lawyers who do share such information, and I think that there are more than a few matrimonial attorneys who tell a potential client about mediation, even at the risk of "losing" (not being retained) by that person.

Should all divorce lawyers tell those coming to them about something mediation, when doing so might cost them business?

David Saxe apparently thinks so. Saxe, an associate justice at the Appellate Division, wrote an article for the *New York Law Journal* (read primarily by lawyers) in 2011, entitled "Encourage Divorce Clients to Mediate". In it, he pointed out that the litigation process often extended into years, exacerbating conflicts instead of resolving them amicably, and that legal fees can often be enormous,



sometimes well into the six figures, for the more contentious cases.

Saxe wrote that mediation was "more focused on the needs of the parties [than litigation]," and that in mediation "the majority of the expended time is devoted to exploring disputes, proposals, suggestions and possible solutions."

Are many more matrimonial attorneys informing (let alone 'encouraging') those who come into their offices about mediation since the Saxe article was published? Who are giving a brief overview of how it works and saying that the process might save time and money? That spouses who mediate reach their own agreements on how to spend time with their children, how to divide property, and on all their other questions? I doubt it.

Informed decision-making is at the very heart of mediation. That is, parties in mediation are required to gather and share information so that they can make the important decisions that they need to.

Imagine a wife saying in regard to her husband, "I don't need to know anything. What's his is his and I don't care." Imagine that same wife learning that her husband is holding a winning lottery ticket worth \$5 million, and that she may be entitled to a share of the proceeds. Might this

hypothetical wife make a different decision, knowing about the lottery ticket and its value, than she would if she were ignorant of it?

While the example seems far-fetched, I think that the point is clear. Having information may impact our choices.

According to the New York Rules of Professional Conduct <https://www.nycourts.gov/rules/jointappellate/NY-Rules-Prof-Conduct-1200.pdf>, communication is rule number one: A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

I don't believe, as some do, that everyone should have to try mediation, but everyone getting divorced should at least know that it is an option. Then that person can decide what to do. In my view keeping such information from a potential client is downright unethical.

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

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

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Kid movie critics review 'Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb'

KIDS FIRST! FILM CRITIC

This latest installment to the Night at the Museum series finds Ben Stiller returning as Larry who spans the globe, uniting favorite and new characters while embarking on an epic quest to save the magic before it is gone forever. Rebel Wilson joins the cast as a security guard, Robin Williams makes his final portrayal as Teddy Roosevelt, and Owen Wilson plays Jedediah.

This is a wild, adventurous and funny film. This last installment of the Night at the Museum trilogy takes you on an adventurous journey and is definitely a must-see. Robin Williams' final on-screen portrayal of Teddy Roosevelt is amazing. He has a great sense of humor and is in tune with his character, completely. The magic that brought the characters to life in Night



at the Museum 1 and 2 is in danger. Larry Daley (Ben Stiller) must go on an adventure to unite and save them all. Will he be able to do it?

I really enjoy seeing this film. It has excitement and is bigger and better than before. Everyone is back, Ben Stiller, Owen Wilson, and Steve Coogan. They are joined by some electrifying new characters. A lot of attention to detail is paid to the wardrobe, set locations and the historical time pieces. The special effects are big and bold and definitely complement the film in every way. It looks so real. My favorite character is newcomer Tilly (Rebel Wilson, Pitch Perfect). She is funny, talks a lot, and says whatever is on her mind. She goes on funny tangents and her appearance is simply amusing. The cast also includes Dick Van Dyke and Rick Gervais.

Shawn Levy directs this film and brings his skill to making it artistic and funny from pulling together a great cast, production designers, and all the creative people involved in this film. Although the film has a number of characters, jokes and situations, it also has a simple message of teamwork. Sometimes, you need a good team of people working together to get the job done.

I recommend this film for ages 8 to 18. However, adults will enjoy it as well, especially if they have seen the previous two films. It's rated PG for mild action and some rude humor. I give it 4 out of 5 stars. It's a good adventure that will keep you entertained.

Join the wildest night yet and see Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb, it's in theaters on Dec. 19. Please check it out.

— Brianna Hope B., age 15

Hilarious, exciting and imaginative is how I would describe Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb. I enjoy the Night at the Museum movies because I love anything to do with history. This movie brings some of history's greatest characters to life in a fun and entertaining way.

Director Shawn Levy brings back

the incredibly talented cast and adds a few new faces. Larry Daley (Ben Stiller) returns as head of the museum's "special effects." Larry begins noticing some strange behavior by the museum's residents. He suspects the ancient Tablet of Akmenrah, the



source that causes the museum's exhibits to come to life, is somehow losing its powers. Larry decides that he must travel to the British Museum in London to find Akmenrah's parents. He hopes the parents can help him solve the mystery of why the tablet is losing its magical powers. Larry's plan does not turn out as smoothly as he hoped. Some of the residents of the New York museum secretly follow Larry to Britain. That's when things go hysterically wrong.

Ben Kingsley (Akmenrah's Dad) and Dan Stevens (Sir Lancelot) are wonderful newcomers to the cast but, Rebel Wilson shines as the weird and wonderful security guard Tilly. Her one-liners are a little puzzling at times, but I loved them. The original cast is just as great as they were in the last two movies. I laughed out loud at Owen Wilson's Jedediah and Steve Coogan's Octavius as they go through their adventure.

My favorite part of the movie is when the exhibits in the British Museum come to life for the first time. The visual effects' team does an excellent job in creating images that are realistic. The story has many sub plots so it may be difficult for a younger audience to keep up with how each part connects to the big picture.

