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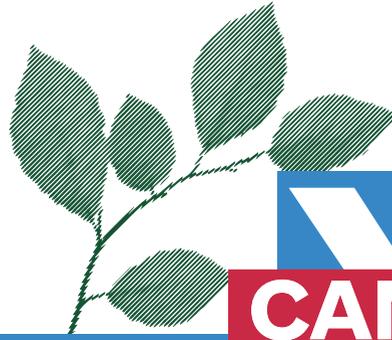
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Letter from the publisher

Desperate need of love

I'm pretty sure it was more than St. Valentine's Day that prompted a celebration of love in the month of February. Living in the Northeast means that by now we are sick and tired of winter and are looking forward to anything to help us feel warm and nurtured. Just like holiday lights at Winter Solstice, love and hearts and chocolate candy sounds pretty darned good in early February.

As we read the horrible news headlines emerging around the globe, one has little doubt that this world is in desperate need of love. We read about the horrors of children whose childhoods are sabo-



tagged by an array of devastation. We pale with disbelief that any child's reality could be so shocking and so devoid of love that in its place is obscenity. Yet we also know these are truths and that the headlines don't lie.

Knowing these horrendous truths should prompt all of us who are largely blessed with prosperity, health, and opportunity, the means and skill to be profound nurturers and love givers/teachers.

We have mused on this topic of love in many ways in this issue. We have of course pointed out events around town that will help us celebrate the Cupid in us all and we

have naturally written about ways to love better and more successfully. Perhaps more importantly, we have attempted to talk about methods for teaching love to our children. We have had experts in this topic give us some sound direction to find some keys to the process. We have even touched on the topic of in-laws and it's not just comedians who understand the significance of that source of possible friction.

In thinking about love, I myself, have pondered the difficulty of letting go as well as holding on. Sometimes the better expression of love is in not being active, but in stepping back and watching from afar. For me and for most "empty-nesters" not being the parent who is loving up close anymore is hav-

ing to learn a new way of operating through this magical thing we call love. When to give and when not to becomes our new mantra and modus operandi.

Enjoy this crazy winter month and have fun in the snow and ice. For sure, we will be getting it. It's February in the Northeast. Be joyful and love each other. As Lennon and McCartney said "Love is the Answer." Without a doubt.

Thanks for reading.

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Simple ways to show your kids LOVE

BY GAYLA GRACE

Your kids know you love them, right? I'm sure they could still use a few extra strokes or simple reminders of how important they are to you. Try some new ways this month to say, "I love you."

- Surprise them with a new game on Saturday morning. Enjoy donuts and hot chocolate while learning to play the game. Be sure to include the whole family.

- Tell them the story of their birth. Show pictures of how they looked as a newborn, and talk about who came to visit in the beginning. Make sure they know how excited you were when they entered your life.

- Love them despite their faults. Offer them grace freely and often.

- Find a unique quality about each of your children and praise them

for it. Whether it's a sensitive spirit toward a sibling or a quick-to-forgive gesture toward friends, tell them how it makes them special.

- Indulge in a child-specific treat, and enjoy some one-on-one time together. Ask for input and make plans ahead so they know it's a special occasion.

- Compliment your child in front of another adult. Be specific with an example of good behavior as you beam with pride.

- Praise their efforts, not just results. Don't expect perfection on every chore or straight-As on every report card. Let them know you notice when they do their best.

- Let them pick their favorite book and read to them, even when you don't want to.

- Play inside together on a rainy day. Make forts with chairs and blankets or play a game of hide-and-seek.

- Accompany them to walk the dog. Ask about their day at school or a budding friendship. Listen more than you talk.

- Allow them to be messy. Play with finger paints and Play-Doh. Go outside and spray Silly String on each other.

- Display their artwork on your refrigerator or window. Talk about what a great job they did and how you love to look at it every day.

- Put a surprise in their lunch. Include a note that says, "I love you."

- Get off social media and completely tune in when they're talking.

Refrain from multi-tasking and focus on their needs.

- Patiently help them with homework. Don't raise your voice when you have to explain it one more time.

- Ask for their ideas when you plan your next vacation. Look at fun places to visit on the computer and dream together for future trips.

- Sit under the stars and talk about the beauty of god's creation.

- Take off your serious hat and make them laugh. Tell jokes or watch a funny movie together. Tickle them until they cry.

- Offer a no-rules day. Let your kids stay in their pjs all day and eat and play whatever they want.

- Ask your child to sing to you. Join in and finish the song as a duet. Let your child know that you love hearing her beautiful voice.

- Surprise them with a simple gift through the mail such as a comic book, a glow-in-the-dark pencil, or their favorite player's card. Include a note of "I love you."

- Make s'mores around the fire pit or roast marshmallows in the fireplace. Include a cup of hot cocoa or favorite beverage with it.

- Start fun traditions for holidays and birthdays that your child can look forward to as a family.

- Get to know their friends and encourage healthy friendships. Take everyone out for a movie night or bowling night once in a while.

- Be their biggest fan. Let them experiment with sporting activities, music lessons, and other extracurricular activities. Cheer them on as they seek to find what fits for them.

- Allow them to be different from you.

- Treat them with respect. Don't interrupt when they're talking. Ask for their opinion as often as possible and include them in family decisions as they get older.

- Hug, kiss, and shower them with physical affection every day. Tell them at least once a day, "I love you."

Books to help your kids feel loved

"You Are Special" by Max Lucado
 "Little Things Long Remembered: Making Your Children Feel Special Every Day" by Susan Newman
 "101 Ways to Make Your Child Feel Special" by Vicki Lansky
 "Oh, The Places You'll Go" by Dr. Seuss

As a freelance journalist, Gayla Grace loves sharing experiences to encourage other parents. She is thankful for her five children, who love her despite her not-so-perfect parenting.

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Playing with food

Study reveals benefits to toddlers' messy eating

Morgan Delack was at her wit's end when her daughter was 1.

"Almost every time I put her in the highchair to feed her, she would throw her food on the floor," she says. "She was trying to play with me and get my attention. She knew she'd get a response."

Whether your child is throwing food or making a spectacular mess with it, it's difficult to see a good result. After all, this mess-making is creating more work for you!

Believe it or not, there is a silver lining in this developmental stage. According to a study published in the journal *Developmental Science*, the messier a toddler gets while eating, the more he's learning. And eating in a highchair is the best place for that learning.

The study explored how well 16-month-olds learned the names of non-solid foods and other objects while seated either in a highchair or



at a table. The researchers offered the toddlers foods such as pudding, applesauce, juice, and soup, but gave them made-up names.

The toddlers who most enthusias-

tically explored the foods by poking, throwing, and picking them up were more likely to correctly identify them when the researchers put foods out in different sizes or shapes.

And the tots seated in highchairs were better at correctly identifying the objects compared to those seated at tables. Because the foods vary in shape and size, the context in which the child touches it matters.

"It turns out that being in a highchair makes it more likely you'll get messy, because kids know they can get messy there," says lead author Larissa Samuelson.

So the next time your little one smears mashed peas all over, reframe it as a "learning experience."

"The study shows the cascading influence that the context of everyday activities — such as mealtimes — has on children's exploration, attention, and word learning," wrote the authors. "When young children messily eat and explore food at each meal, they are learning both about individual foods and also about non-solid substances more generally."

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

Swedish pea soup

ACTIVE PREPARATION TIME: Seven minutes

TOTAL PREPARATION TIME: One hour 30 minutes to two hours (not including soaking)

SERVINGS: Eight servings (almost 1 cup each)

Pea soup dates back to ancient Roman times, when it was a nutritious, peasant food staple, but it eventually became one of the time-honored foods of Sweden. Made with yellow peas, this simple soup is prepared with sweet, zesty mustard.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound (454 g) dried yellow peas
- 6 cups water
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 tbsp. reduced sodium vegetable broth base
- 1 tbsp. prepared mustard (e.g., Swedish, whole grain, or Dijon)
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

1 tsp. low-sodium herbal seasoning blend

- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp. marjoram
- 1 tsp. thyme

DIRECTIONS: Cover the dried yellow peas with water and soak overnight. Drain the peas and place them in a large heavy pot. Add the remaining ingredients, stir well, cover with a lid, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 1½ to 2 hours, stirring occasionally, until the peas are tender. Add water as needed to replace moisture lost to evaporation. Remove the bay leaf before serving.

Traditional Swedish pea soup uses whole yellow peas (not split). If you are unable to find whole yellow peas, substitute split yellow peas, but reduce the cooking time by about 30 minutes.

To make this in a slow cooker, soak and drain the peas, then combine with the other ingredients and cook



for 4 to 6 hours on high or 8 to 10 hours on low.

NUTRITION FACTS: 203 calories, 14 g protein, 36 g carbohydrate, 1 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 15 g fiber, 5 g sugar, 59 mg sodium, 28% DV thiamine, 39% DV folate, 10% DV calcium, 16% DV iron, 17% DV magnesium, 16% DV potassium, 12% DV zinc

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Learning to love your mother-in-law ...or daughter-in-law!

How to make
the most of a
relationship
with a bad
reputation

BY JAN PIERCE

Recently, I sent a list of six questions to my women friends asking about their relationship with their mother-in-law or their daughter-in-law. The answers came back almost immediately, telling me this is a hot topic.

I remember the day my son announced his engagement. I was thrilled — just filled with happiness for him and his intended bride. But soon after came the realization that I'd be a mother-in-law. I wasn't quite as thrilled.

Why? Well, to be honest, mothers-in-law have a bad reputation. They are the butt of jokes about their heavy hand, their unwanted advice, and their tendency to see

no wrong in their precious sons, even when they're acting like rats. How to combat the stereotype? How to do better?

One place to begin in understanding this uncertain relationship is to think of our own nuclear families. Ideally, relationships between parents and children are based on a foundation of unconditional love. We love our parents and they love us. We love our children and they love us. But even in this most natural of relationships, there are tensions. Add to that a merging of two different family backgrounds and traditions, and the room for misunderstanding and animosity is multiplied many times.

So what were the findings? What themes ran through all the success-

ful relationships and what trouble spots reared their ugly heads over and over?

Here are the six questions I asked. You might want to jot down some answers of your own.

- If you have a good relationship with your mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, name three reasons why.

- If there are problems in the relationship, give the general areas of tension, e.g. parenting, holidays, communication, etc.

- Name three areas that might be “touchy” in the relationship.

- When you experience tension or misunderstandings, what helps? Conversation, heart-to-hearts, letting it go? Other?

- Talk about the role of advice in your relationship. Do you appreciate it? Feel confident in giving it? Hate it?

- What would be the ideal in-law relationship in your opinion?

The Findings

Not surprisingly, the most successful relationships were built on mutual trust and understanding. Many younger women spoke of uncertainty and lack of confidence in their role as daughters-in-law in their early years of marriage. As they were learning to be a wife, they also had to take on the responsibility of a relationship with a woman they barely knew. Those who developed a positive relationship, even a friendship, went through a time of testing, learning to trust, and deciding to “let it

Tips for daughters-in-law

- Allow your mother-in-law to continue to play a role in her son's life. She's earned it.
- Know that strong relationships take time to build. In the meantime, be willing to let things go for the sake of a future relationship.
- Don't assume your mother-in-law will be just like your own mother (or any other person you know).
- As much as possible, keep conversation positive, free of gossip, and respectful.
- Agree to disagree on touchy topics.
- Appreciate efforts to help even if you have to set boundaries.
- Learn to listen to advice without necessarily taking it.
- Be patient. You may one day become a mother-in-law.

Tips for mothers-in-law

- Accept the fact that your son has chosen another woman to love and respect.
- Display love and affection honestly. Know it may take some time for the relationship to mature.
- Overlook flaws or failings in your daughter-in-law. Try to remember what it was like to be a new wife.
- Speak positive things to her and about her.
- Understand she is young and may change some of her opinions and habits.
- Refrain from giving unsolicited advice, even if you're “right.”
- Be supportive and willing to help if needed.
- Be patient. You were once a young, inexperienced woman.

Top
Tips



go” when there was the possibility of misunderstanding words or circumstances.