The message of this film is that parents cannot hold onto their children forever. I recommend Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb for ages 8 to 15 and give it 4 out of 5 stars. Please be sure to check out Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb when it comes to theaters on Dec. 19.

— Simone S., age 14



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Calendar

JANUARY



'Lionboy' comes to the New Victory Theater

"Lionboy" comes alive at the New Victory Theater from Jan. 23 through Feb. 1.

When Charlie Ashanti's parents are abducted, brave Charlie sets out to save them. Using his secret weapon (he can talk to cats), he takes the audience on a cross-continental rescue

mission to a floating circus, a hot air balloon, a pride of talking lions, and a very crafty chameleon.

"Lionboy" from Jan. 23 through Feb. 1. Tickets start at \$15.

The New Victory Theater [209 W. 42nd St. in Times Square; (646) 223-3010; www.newvictory.org]

Submit a listing

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

Send your listing request to 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!

FRI, JAN. 2 IN MANHATTAN

Shababa Fridays: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 9:30-10:15 am, and 10:45-11:30 am; \$10 adults.

Enjoy a friendly, welcoming atmosphere and give your toddler an opportunity to embrace the festive feeling of Shabbat with songs, stories, challah and snacks.

Drop-in Days: Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden, 421 E. 61st St. between First and York Avenues; (212) 838-6878; www.mvhm.org; 11 am to 4 pm. Free with museum admission.

Drop in any time during regular museum hours for a family-friendly tour, featuring "A Visit from St. Nicholas"-inspired museum hunt.

FURTHER AFIELD

Music and movement: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 12:30 pm. Free with museum admission.

Stomp your feet and count the beats - learn about traditional dances.

Light it up: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Many holiday traditions use light in this dark time of year. Come learn the science behind light bulbs, and safely experiment with electricity using common objects in strange and fun ways.

SAT, JAN. 3 IN MANHATTAN

Shababa Saturday Experiences: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 10:30 am-noon. Free.

Newborn-10 year olds join the Sha-



Enjoy Three Kings Day

Children celebrate El Dia de los Tres Reyes Magos at Teatro Sea on Jan. 6

Three Kings Day is one of the most important Latin American holidays for children. Families will enjoy live music by Los Pleneros de la 21 and Mariachi Academy of New York, free samples of food and beverages provided by GOYA Foods, and have their

faces painted while enjoying cotton candy.

The first 1,000 children will personally meet the Three Kings and receive a free gift!

Celebrate on Jan. 6 from 3 to 5 pm. Free.

Teatro Sea [107 Suffolk St. between Rivington and Delancey streets; (212) 529-1545; www.teatro-sea.org].

SUN, JAN. 4

IN MANHATTAN

Macy's Sunday Story Time: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 11:30 am; \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5-12.

Families discover New York history through tales of the past and celebrate the Holiday Express exhibition with train tales. For ages 4 - 7.

Teddy Bear Tea: Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden, 421 E. 61st St. between First and York Avenues; (212) 838-6878; www.mvhm.org; 1 pm; \$10 adults, \$5 children under 12.

Children, ages 3-6, bring their favorite teddy bear (or doll) to meet Mrs. Woodhull, the hotel proprietor's wife, and role-play the daily activities at the Mount Vernon Hotel in 1830. Reservations recommended.

MON, JAN. 5

IN MANHATTAN

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

Meet with other moms, babies and a lactation specialist from 92Y Parenting Center to discuss topics such as the emotional ups and downs of breastfeeding, what happens when your milk supply is weak, how to juggle breastfeeding and work, and whether and how to supplement.

Pre Robotics for Grades K - 2nd: Bloomingdale Library, 150 West 100th Street; (212) 222-8030; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Sample projects include an alligator that opens and closes its mouth, a bird that flaps its wings and a Ferris wheel that goes 'round and 'round. Presented by RoboFun. Preregistration required.

Family Country Dance: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 5:30-8:30 pm; Free.

There will be Squares, Circle dances, Reels and Lines. Bring a dish and share in a vegetarian pot-luck supper before the dancing begins. The Hell's Kitchen Cookers will provide the live traditional American music, and the callers are Henry Chapin and Lucia Wright.

TUES, JAN. 6

IN MANHATTAN

"El Día de los Tres Reyes Magos": Teatro Sea, 107 Suffolk St. between Rivington and Delancey streets; (212) 529-1545; www.teatrosea.org; 3-5 pm. Free.

Celebrate Three Kings Day, one of the most important Latin American Holidays for children. Live music, free samples of food, face painting, and more.

WED, JAN. 7

IN MANHATTAN

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

Led by 92Y Parenting Center director Sally Tannen and New York's top child psychologists and pediatricians, this weekly discussion group is a great way for new parents to share experiences, learn from one another and make friends.

Budding Bookmakers: Battery Park City Library, 175 North End Avenue; (212) 790-3499; www.nypl.org; 4 pm. Free.

Session begins with an interactive book reading followed by an art activity exploring the techniques used by the illustrator. Presented by Children's Museum of Manhattan, for ages 5 and older.

Continued on page 40

Calendar

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

Continued from page 39

THURS, JAN. 8

IN MANHATTAN

Cross-Stitch Circle: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 3:30 pm; \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5-12.

Drop in to try your skills at one of the oldest forms of embroidery in the world. Beginning cross stitchers and younger children will learn the basic stitch and create a bookmark with their new skill.

FRI, JAN. 9

IN MANHATTAN

Shababa Fridays: 9:30-10:15 am OR 10:45-11:30 am. 92Y. See Friday, Jan. 2.