One of the loveliest answers I got was from a woman in her 50s who spoke of accepting her mother-in-law just as she is — a quirky, sometimes inappropriate, and seemingly unloving woman. She has learned to accept strange, random re-gifts rather than store-bought ones, she has learned to understand the woman will not play the role of a loving grandmother to her children, but still she determined to love her as she is and not as she wishes she would be.

Another young woman spoke of feeling offended and even attacked by her mother-in-law when she received unwanted advice and criticism about things such as time management, finances, and discipline of her children.

The solution to this relationship in jeopardy came when the husband stepped up and stood with his wife. Once the wife felt affirmed, she was free to see words of advice in a better light, not as condemnation, but as alternate choices and ones she was free to follow or ignore. The key was not feeling ganged up on by a mother-and-son combo.

Almost universal was the concept of mutual respect. Respect doesn't mean taking advice or believing the same ways. It doesn't mean managing another's behavior or changing their personality. What it does mean is letting the other person be themselves, warts and all.

I'd have to add that kindness and a sense of humor go a long way in any new or awkward relationship. Giving the benefit of the doubt relieves the tension of perceived competitive or jealous ambitions, the tendency to judge or be judged, and the possibility of offending without meaning to. Many pitfalls are avoided if both women see the other through eyes of love and acceptance, ascribing positive motives to their sometimes less-than-admirable behaviors.

In general, the answers to the six-question survey were heartfelt — the topic mattered to the women who answered.

Very few reported a perfectly smooth road to a healthy relationship, but rather they learned over time to build a friendship based on acceptance, kindness, and love.

Jan Pierce is a retired teacher and freelance writer specializing in education, parenting, and family-life. Find her at www.janpierce.net.



Falling in love again

Make time for
romance with
your spouse
— over and
over again

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-
TIEMAN

As Valentine's Day rolls around again, I find myself reflecting on love relationships in general and marriage in particular. You may be wondering why I am writing about marriage in a parent resource magazine. The answer is simple: the model for marriage (or any committed relationship) we provide for our children has implications for generations to come.

The intricate connection between marriage and parenting can perhaps best be illustrated by comparing a family to a mobile. If you have ever carefully observed a mobile, you probably noticed that all the connec-

tions make it impossible to touch one piece without moving all the others. Some may teeter wildly while others barely quiver, but they all move. The same is true of families. What affects a person in one relationship will affect all of her other relationships. In short, your parenting will be affected by your marriage and vice versa.

I have been puzzling over the question of why we assume dating and courtship are active and stimulating, whereas marriage is passive and routine? Most wedding ceremonies are chock full of action words — promises to love, honor, cherish, support, nurture. So far, I haven't attended a wedding in which one of the vows was, "I promise to become less attractive, less affectionate, uncom-

municative, distant, and to take thee for granted for as long as we both shall live."

All too often, I see couples investing more time, energy, thought, and money on planning and preparing for their wedding day than they will ever spend on their relationship again. Maybe we need to require that couples be married for at least a year, better yet five years, before they get a wedding. If only we were as committed to creating lifelong, satisfying relationships as we are to throwing perfect weddings! Then maybe all our talk about the importance, value, and even sacredness of marriage would be more than just talk.

One of the most common excuses for a marriage gone stale is lack of time. Well, I'm here to tell you that courting couples have the same 24 hours in their day as married couples. Courting couples are often full-time students who hold jobs, or are both employed full time, or employed full time and have children. Married couples who complain of having no time for each other somehow find time to chat and text or do lunch with friends or co-workers, watch television, surf the net, and participate in social media.

Clearly, what has changed are a

couple's priorities, not the amount of time available. When you care about someone, you make time to let them know it. If only couples would work as hard to keep each other as they did to get each other in the first place. The key word here being "work." Every one of us who has ever been involved in a committed relationship knows how to court. We must have been fairly good at it at one time. There is no good reason for stopping. Marriage doesn't extinguish the desire to be courted.

As a culture, we are in love with falling in love. Unfortunately, this obsession with falling in love is not conducive to long-term, committed relationships like marriage. But perhaps it could be if we changed the rules a bit. We tend to believe that falling in love with a person can happen only once. Then when you fall out of love with that person, you move on to the next. The fact is, you don't have to fall out of love to fall in love. I have personally fallen in love, on numerous occasions, with the same man: my husband of 29 years. Each time has been different, surprising, exciting, and deeply satisfying.

Falling in love is easy. Staying in love is the real challenge. Here are a few suggestions for meeting the challenge:

Continue becoming yourself. I once heard a university provost say, "Becoming is superior to being." "Being" describes a static state, while "becoming" recognizes the active, evolving nature of the self. Becoming also suggests that the process is one over which we have control. Take responsibility for knowing what your needs are, for communicating them to others, and for getting them met. Your spouse is not capable of knowing or responsible for fulfilling all your needs. And the only way he can know what you need or want is if you tell him. Have realistic expectations for yourself and others. Remember, the only person you can change is yourself. Continue becoming the best version of yourself.

Learn and practice effective communication. Increase your feeling word vocabulary. The more accurately you can identify your feelings, the more likely you are to effectively express them and get the associated needs met. Accept conflict as a natural part of any intimate relationship. Arguing does not have to be destructive.

Learn and practice rules for fighting fair. Learn and practice the steps for problem solving. First and foremost, identify and define the problem. The more accurately you define the problem, the more likely you are to arrive at a mutually agreed upon, effective solution. (If you discover issues in your marriage that you are not sure how to address, get professional help. Marital therapy is not restricted to couples with serious problems. Seek help before what is simply irritating becomes a crisis.)

Revisit your courtship. Research has shown that one characteristic of couples in lasting marriages is a fond recollection of their earliest times together — their meeting and courtship. Take time to recall how you met and what you did to attract one another in the first place. If it worked then, chances are it will work now. Expressing appreciation, noticing when your partner looks especially attractive, leaving notes, holding hands, calling just to say hello — all those little things you did when you were courting are just as important now as they were then.

Create opportunities for falling in love. Schedule time to spend together regularly. Spur-of-the-moment outings are lovely, but don't depend on them happening in the fast-paced lives we live. Take a walk and talk. Learn how to do something new as a couple. Choose a book and agree to read and discuss it. Better yet, read aloud to one another. Time together doesn't have to be spontaneous or expensive to be meaningful.

Relationships that last involve two people committed to spending a lifetime falling in love again. So that is my wish for you this Valentine's Day. May you look for opportunities and find reasons to fall in love with one another over and over for as long as you both shall live. You and your children will reap the rewards.

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 read more, visit www.aparent4life.com or follow A Parent for Life on Facebook. To contact her, please e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.

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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Pet safety in winter

The frigid temperatures around the country are not just inconvenient; they can be incredibly dangerous for our pets. Experts say frostbite can set in in less than 15 minutes, and animals are not exempt from this, despite their furry coats.

Hypothermia is the most dangerous hazard when the weather gets this cold. Signs of hypothermia include "violent shivering followed by listlessness, a rectal temperature below 95°F (35°C), weak pulse, lethargy, and coma." It can become fatal very fast.

It goes without saying that every dog and cat needs to be indoors during cold temperatures like these. I would argue, however, that dogs and cats need to be indoors during any cold temperatures. If you are cold, they are cold, simple as that. Out-

doors is no place for pets.

Here are 10 cold-weather tips for your pets:

Anti-freeze can be fatal

Anti-freeze is poisonous. Even a lick or two on a quick walk can add up to distress for your dog. Keep an eye out for any liquid on sidewalks and steer clear of it. Also, do not let your dogs roam freely where you cannot monitor their activity. If there is any doubt that your dog may have ingested anti-freeze, take him to the vet immediately.

Pay extra attention to puppies

Puppies are more susceptible to the cold than dogs due to their tender age. They will suffer from the harsh realities of the cold quicker and should not spend much time outdoors in harsh weather conditions. In addition, they may have some issues potty training during cold spells. Understandably, puppies may have more accidents in this weather.

Cars and feral cats

Cats are particularly vulnerable to the cold and can freeze to death. They are also crafty and smart and will do what they have to do to stay warm and alive. When left outside, many cats seek to find warmth in car hoods and engines, and can easily be killed when cars are turned on. Take a peek under your hood and tires before turning on your car.

Leash and collar

When walking puppies and dogs, make sure their collars are secure and never let them off the leash. Getting lost in sub-zero temps is deadly. Their scent trails are compromised in the snow, and frostbite and hypothermia can set in quickly, leaving them unable to find their way back home.

Frostbite

Frostbite most often occurs on the thin, exposed areas of a dog such as their ears, tail, scrotum, and paws. The skin may look blue or white, but will appear red and inflamed when circulation comes back. The surface

of the skin may peel and eventually turn black. Use warm (not hot) compresses on the affected areas and then seek medical care.

Cars can be death traps

It's worth remembering that a cold car can be just as deadly as a hot car for a dog. They can freeze to death in a vehicle with no heat. Not only are they already at freezing temps, but cars can act as a refrigerator, keeping all the coldness inside.

Stay away from salt

Be on the lookout for salt on sidewalks and driveways, which can irritate and even burn your pup's paws. Wipe their paws off with a paper towel or warm cloth when you return from a walk.

Check on neighboring pets

It's imperative to remember that if we see an animal left outside in this weather, we must report it to the proper authorities ASAP. Dogs left outside in cold temperatures suffer needlessly and can easily die. It is a form of abuse. We are the protectors of animals and need to be vigilant about their well being at all times.

Indoor comfort

When indoors, try to let your dog sleep in a warm spot. Ideally, every dog should have a bed (or share yours) and not sleep on a hardwood floor. Make sure to place the bed away from doors and drafts.

More food

Dogs that are kept outside often need extra food in the winter months to keep warm. If you must keep your dog outside for periods in the daytime (not recommended), make sure you are supplying them with extra calories all day long (and a sheltered, cozy doghouse). And never, ever leave your dogs out at night!

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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Catholic Schools

DIRECTORY

Holy Child Middle School

220 East 4th St NYC 10009, 212-982-2287 or www.connellycenter.org

The mission of Cornelia Connelly Center (CCC) is to champion girls at risk, empowering them to realize their full potential from middle school through college and beyond. We provide a twelve-year program to girls living in poverty, supporting them from 5th grade through college completion.

The Connelly Center is sponsored by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, one of ten Holy Child Schools across the United States. Holy Child Schools are based in the educational philosophy of Cornelia Connelly, who believed in holistic education for all students, combining challenging academics with artistic and spiritual development.

Our first graduates entered the Graduate Support Program (GSP) in 1995 for support through high school. In September 2013, GSP extended its services to support alumnae in college on their path to college completion and career readiness. Through CCC, a young woman learns to shine – transforming her life and our world.

Incarnation School

570 West 175th Street, NYC 10033, 212-795-1030 or www.incarnationnyc.org

For over 100 years Incarnation School has proudly served the ever changing immigrant population of Washington Heights. Incarnation is a strong family – graduates hold 50th reunions, come back to work in the school, send their children here, join the board, speak at graduations, earn college and graduate degrees and support us financially.

Our strong academic program is enriched by professional development, math and literacy coaches, Title 1 services, art, music, PE, computer lab classes, and SmartBoards in every classroom. In addition, Incarnation offers extra-curricular activities such as Classroom Inc, the Art and Performance Club, track, soccer and CYO basketball. An affordable after-school care includes time outside on our rooftop playground. Our Early Childhood Program now includes, free of charge, six full day UPK classes. Enrollment is ongoing. Tours of the school are available upon request.

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176021 Wexford Terrace, Jamaica Estates, Queens, 718-297-2120 or www.tmla.org

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Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary

371 Pleasant Avenue, NYC 10035, 212-876-7555 or www.mtcarmelholyroary.org

Founded in 1949, Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary School is a private Catholic elementary school in Harlem. The school provides superior Pre-K to grade 8 education, combining the best of current teaching and technology with traditional values in a warm and caring atmosphere. Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary views each child as an individual with unique talents and needs. The school's dedicated administration and faculty make it possible for all students to grow intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually within a caring school community. As a Partnership Network school, Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary offers choir, dance and music classes during the school day as well as a robust after-school program. Scholarships applications are available for new students in Pre-K through 8th grade and most families qualify. Admissions are on a rolling basis – call today!