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

Children squish, roll and braid their own challah to take home and bake.

SAT, JAN. 10

IN MANHATTAN

Shababa Saturday Experiences: 10:30 am-noon. 92Y. See Saturday, Jan. 3.

Bereavement Support Group For Siblings: COPE, 274 Madison Ave. between 39th and 40th Streets, Room 1202; (9516) 484-4993; 11 am. Free.

COPE, a grief and healing organization dedicated to supporting parents and families living with the loss of a child, offers bereavement support groups for young adults who have lost a sibling one Saturday a month, facilitated by a licensed social worker.

"Stella, Queen of the Snow": Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am and 2 pm; \$12 and up.

In this new 2014 production, the classic story by Marie-Louise Gay (best-selling author of the "Stella and Sam" series) is adapted into a puppetry spectacle.

SUN, JAN. 11

IN MANHATTAN

Second Sunday Family Tours: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street; (212) 423-3500; www.guggenheim.org; 10:30 am-noon; \$15 per family (includes museum admission and tour for two adults and up to four children).

In today's theme, New Year's Resolution: Get into Shape(s), families with



Ben Rudnick & Friends

Ben Rudnick & Friends come to Symphony Space on Jan. 31.

The popular Boston children's band returns to New York City for a morning jam session of cheerful kid-friendly music. Playing everything from light folk and bluegrass to calypso and rock and even Irish jigs, Ben Rudnick & Friends are guaranteed to supply

an entertaining musical morning for all members of the family. And singing along is expected!

Ben Rudnick & Friends on Sat. Jan. 31 at 11 am. Tickets are \$12 and up.

Symphony Space [2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street on the Upper West Side; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org].

kids ages 5-10, kick off 2015 by learning how artists use shapes in their work.

"Mike Super: Magic and Illusion": Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am and 2 pm; \$12 and up.

This nationally acclaimed illusionist and "America's Got Talent" finalist performs super-human acts to mystify even the most savvy kid (or parent).

Broadway Playhouse: Charles Strouse: Merkin Concert Hall at Kaufman Music Center, 129 W. 67th St. between Amsterdam and Broadway; (212) 501-3330; www.kaufmanmusic-

center.org; 11 am; \$20.

Children ages 4-11 listen to the masterpieces of American musical theater, celebrate "Annie" composer Charles Strouse and hear songs from Annie (1977) as well as the Elvis-inspired Bye, Bye Birdie (1960) and more.

Macy's Sunday Story Time: 11:30 am. New-York Historical Society. See Sunday, Jan. 4.

FURTHER AFIELD

Gingerbread Lane Giveaway: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X353; www.nyscience.org; Noon; Free with museum admission.

Take a piece of the Gingerbread Lane home with you Houses will be given away on a first-come-first served basis until the last square of real-estate is gone. Limit one house per person.

MON, JAN. 12

IN MANHATTAN

Breastfeeding Support Group: 11:15 am-12:30 pm. 92Y. See Monday, Jan. 5.

Pre Robotics for Grades K - 2nd: 4 pm. Bloomingdale Library. See Monday, Jan. 5.

TUES, JAN. 13

IN MANHATTAN

Bereavement Support Group For Parents: COPE, 1177 Avenue of the Americas at 46th Street, floor C-2, Suite 0020; (516) 484-4993; 7 pm. Free.

COPE, a grief and healing organization dedicated to supporting parents and families living with the loss of a child, is starting up monthly support groups in New York City for bereaved parents, facilitated by a licensed social worker.

WED, JAN. 14

IN MANHATTAN

New Parent Get-Togethers: 10:30 am-noon. 92Y. See Wednesday, Jan. 7.

Budding Bookmakers: 4 pm. Battery Park City Library. See Wednesday, Jan. 7.

THURS, JAN. 15

IN MANHATTAN

Cross-Stitch Circle: 3:30 pm. New-York Historical Society. See Thursday, Jan. 8.

FRI, JAN. 16

IN MANHATTAN

Shababa Fridays: 9:30-10:15 am OR 10:45-11:30 am. 92Y. See Friday, Jan. 2.

SAT, JAN. 17

IN MANHATTAN

Civil Rights Weekend Scavenger Hunt: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 10 am-6 pm; \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5-12.

Families take a deeper look at the courageous people who marched for equal voting rights through a scavenger hunt matching faces to the names

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

of heroes from the Civil Rights Movement, for ages 8 and up.

Shababa Saturday Experiences: 10:30 am–noon. 92Y. See Saturday, Jan. 3.

Concert: Tim Kubart and the Space Cadets: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$12 and up.

Sprout TV's "Sunny Side Up Show" host Tim and his NYC based band will perform their charming and engaging pop tunes about superheroes, talent shows, and other things that kids love.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Learn all about the civil rights leader.

Film Screening: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 12:30 pm. Free with museum admission.

"Our Friend, Martin" animated film uses historical footage of the civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

SUN, JAN. 18

IN MANHATTAN

Civil Rights Weekend Scavenger Hunt: 10 am–6 pm. New-York Historical Society. See Saturday, Jan. 17.

Art Workshop & Gallery Tour: The Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Ave. at 92nd St.; (212) 423-3200; thejewishmuseum.org; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$15 adults; \$10 children.

Children, ages 6-10, discover the expressive and colorful worlds of painters Lee Krasner and Norman Lewis. Examine rhythmic lines, abstract jazz musicians, rich layers of drips and more on a gallery tour. Inspired by what you see, paint with experimental tools to create your own vibrant work of art.