Our Lady Queen of Angels

229 East 112th Street NYC 10029, 212-722-9277 or www.olqaeastharlem.org

True to its tradition of serving the East Harlem Community for over 120 years, Our Lady Queen of Angels School (OLQA) provides our students with a high quality, well-rounded education rooted in gospel values and attentive to individual differences. OLQA strives to empower students to strengthen their faith, develop their talents and abilities, and embrace a life-long passion for learning. In doing so, OLQA prepares them to become successful, contributing members of their local and global communities. As a Partnership Network school, OLQA offers choir, dance and music classes during the school day as well as a robust after-school program. Scholarships applications are available for new students in Pre-K through 8th grade and most families qualify. Admissions are on a rolling basis – call today!

St. Aloysius School

223 West 132nd Street NY, NY 10027, 212-283-0921 or www.staloyssiusschool.org

St. Aloysius School is a Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade independent Jesuit school located in Central Harlem. St. Aloysius School works to instill the importance of strong values, promoting social justice, giving back to the community, and becoming a "person for others". Upon graduation, we actively support alumni throughout their high school years and into college. Our Graduate Support Program has a full-time director who works to prepare students to enter competitive high schools, succeed in school, and go on to college. We provide our students with opportunities to explore and expand interests and talents, with organized sports teams, outdoor programs, and other extra-curricular opportunities such as Squash, tennis, and a cooking/nutrition program. Extra-curricular opportunities offer an exciting chance for students to break from the normal structure of an academic day and get creative, furthering our mission to educate the "whole child."

Continued on page 18



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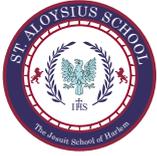
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Catholic Schools

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 16
 in mind, body, and spirit.

St. Brigid School

185 E. 7th Street, NY 10009, 212-677-5210 or www.stbrigidschoolny.com

Since 1856, St. Brigid School has been an integral part of the East Village through its emphasis in a complete education. Located at the corner of Tompkins Square Park, SBS provides its students from Pre-K through 8th grade with a safe and welcoming learning environment, where every child is given the opportunity to reach his/her potential and become critical thinkers and impassioned members of the community.

Our Early Childhood Program accepts children aged 3 and 4 with student-teacher ratios maxed at 9:1. The Pre-K curriculum focuses on literacy, math, values, and classroom preparation. Center based instruction at St. Brigid School fosters the important early development of math and literacy that is supported by continual feedback and exchanges with the teacher. Through play in areas like the block center, art center, and the sand table, learning is thus both communicative and explorative and builds a strong foundation for critical thought.

St. Mark the Evangelist

55 West 138th Street, NYC 10037, 212-283-4848 or www.saintmarkschool.org

Deeply rooted in the history and culture of Harlem, St. Mark the Evangelist School offers holistic education that is academically fulfilling and shaped by Catholic values. The school was founded by St. Katherine Drexel and has served the community for over 100 years. As a Partnership Network School, St. Mark offers choir, dance and music classes during the school day as well as a robust after-school program. Scholarships applications are available for new students in Pre-K through 8th grade and most families qualify. Admissions are on a rolling basis - call today!

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

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contact@spectrumneuroscience.org

www.spectrumneuroscience.org



FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN

Cupid and the city

Whether you are watching a romantic film, eating a DeLysscious box of chocolate, or having a candlelit dinner, you're sure to have a wonderful, lovable, #FabULySS Valentine's Day! If you're still looking for something to do, try these suggestions.

If you are able to score a sitter (Urban Sitter www.urbansitter.com and DK Nannies www.dknannies.com are great babysitting services), try and make a reservation at one of my favorite DeLysscious restaurants — Il Mulino, Daniel, and Gramercy Tavern, just to name a few. A new favorite of mine is The Upsider, located in Midtown East (you will love this awesome new restaurant).

Il Mulino [86 W. Third St. between Thompson and Sullivan streets in NoHo, (212) 673-3783; and 37 E. 60th St. at Madison Avenue in Midtown, (212) 750-3270, ilmulino.com]

Daniel [60 E. 65th St. between Park and Madison avenues in Midtown, (212) 288-0033, danielnyc.com]

Gramercy Tavern [42 E. 20th St. between Park Avenue S and Broadway in the Flatiron District, (212) 477-0777, gramercytavern.com]

The Upsider [1004 Second Ave. at E. 53rd Street in Midtown East, (646) 726-4760, theupsidernyc.com]

Then, kick off Valentine's Day weekend and the start of the city's public school's February break by attending The DivaMoms Sweetest Valentine Party at Creative Dreams Party for singing, dancing, and decorating chocolates with your sweet little valentines.

The DivaMoms Sweetest Valentine Party at Creative Dreams Party (25 Waterside Plaza at E. 26th Street in Rose Hill, rsvp@divamoms.com) on Feb. 13 from 5 to 7 pm.

Valentines sure have come a long way from the generic boxed sets we bought in the drugstore back when we were kids (I know, I'm dating myself). One of my favorite designers, Sophie & Lilli, is offering customized Valentine's cards where you get to pick out a girl with a likeness to you. They're available, in two styles — fill in your own info or custom with



your name — and you receive a PDF to print at home. www.sophieandlilli.com.

I am always looking for new #FabULySS children's books to read with my kids. I recently came across the new book written by Wall Street mogul and dad Steven Schoenfeld, "Can You Buy Me the Wind?", a children's book for this age of instant gratification. Inspired by actual events between his daughter and her grandparents, "Can You Buy Me the Wind?" illustrates the tug-of-war between teaching values and making a child happy. When Sammy's grandparents come to sit, they decide that the 4-year-old should earn the toy she wants by doing simple chores, and Sammy is eager to comply.

But when there is no wind to fly the kite, Sammy asks grandma to buy her the wind — a rational question for a child who up until then has received everything she ever asked for. After learning about the value of hard work, Sammy hears that not everything can be earned or bought. "Can You Buy Me the Wind?" addresses both issues in a fun, light-hearted way. Sammy absorbs a great lesson about working to earn the kite that she wants, but more important, she learns that it takes more than money to earn the things in life that really matter. Illustrated by Chuck Gonzales. It is available at bookstores and online through www.canyoubuymethewind.com and www.amazon.com.

Many young families are always asking me "How do we want to raise

our family? Should we stay in the city — or is it possibly time to go where the grass is literally greener — the suburbs?"

It is a tough decision for everyone involved, parents and kids alike. There is no right answer, and for many there are considerations not just including finances, schools, commutes — but more importantly how a family will be raised. There is not a perfect answer for any one family, and it is a very subjective process.

For those that end up staying there are endless things to discuss such as summers and the plan for that, schools and more. For those that decide to leave for the 'burbs, the tough part then begins of deciding where to go. A mother of four young kids, who a few years ago was in the same situation of leaving the city and trying to figure out where to go, created a unique business centered around this move to the suburbs. It was extremely difficult to figure out where to look and, more importantly, get truly objective advice on which suburbs to look in. She had no idea where to start, and knew that the wrong decision of where to move would be a costly one both emotionally and financially.

Alison Bernstein launched the Suburban Jungle Realty Group to help young families free of charge. It is the first of its kind — a real estate strategic relocation firm dedicated exclusively to helping young families leave New York City for the suburbs! Each family works with their personal strategist as well as our relocation team to find the right town, and then of course the right home! Their award-winning "town first" approach to real estate helps to make certain that families are looking in the right places, and more importantly asking the right questions.

All of their services are free. The firm has now helped hundreds of families, and is now expanding to Chicago, San Francisco, LA and Miami. www.suburbanjunglerealty.com

Wishing everyone a sweet Valentine's Day filled with lots of hugs and kisses!

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

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New-York Historical Society / Glenn Castellano

The Annie Liebovitz "Pilgrimage" exhibit at the New York Historical Society comes alive with a family guide.

Off the walls

How museum family guides can enrich children's experience

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Many museums in New York City are making efforts to not only attract families with children, but to also engage them. For instance, the Metropolitan Museum of Art has family guides available to use when exploring the space, and the Museum of Modern Art offers art cards as well as a space dedicated to hands-on learning for children and families. I recently visited the New York Historical Society, also home to the DiMenna Children's Museum, to view the Annie Leibovitz exhibition, "Pilgrimage." It was a pleasant surprise to see that the exhibit had a family guide available so that my child could be engaged as we walked through the gallery space.

I spoke to Alice Stevenson, director of the DiMenna Children's History Museum, about the addition of a family guide for an exhibit like "Pilgrimage."

Shnieka Johnson: What is the family guide?

Alice Stevenson: "The Annie Leibovitz: Pilgrimage Family Guide" is a way for kids and grown-ups to explore the exhibition together — to look closely, to discuss, to form opinions, and to learn something new. It first encourages families to look closely at Leibovitz's work in order to appreciate the composition, the mood, the objects, and to ponder her intentions; and second it layers in historical information about the places, events, and people related to the photographs. The history she is representing is

so dense, we wanted to make sure kids walked away from the exhibition with a deeper understanding of these important figures in American history.

SJ: What types of activities are included?

AS: We selected 10 photographs from the exhibition and for each image we have two pages. One page has "Look" questions directing families to notice details in the photographs. The second page has "Learn" text layering in relevant historical information and hopefully some surprising facts. We wanted Annie Leibovitz's photographs to speak for themselves, and then we wanted the historical figures to "speak" to the families. After all, these are all portraits of people, in their own way.

“By connecting with stories, kids can both more deeply understand the past and perhaps gain perspective on their own lives as New Yorkers.”

For example, at first, families won't be aware they are looking at Abraham Lincoln's top hat. We start by asking them to notice things like the wear on the hat, or where someone would wear a hat like this. Once families have looked closely at the hat itself, we then introduce Lincoln, and share that it was worn the night of his assassination.

Tops hats are associated with Lincoln in general, but this object is so specific to this momentous night in our history.

SJ: Why was it important to draw families to this particular exhibit?

AS: The New-York Historical Society is committed to engaging families in all of our exhibitions, in addition to the DiMenna Children's History Museum. We do this in a variety of ways — through performing arts classes related to Chinese American: Exclusion-Inclusion, or a scavenger hunt that brings families through our permanent collection, or our Reading into History book club looking at documents in our library.

One of the things I love about “Pilgrimage” is that the photographs are a personal exploration of Leibovitz's interest in history. We encourage kids to connect with and wonder about the people in American history, and their struggles and triumphs. By connecting with stories, kids can

both more deeply understand the past and perhaps gain perspective on their own lives as New Yorkers.

SJ: Did the photographer have a preference for which images were used in the guide?

AS: No, we were able to choose from her works on view.

SJ: How does the guide help the family flow through the exhibit?

AS: Museum visitors sometimes come in to exhibitions with the expectation that they have to see every object. As an adult that can be tiring, but as a kid it can be exhausting.

Family guides and programs help this by highlighting a few objects around a theme, or suggesting a mode of looking.

We hope that families visit all the photographs in this guide, and then if they have an appetite for more they will keep exploring. I always encourage grown-ups to stop at a handful of objects, and then see where their interest takes them.

SJ: What is the suggested age range for the guide?

AS: 6 and up.

SJ: Why this and not an audio tour?

AS: We have done audio tours for families in the past — this summer we had one for “Madeline in New York: The Art of Ludwig Bemelmans.”

For this guide we chose a written piece because we really wanted to encourage contemplation of the works, and that is a very subjective experience. I might think looking for two minutes is enough, someone else might want to look for five minutes.

An audio guide felt too one-size-fits-all for what we wanted to accomplish with this guide.

SJ: Are there upcoming family programming or family-friendly events related to this exhibit?

AS: In addition to the family guide, our Little New-Yorkers program will hold a storytelling project in the gallery.