Concert: Tim Kubart and the Space Cadets: 11 am. Symphony Space. See Saturday, Jan. 17.

Macy's Sunday Story Time: 11:30 am. New-York Historical Society. See Sunday, Jan. 4.

Meet Lynda Blackmon Lowery, Freedom Marcher: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 2 pm; \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5-12.

Hear Lynda Blackmon Lowery, the youngest participant in the historic 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, share her experiences as recounted in the memoir Turning 15 on



Harlem Gospel Choir

Join the Harlem Gospel Choir as part of the Meet the Artist Saturday at Lincoln Center on Jan. 3.

Kick off the New Year begins with the beautiful sounds of the world-famous Harlem Gospel Choir. The choir, which has been together for more than 20 years, has performed for three presidents and two popes.

the Road to Freedom. Ages 8 and up.

FURTHER AFIELD

Film Screening: 12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Jan. 17.

MON, JAN. 19

IN MANHATTAN

Civil Rights Weekend Scavenger Hunt: 10 am–6 pm. New-York Historical Society. See Saturday, Jan. 17.

Breastfeeding Support Group: 11:15 am–12:30 pm. 92Y. See Monday, Jan. 5.

TUES, JAN. 20

IN MANHATTAN

Stroller Tours: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street; (212) 423-3500; www.guggenheim.org; 3–4 pm; \$20 per stroller (includes museum admission).

Led by a museum educator, one-hour tours of the Guggenheim's fall exhibitions are given for caregivers and their babies.

On Jan. 3 it performs an inspiring family program to celebrate the upcoming Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

Sat., Jan. 3 at 11 am. Free.

David Rubenstein Atrium at Lincoln Center, Frieda and Roy Furman Stage [Broadway between 62nd and 63rd streets on the Upper West Side; (212) 875-5374; www.lincolncenter.org].

WED, JAN. 21

IN MANHATTAN

Budding Bookmakers: 4 pm. Battery Park City Library. See Wednesday, Jan. 7.

THURS, JAN. 22

IN MANHATTAN

Cross-Stitch Circle: 3:30 pm. New-York Historical Society. See Thursday, Jan. 8.

FRI, JAN. 23

IN MANHATTAN

Shababa Fridays: 9:30–10:15 am OR 10:45–11:30 am. 92Y. See Friday, Jan. 2.

Shababa Bakery: 10:15 am. 92Y. See Friday, Jan. 9.

SAT, JAN. 24

IN MANHATTAN

Shababa Saturday Experiences: 10:30 am–noon. 92Y. See Saturday, Jan. 3.

A Bilingual Morning of Song with Moona Luna: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$12 and up.

NYC based band leader Sandra Velasquez (of Pistolera fame) brings her full band playing accordion, guitar, percussion and bass for this family concert.

SUN, JAN. 25

IN MANHATTAN

Parenting Conference: Why Fathers Matter: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 10 am–3 pm; \$99.

Topics include at-home dads, parenting partnerships, and the science of fatherhood.

Children's Concert: Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Place at First Place; (646) 437-4202; www.mjhnyc.org; 10:30 am; \$10, \$7 for children 10 and under.

Brooklyn band Yellow Sneaker and their puppet pals nurture family bonds and bridge connections to Jewish life and traditions through their performance.

Studio Workshop: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street; (212) 423-3500; www.guggenheim.org; 10:30 am–1 pm; \$30 per family (includes museum admission, workshop materials, and tour for two adults and up to four children).

In today's theme, Fat and Flat, families with kids ages 5-12, see 2D and 3D artworks throughout the museum and then construct their own versions to take home.

Workshop for Kids with Special Needs: The Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Ave. at 92nd St.; (212) 423-3200; thejewishmuseum.org; 10:30 am–12:30 pm. Free.

Children, ages 5-17, examine works of art and create one of their own in this program for families with children who have developmental or learning disabilities. Workshops include gallery activities, an art project, and snacks.

Macy's Sunday Story Time: 11:30 am. New-York Historical Society. See Sunday, Jan. 4.

Kids 'N Comedy: 208 West 23rd St. between 7th and 8th avenues; (212) 877-6115; www.kidsncomedy.com; 1 pm; \$15.

Enjoy NYC's best teenaged comics joke about their plans for the New Year and the resolutions they haven't ditched yet.

Thalia Kids Book Club: Symphony
Continued on page 42

Continued from page 41

Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 1 pm; \$15.

Celebrate the 40th anniversary of "Tuck Everlasting" with Natalie Babbitt and special guests. Babbitt's classic story centers on a young girl who stumbles upon the mysterious Tuck family and their secret, magic spring. An audience Q+A and book signing will follow the discussion.

Danny Weinkauf Concert: The Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Ave. at 92nd St.; (212) 423-3200; thejewish-museum.org; 2 pm; \$18 adults; \$13 children.

Grammy winner and bassist for They Might Be Giants Danny Weinkauf and his Red Pants Band perform hits songs Archaeology, The Moon is Made of Cheese, and others from their notable album.

MON, JAN. 26

IN MANHATTAN

Breastfeeding Support Group: 11:15 am-12:30 pm. 92Y. See Monday, Jan. 5.

Pre Robotics for Grades K - 2nd: 4 pm. Bloomingdale Library. See Monday, Jan. 5.

Broadway Unplugged: Town Hall, 333 West 43rd St. between 8th and 9th avenues; (800) 982-2787; 8 pm; \$22 and up.

For the 12th year, Scott Siegel presents some of Broadway's best talent, belting it out without a mic.