Annie Leibovitz “Pilgrimage” exhibit closes Feb. 22. DiMenna Children's Museum at the New York Historical Society [170 Central Park West at 77th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 873-3400, www.nyhistory.org/childrens-museum]

The Metropolitan Museum of Art [1000 Fifth Ave. at 82nd Street on the Upper East Side, (212) 535-7710, www.metmuseum.org/learn/for-kids/family-guides. Museum of Modern Art [11 W. 53rd St. between Sixth and Fifth avenues in Midtown, (212) 708-9400, www.moma.org/learn/kids_families/visits]

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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Dr. Kaufman, a faculty member at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, also served as Chief of Pediatric Dental Medicine & Surgery at St. Luke's, Roosevelt, and Coney Island Hospitals for over fifteen years. He also held many leadership positions, including serving as Chairman of the Oral Health Committee NY Chapter II of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

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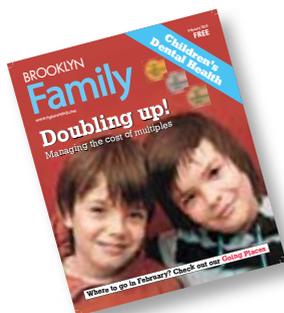
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Dental health for kids

February is National
Children's Dental
Health Month

BY JAMIE LOBER

The Department of Health for New York State says that it is important for children to develop good oral health habits at an early age because practicing healthy habits can prevent or reduce tooth decay in infants and children.

"Parents often do not think of the value of what they are doing for their kid's oral health at home until an issue arises," said Dr. Jonathan Shenkin, dentist and spokesman for the American Dental Association.

Teeth tend to appear between 6 to 8 months-old and by age 3, all 20 primary teeth should be in the mouth. Starting around age 6, baby teeth are replaced by permanent teeth, but it's important to remember that both sets of teeth matter.

"When teeth first come they are exposed to saliva and the minerals that exist in the saliva and fluoride that enables minerals to be deposited completely into the tooth," said Shenkin.

You have to give the teeth time to become strong. Diet plays a big role, and soda can be one of the worst culprits.

"If you are continually consuming sugars throughout the day you are constantly reducing the acid level in your mouth



“It is important that parents monitor toothbrushing until kids tie their own shoelaces because they do not have the manual dexterity to appropriately remove plaque,”

making teeth more susceptible to decay processes, so it is about the frequency and consumption,” said Shenkin.

“Poor oral hygiene combined with poor nutrition can cause tooth decay in kids that could be easily avoided.”

Set an example of how children should take care of their teeth by taking care of your own.

“If you do not have appropriate behaviors that improve oral health you put your kid at great risk for developing disease,” said Shenkin.

To do so you’ll need to have the right tools.

“A big change we made in the last year and a half is recommending fluoride toothpaste for children as soon as the first tooth erupts in the mouth,” said Shenkin. “We used to say age 2 was the first time you would provide fluoride toothpaste, but we changed it based on the amount you use and the age of the child.”

And you should know your measurements.

“We recommend at the eruption of the first tooth to start using a piece of toothpaste the size of a piece of rice to help parents visualize the amount, which is extremely small to minimize ingestion. And then at age 3 we recommend a pea-size amount,” said Shenkin.

Your child should be brushing twice a day.

“Morning and night is imperative and it is not just about putting the toothbrush in the mouth, it is about removing the plaque on the teeth and the sugars that cause the decay,” said Shenkin. “It is important that parents monitor toothbrushing until kids tie their own shoelaces, which is at 6 to 7 years of age, because they do not have the

manual dexterity to appropriately remove plaque,” said Shenkin.

Sometimes the right toothbrush can make a big difference.

“Electric toothbrushes can inspire children to brush their teeth and they do a better job if they are excited about the process,” said Shenkin.

You’ll also need a trustworthy dentist who can help with the cleaning.

“We typically recommend at age 1 or within 6 months of the eruption of the first tooth to have the first visit to find out what kind of risk factors exist,” said Shenkin. “We recommend seeing the dentist based on your risk level so some kids go once a year and some need to go 4 times a year.”

The dentist may have some individualized recommendations that consider your child’s needs.

“Parents do not realize the importance of dental sealants at the age of 6,” said Shenkin. Evidence shows they work wonders. “The most decayed tooth in the mouth for all of us is the adult first molar on the biting surface and the most effective way of reducing risk for tooth decay in young kids is to put a dental sealant or a little plastic coating on it to dramatically reduce the incidence of tooth decay,” said Shenkin. It is advised to do that on all permanent molars for kids.

If your child wants sugar, it is best with a meal.

“Do not have sugars in between meals because having it with meals would expand the time period that there are higher levels of acidity in the mouth,” said Shenkin. “Mistakes parents make are putting kids to bed at night with a bottle with fermentable sugars, juices, or milk because it can result in decay.”

February is National Children’s Dental Health month, making it the perfect time to talk with your child about why taking care of his teeth matters. And it may sound basic, but folks easily overlook the importance of dental health.

“The most important thing we have recognized is how kids can come to the dentist earlier to reduce disease levels, educate parents, and redirect behaviors in the household,” said Shenkin.

Jamie Lober, author of “Pink Power” (www.getpinkpower.com), is dedicated to providing information on women’s and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at jamie@getpinkpower.com.

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Misty Copeland

Breaking down barriers

A ballerina
who inspires
— on and off
the stage

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Misty Copeland's path to dance was not a traditional one, as she entered the practice quite late. She was 13 when first introduced to ballet, and she took classes offered at her local Boys & Girls Club. Quickly considered a prodigy, she has spent the entirety of her career with the American Ballet Theatre (the only African-American woman to do so). She is the third soloist of African-American background (and the first in two decades) to

perform with the American Ballet Theatre. She has endured not only a difficult upbringing that called for much adversity, but also cultural pressure associated with the role she has assumed.

In her children's picture book, "Firebird" (profiled in last month's Bookworm story), which is a collaboration with author and illustrator Christopher Myers, Copeland seeks to inspire other young dancers. The title holds significance, as it was one of the first principal roles that she performed for the American Ballet Theatre. The

book itself is dedicated to her mentor Raven Wilkinson, the first African-American ballerina to tour the country.

Copeland has been very vocal about the lack of diversity in classical ballet. She has worked very closely with the development of Project Plié, a comprehensive initiative to increase racial and ethnic representation in ballet. Project Plié seeks to combine training and support of ballet students and dance teachers from underrepresented communities. Project Plié will also include a new partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America to introduce participants to ballet — aiming to take an important step toward helping the classical ballet profession better reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of our country.

I recently spoke to Misty Copeland about being a child prodigy, her lengthy career with the American Ballet Theatre, and how she plans to influence diversity in classical ballet.