TUES, JAN. 27

FURTHER AFIELD

Bug Out: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3:30 pm. Free with museum admission.

Meet grasshoppers, worms, stick bugs and cockroaches - eeeek!

WED, JAN. 28

IN MANHATTAN

New Parent Get-Togethers: 10:30 am-noon. 92Y. See Wednesday, Jan. 7.

Budding Bookmakers: 4 pm. Battery Park City Library. See Wednesday, Jan. 7.

THURS, JAN. 29

IN MANHATTAN

Cross-Stitch Circle: 3:30 pm. New-York Historical Society. See Thursday, Jan. 8.



Parenting conference

The 92Y presents the third annual 92Y Parenting Conference on Jan. 25 — with a focus on dads.

Both working and stay-at-home parents will benefit from hearing the latest from today's top experts on how to be great role models, and raise happy, healthy kids, at the forum, "Why Fathers Matter: Creating Successful Parenting Partnerships."

Topics include: At-home Dads: What Do Breadwinning Moms Really Think?; Juggling Dads: Finding Time for Work, Family & Play; and Parenting Partnerships: Building a High-Perfor-

mance Parenting Team.

"The Science of Fatherhood" delivers the lowdown on how research is changing the conversation, and how fathers shape their children's bodies, brains and futures.

Speakers include psychologist and author Dr. Michael Thompson; author Paul Raeburn ("Do Fathers Matter"); and Lance Somerfeld, founder of NYC Dads.

Parent workshop, Jan. 25 from 10 am to 3 pm; tickets are \$99.

92Y [1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street on the Upper East Side; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org].

FRI, JAN. 30

IN MANHATTAN

Shababa Fridays: 9:30-10:15 am OR 10:45-11:30 am. 92Y. See Friday, Jan. 2.

SAT, JAN. 31

IN MANHATTAN

Baby Got Bach: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 10 am; \$18 and up.

Flute, clarinet, French horn and more—explore the fascinating world of wind instruments with Orli and friends in this interactive event for children.

Shababa Saturday Experiences: 10:30 am-noon. 92Y. See Saturday, Jan. 3.

Concert: Ben Rudnick & Friends: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$12

and up.

Musically adventurous, the band boasts a high level of musicianship. Their enthusiastic recordings and live performances seamlessly range from light folk, bluegrass, calypso, rock and even Irish jigs. Singing along is expected.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Discover the art of quilts and share stories and decorate a quilt square to take home.

To the Moon: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children discover why some traditions are based on the moon and touch a real rock from outer space.

LONG-RUNNING

IN MANHATTAN

Drawn to Language: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; \$11.

In this new exhibition, words are given visual form. Letters, words, or phrases are transcribed, visualized, verbalized, symbolized, morphed into patterns, scrambled, or even erased.

Holiday Express from the Jerni Train Collection: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5-12.

Witness the holiday transformation with the installation of a spectacular exhibit of treasures from the renowned Jerni Collection of model trains, scenic elements and toys. The display appeals to all ages, showcasing the beauty and allure of toys from a bygone era.

George Balanchine's The Nutcracker: David H. Koch Theater, Josie Robertson Plaza at Columbus Avenue and 63rd Street; (212) 496-0600; nycballet.com; Start at \$35.

Highlights of this world-renowned holiday production include a one-ton Christmas tree that grows from 12 to 40 feet, an onstage snowstorm, and hundreds of elaborate costumes, including one for Mother Ginger that measures nine feet wide and weighs 85 pounds. The production's grand finale involves one million watts of lighting, the most used in any New York City Ballet production.

Handmade: Artists' Holiday Cards: The Morgan Library & Museum, 225 Madison Ave. between West 36th and West 37th streets; (212) 685-0008; www.themorgan.org; \$18 adults; \$12 students; free for children under 12.

Exhibition of rarely-seen handmade cards created by twentieth-century artists for their friends and family. Drawn from the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art, the exhibition includes nearly sixty seasonal cards made by such important artists as Helen Frankenthaler, Milton Avery, Alexander Calder, Ad Reinhardt, Philip Guston, and Saul Steinberg.

Origami Holiday Tree: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at West 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Suggested admission \$22 adults, \$17 students/seniors, \$12.50 children.

An annual tradition, the delightfully decorated Origami Holiday Tree has marked the start of the holiday season at the Museum for decades. The theme of this year's 13-foot-tree is "Night at the Museum," inspired by American Museum of Natural History

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

sleepovers and tours featuring places, artifacts, characters, and real exhibits behind the delightful movies of the same name.

The Butterfly Conservatory:

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at West 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Suggested admission \$22 adults, \$17 students/seniors, \$12.50 children.

In the annual favorite, 'Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter', up to 500 live, free-flying tropical butterflies from the Americas, Africa, and Asia are housed in a vivarium that approximates their natural habitat, includes live flowering plants that serve as nectar sources, and features controlled artificial light, temperature, and humidity.

Metamorphosis!: Damrosch Park, West 62nd St. between Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues; (888) 541-3750; bigapplecircus.org; Start at \$25.

The celebrated Big Apple Circus Band, under the baton of maestro Rob Slowik, provides the lively musical soundtrack, and magnificent Ringmaster John Kennedy Kane will summon the spirits of the circus universe to immerse the audience in the wonder, the joy and the astounding magic of Metamorphosis!

Hansel and Gretel: Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center Plaza; (212) 362-6000; www.metopera.org; Tuesday, Dec. 23, 12 am; Saturday, Dec. 27, 12 am; Tuesday, Dec. 30, 12 am; Thursday, Jan. 1, 12 am; Saturday, Jan. 3, 12 am; Thursday, Jan. 8, 12 am; \$25 and up.

Richard Jones's production of this fairy-tale opera tells the tale of two children who face off against a wicked witch, in a lush setting of giant chefs, suit-clad trees, and an industrial kitchen where the Witch gets what's coming to her.

Somebody Come and Play: 45 Years of Sesame Street Helping Kids Grow Smarter, Stronger, and Kinder: The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, 40 Lincoln Center Plaza; (212) 875-5030; lincolncenter.org. Free.

This exhibition gives Sesame Street fans of all ages the opportunity to experience what it's like to create an episode of the show and get close to their fuzzy and furry friends from the street. See behind the scenes footage, animation cells, blueprints, and an architectural model of the set from the early 1990s.

13th Annual Holiday Train Show: New York Transit Museum Gallery Annex and Store at Grand Central Terminal, 89 E. 42 St. between Madison and Lexington avenues; (212) 340-2583; www.



Story time with music

Enjoy a Daily Story Hour at the Bank Street Bookstore, and a musical story hour every Tuesday with CC and Mallory.

Children beat the winter blues with a trip around the neighborhood at Bank Street. Kids 5 and under can enjoy fun, educational, and socially engaging story-times at this popular series featuring special guest authors.

Once a week favorite storytell-

ers, CC and Mallory (pictured) present musical story hours, which bring the books to life.

Musical Story Hour takes place every Tuesday morning. Daily Story Hour takes place every day, seven days a week at 10:30 am throughout January. Free.

Bank Street Bookstore [610 W. 112th Street, corner of 112th and Broadway; (212) 678-1654; <http://bankstreetbooks.com>].

grandcentralterminal.com; Weekdays, 8 am-8 pm, Saturdays, 10 am-8 pm, Sundays, 10 am-7 pm, Now - Sun, Feb. 22. Free.

Lionel continues its tradition of capturing hearts and imaginations this holiday season, with Metro-North, New York Central and subway trains departing from a miniature Grand Central Terminal on a 34' long two level "O" gauge model train layout. Vintage Lionel trains from the Museum's collection and 1930s Lionel advertisements

will also be on display.

Free Baby/Toddler Class: Franciscan Community Center, 214 West 97th St. between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue; (212) 932-8040 ext. 38; blewis@fccnyc.org; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am-noon. Free.

Socialization, early literacy, singing, movement and explorative play.

Holiday Express: December School Vacation Week: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th

Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Daily, 10 am-6 pm; Now - Sun, Jan. 4. Free with museum admission.

Stop by the New-York Historical Society this week to marvel at the toys and trains of the Jerni Collection, go on a Holiday Express I Spy Scavenger Hunt. At 2 pm, hear beloved train tales and make a train-themed craft to take home as a souvenir from the day.

Daily Story Hour: Bank Street Bookstore, 610 West 112 St. between 112th and Broadway; (212) 678-1654; bankstreetbooks.com; Daily, 10:30 am; Thurs, Jan. 1 - Sat, Jan. 31. Free.

Enjoy fun, educational and socially engaging story-times with your baby, toddler or preschooler at this popular series featuring special guest authors. Favorite storytellers, CC and Mallory present musical story hours every Tuesday morning.

Cirque Ziva: The New Victory Theater, 209 W 42nd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues; (646) 223-3010; www.newvictory.org; Tuesdays, 2 pm, Fridays and Saturdays, 2 and 7 pm, Sundays, Noon and 5 pm, Now - Sun, Jan. 4; \$19 and up.

Ensemble performances like acrobatic hoop diving and the whizzing diabolo are punctuated by awe-inspiring solo acts of unparalleled precision. An acrobat of incomparable strength winks at balcony patrons as his chair stack teeters over 30 feet high. A gifted contortionist balances over 60 wine glasses while her body bends impossibly backwards, and much more.

Lit Talks for Readers with Regina Teltser: Bank Street Bookstore, 610 West 112 St. between 112th and Broadway; (212) 678-1654; bankstreetbooks.com; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, Sat, Jan. 3 - Sat, Jan. 31. Free.

Biweekly read-alouds for ages 9 to 17 feature dramatized readings for middle-graders and young adults, along with a discussion on themes afterward.

Drop-In Art Workshop: The Jew-
Continued on page 44

Civil Rights Week scavenger hunt

Celebrate Civil Rights Week-end with a scavenger hunt at the New York Historical Society from Jan. 17 through Jan. 19.

Learn about the fearless people who marched for equal voting rights by enjoying a scavenger hunt to match faces to the names of heroes from the Civil Rights Movement, in honor of Martin Lu-

ther King, Jr. Day and the special exhibition Freedom Journey 1965: Photographs of the Selma to Montgomery March by Stephen Somerstein. For children ages 8 and up.

New York Historical Society [170 Central Park West, (212) 873-3400, nyhistory.org. Scavenger hunt Jan. 17 through Jan. 19. 10 am-6 pm. \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5-12.



Calendar

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ish Museum, 1109 5th Ave. at 92nd St.; (212) 423-3200; thejewishmuseum.org; Sundays, 1 – 4 pm, beginning Sun, Jan. 4. Free with museum admission.

Children, ages 3 and up, paint, draw, sculpt, or craft a work of art inspired by exhibitions on view. Projects explore new themes each week.

Jazz For Kids: Jazz Standard, 116 East 27th St. at Park Avenue South; (212) 576-2232; www.jazzstandard.com; Sundays, 2-3 pm; Free, guests may give a \$5 donation that benefits the Jazz Standard Discovery Program.

The talented children's musicians of the The Jazz Standard Youth Orchestra perform every Sunday (except for 12/21, 12/28 and 2/1).

Lit Talks for Readers with Regina Teltser: Bank Street Bookstore, 610 West 112 St. between 112th and Broadway; (212) 678-1654; bankstreetbooks.com; Wednesdays, 5 pm, Sundays, 4 pm, Now – Wed, Jan. 28. Free.

Biweekly read-alouds for ages 9 to 17 feature dramatized readings for middle-graders and young adults, along with a discussion on themes afterward.

Little New-Yorkers: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Tuesdays and Fridays, 3:30 pm, Tues, Jan. 6 – Fri, Jan. 30; \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5-12.

This program introduces New York and American history to the littlest New Yorkers with age-appropriate themes and engaging hands-on activities. For ages 3-5.

Storytime: Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Place at First Place; (646) 437-4202; www.mjhnyc.org; Wednesday, Jan. 7, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, Jan. 21, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, Feb. 4, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, Feb. 18, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, March 4, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, March 18, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, April 1, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, April 15, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, May 6, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, May 20, 3:30 pm. Free.

Drop-in program warm, whimsical tales about traditions, holidays, and families from some of today's best storybooks for children ages 0-4.

"Jack and the Beanstalk": Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, West 79th and West Dr; (212) 988-9093; Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10:30 am and noon, Wednesdays, 10:30 am, noon, and 2:30 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, beginning Wed, Jan. 14; \$10; \$7 children under 12.

This fresh retelling of the Swedish Cottage original production takes Jack



Tea and teddy bears

Enjoy Afternoon Tea at Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden on Jan. 4.

If you're looking for something to do with your little ones on the last couple of days of holiday break, you might want to spend time on an afternoon tea with a teddy bear. Children, ages 3 to 6, can bring their favorite teddy bear (or doll) to meet Mrs. Woodhull, the hotel proprietor's wife, and role-play the daily activities

at the Mount Vernon Hotel in 1830. Play with her son's toys or help her daughter with the chores. Afterwards enjoy fruit tea and cookies.

Afternoon Tea on Jan. 4 at 1 pm. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 12. Reservations recommended

Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden [421 E. 61st St. between First and York avenues; (212) 838-6878; www.mvhm.org].

on an enchanting adventure up a magical beanstalk. Jack encounters the notorious Giant, Milford, whose thieving ways have brought misfortune upon Jack and his mother, but with help from friends, he risks his life to take back what the Giant stole.

Exhibition: Freedom Journey 1965: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Daily, 10 am-6 pm; beginning Fri, Jan. 16; \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5-12.

This exhibit features the stunning and historic photographs of Stephen Somerstein, documenting the Selma-to-Montgomery Civil Rights March in January 1965.

Sunday Art Discoveries: The Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Ave. at 92nd St.; (212) 423-3200; thejewishmuseum.org; Sundays, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm, beginning Sun, Jan. 18. Free with museum admission.

Children engage with works of art through exciting activities and gallery tours focusing on themes inspired by

to our special exhibitions.

Exhibition: Pixelated, Sum of its Pieces: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; Mondays and Wednesdays, noon-5 pm, Thursdays and Fridays, Noon-6 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-5 pm, beginning Thurs, Jan. 22. Free with \$11 museum admission.

This exhibition brings together emerging and mid-career artists whose work explores different means of perception and brings together visual artists whose works explore the intersection between art and technology.

FURTHER AFIELD

More than meets the "I": Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am-5 pm, Now – Mon, Jan. 19; \$9 general admission (children under one free).

The new exhibit at the museum provides young scientists the opportunity to explore innovations in biology,

health, robotics, and technology.

Holiday Train Show: New York Botanical Garden, 200th St. and Kazimiroff Blvd., The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Saturdays, 10 am-6 pm, Now – Mon, Jan. 19; \$20 (\$8 children, Free for children under 2).

The annual tradition is open again. Model trains are enlivened amid the glow of twinkling lights in Victorian style glasshouses featuring replicas of New York landmarks crafted of natural materials by designer Paul Busse's team.

Gingerbread Lane Exhibit: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X353; www.nyscience.org; Daily, 10 am-4 pm, Now – Sun, Jan. 11. Free with museum admission.

Marvel at creative culinary constructions of gumdrops, candy, icing and gingerbread.

Ice skating: Lefrak Center in Prospect Park, Parkside and Ocean avenues, Brooklyn; (718) 594-7439; info@brooklynice.org; www.brooklynice.org; Tuesdays – Thursdays, 11 am-6 pm, Fridays, 11 am-8 pm, Saturdays, 10 am-9 pm, Sundays, 10 am-6 pm, Now – Tues, March 31; \$6 (\$8 on Sat. and Sun) plus \$6 skate rental.

Families have a great time twirling and skating and enjoying the rink.

Art Kids: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Fridays, 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, Fri, Jan. 2 – Fri, March 6; Free with museum admission.

Children explore a new style of art and discover the artistic process while developing artistic skills.

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

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

Ice skating school: Lefrak Center in Prospect Park, Parkside and Ocean avenues, Brooklyn; (718) 594-7439; info@brooklynice.org; www.brooklynice.org; Mondays and Wednesdays, 4-6:30 pm, now – Tues, March 10. Free.

Instructions, fitness, homework help and lots more. Requirements - students in grades first through eighth must live in Brooklyn or go to school in Brooklyn, be eligible for free/reduced lunch program. Preregistration required.

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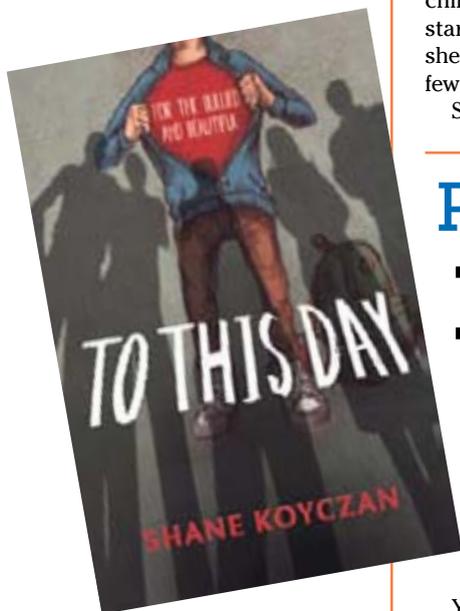
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THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER



Anything you can do

There are times when you hear the sentence “You can’t” and it makes you sad. In the new book “Firebird” by Misty Copeland, illustrated by Christopher Myers, a young girl learns to replace the word “can’t” with one that strengthens.

Once, there was a little girl who loved to watch ballet, but she knew she was nothing like the dancer on the stage. Yes, she loved to dance, but the ballerina was so much better and the little girl was told that she’d never be like that.

The ballerina leaped and spun and bent. Her legs stretched like the New York skyline, which was something the girl couldn’t do.

“I could never hope to leap the space between,” she said, and that made her “heavy” and heartsick.

But then, the most amazing thing happened! The ballerina came to the girl to tell her a story of a dancing child who wanted to fly among the stars, a child who wanted to soar but she saw “can’t” because there were few other dancers like her.

Still, the dancing child bent and

dipped at the barre, and leaped like her heart told her to. She spread her wings, changed her slippers, and practiced arabesque. The ballet positions were like “stair steps to the sky,” and she never listened to “can’t.”

The ballerina promised the girl that, if she believed, there would come a day when she would be just like the dancing child. She would “become a swan ... a firebird for sure.” She would be light and beautiful. Maybe she’d even dance on stage with the ballerina, jumping to the stars, and showing ballerinas not yet born that dreams come true and “can’t” can’t hold them on the ground.

I liked “Firebird” well enough the first time I ran through it. With their bold colors and scrapbook-mosaic edges, I was especially pleased with the illustrations by Christopher Myers, but there was something about the narrative that I felt I’d missed.

The second time around, there it was: the font between the charac-



ters is different, as if there’s a conversation on each page.

Now that you know that, you’ll be able to easier understand how author Misty Copeland tells her story — and, once you read her afterword, you’ll see that it really is her story. Copeland explains how she was that self-conscious girl once, and how she wants “to expand the idea of beauty and art” with this book.

That’s surely accomplished, but my recommendation would be to read through this tale once before you read it aloud, just so you know how it’s set up. Do that, and “Firebird” will be a story your child can’t help but love.

“Firebird,” by Misty Copeland [40 pages, 2014, \$17.99].

Powerful words for victims of bullying

For the rest of your life, you’ll always regret it.

There were two bigger boys standing over him, and a look of sadness on his face. You’ll regret forever that you never stuck up for him, because you’d been bullied, too, just like one out of every seven kids. And as you’ll see in the new book “To This Day” by Shane Koyczan, it’s never forgotten.

Yes, names are just sounds, but though adults say words will never hurt you, you know they do.

So you stay invisible, stay quiet, stay inside during recess, and “rehearse running away.” You find a friend who’s being bullied, too, because there’s safety together, but you’re still “outnumbered day after wretched day.” The years will pass, you’ll grow up, but, like the mom who found a sign taped to her desk that said “Beware of Dog” back in fifth grade, or the grown-up man who was once a boy fighting depression and

anger, the bad feelings will linger.

The thing to remember is, you might feel like an outcast, but you’re not alone. And someday, long after middle school or high school, long after you’ve looked in a “better mirror” to see a beautiful and accomplished person, you’ll understand that “all of this is just debris.” Maybe you aren’t a part of a clique today. Maybe you’re not on the team or in the club, you’re not popular, but those people who bullied you and said bad things were wrong — and you’ll know it.

Then you, and everyone like you, can say, “We made it.”

From its beginnings as a poem written from author Shane Koyczan’s experiences, to a song, then to a video created with the help of 86 animators, “To This Day” is filled with some of the most powerful words you may ever read.

Told from the point of view of a mature-beyond-his-years kid, this book tells a story of triumphant survival that contains just the right words of

comfort and support; indeed, in both his foreword and his afterword, Koyczan offers more of his personal story, and he includes voices from fans and readers who ruefully witnessed or memorably endured bullying.

But that’s only part of why you should want this book: illustrations from artists in several countries evoke the perfect mood to match Koyczan’s words, and a list of resources rounds out what bullied teens need.

Toward the end of his poem, Koyczan asks “... if a kid breaks in a school and no one around chooses to hear, do they make a sound?” If that doesn’t hurt your heart, then read this book again. Better yet, own it. “To This Day” is a purchase you won’t regret.

“To This Day,” by Shane Koyczan [70 pages, 2014, \$19.95].

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

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555 East 90th Street (AT YORK AVENUE)
212.369.8890

BATTERY PARK CITY
212 North End Avenue (AT MURRAY STREET)
212.298.2900

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