Shnieka Johnson: You were a teen when you were first introduced to ballet and were quickly considered a prodigy. When did you come to the realization that this was indeed your passion?

Misty Copeland: I realized ballet was my passion a few weeks after I took my first class. The process in the studio was so intriguing to me. Knowing everyday I was going to learn something new was something I needed in my life at that time. Something structured, but artistic. Performing was such a thrill.

SJ: How did you initially become affiliated with A.B.T.?

MC: My first ballet teacher, Cindy,

Project Plié

Project Plié will award the following annual scholarships to promising students, aged 9 to 18:

- 15 Full Scholarships to attend the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis School at American Ballet Theatre Children's and Pre-Professional Divisions.

- 15 Full Scholarships to attend American Ballet Theatre's Summer Intensive Programs, five of which will include housing stipends.

- 10 Full Scholarships to A.B.T.'s Young Dancer Summer Workshop in New York City, a two-week program for young dancers, aged 9 to 12.

Scholarship recipients will be identified through auditions conducted throughout the United States and nominations made by A.B.T.-certified teachers during the Company's 25-city Summer Intensive audition tour and at master classes held in all five boroughs of New York City. Project Plié scholarship recipients will be eligible



Erica Lall and Naazir Muhammad of Project Plié.

to receive comprehensive training in classical dance; financial assistance for uniforms, shoes, and travel; and access to academic tu-

toring, health assessments, career guidance and mentoring from the theater's dancers and teaching staff.

Photo by Rosalie O'Connor



Photo by Jade Young

showed me videos of ballerinas to show me what was possible. They were all A.B.T. ballerinas. My first live ballet performance was A.B.T.'s "Don Quixote" at the Music Center in Los Angeles. Paloma Herrera and Angel Corella were the leads. I fell in love with the company.

SJ: Your most-recently published work is in partnership with author and illustrator Christopher Myers for the picture book "Firebird." Why did you choose that character to center the children's book? To share this message?

MC: Firebird was the first leading classical role I danced with A.B.T. She is a powerful character who had been portrayed by some of the most iconic ballerinas in history. Christopher and I took that character and made her me. Misty

the Firebird is a leader and mentor for young dancers, the same type of inspiration that Raven Wilkinson was for me.

SJ: You mention Raven Wilkinson as inspiration to you. When were you first introduced to her work? At what time were you able to share this with her?

MC: I saw the "Ballet Russes" documentary when I was maybe 27 years old. I immediately felt a connection and attachment to her being a black ballerina. It was amazing to hear her struggles and see someone who looked like me. It wasn't until I was maybe 28 that I met her. I cried when I met her. She was my hero and she was real!

SJ: You have openly spoken about what it is like to be an "only" in your field. A.B.T. has made ef-



(Top) Misty Copeland with members of Boys & Girls Club of America. (Above) Copeland with author and illustrator Christopher Myers, who co-wrote "Firebird."

forts in advancing diversity in ballet with "Project Plié" for young girls of diverse backgrounds. Can you tell me more about your role with that?

MC: I am on the advisory council of Project Plié. A.B.T.'s C.E.O. Rachel Moore came to me directly with the idea. She wanted to hear my experiences and what changes needed to be made to create an environment where minority dancers felt support from their peers and the staff. The strongest asset I bring is simply my experiences.

SJ: What advice do you give young aspiring ballet dancers?

MC: Believe in yourself. Surround yourself with people who are going to be your support system during those moments when you may have doubts and fears. Enjoy the process of becoming your best self!

•••

Upcoming American Ballet Theatre performances with Misty Copeland:

- "Les Sylphides" – May 14 evening (New York, NY)
- "La Bayadère" – June 2 evening (New York, NY)
- "Romeo and Juliet" – June 20 matinee (New York, NY)
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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.



BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

Ending a tantrum before it even starts

Kids are like sponges; they absorb everything. Even when you think they are fully immersed in the latest version of “My Little Pony,” a piece of their mind is watching every step you take and listening to every word that comes out of your mouth. Your behavior is a model for their behavior. This is both a good thing and something to be concerned about.

If you’re dealing with tantrums in your kids, I’m going to have to ask this question: what behaviors have you been modeling? I would bet there are times when you lose your cool and engage in behaviors that could be defined as an adult tantrum, including: yelling, screaming, grabbing, and pounding your fist against a table. If your “small being” (my word for “kids”) is in the room, she is learning that those behaviors are appropriate ways to deal with a challenging situation.

The absolute best way to stop your child from having tantrums is to stop throwing your own tantrums! That’s right — stop your adult tantrum!

Stop yelling at your kid when he accidentally spills juice on his shirt. Stop yanking your daughter’s arm to leave the park when she simply won’t get off the swings. Stop rolling your eyes when you get annoyed at the slow cashier at the supermarket. Most certainly, stop fighting with the other adults in your home.

Yes, this is all *much* harder to do than to say, but it’s a critical key to stop explosive behavior in your child. You will still get angry, frustrated, or annoyed in countless situations. Changing behavior is not about changing or denying how you feel. It is about changing your behavior while acknowledging your feelings.

What will you do with those big emotions? Right now the tantrum is letting emotions dictate your behavior. Control your behavior in the face of challenging or overwhelming emotions. I’m not asking you to deny your feelings when they occur.

You know the usual suggestions: take a deep breath, walk away until you’re calm, close your eyes and count to 10. Start applying these techniques — or any relaxation techniques — in your life. It’s not important what you do, but rather that you do something to avoid the explosive behavior. Need motivation to make this change? Do it for your children! Model the behavior you want them to have now and in the future.

Changing behavior is hard. Before you ask your kiddo to change her behavior, you need to change yours. You can’t expect your child to handle her emotions better than you do. Start putting the tools in place to make it happen. My favorite is actually talking (calmly) about my feelings. This shows your small being that emotions don’t dictate behavior. Say something like, “I’m so frustrated that I am going to be late because this line is moving so slow.” Maybe even take the next step and say, “Let’s

find a way to take my mind off the time. How about we sing a song (or practice our spelling words or play I-Spy)?” This models what you want your kids to do when they are upset, tell you how they are feeling and do something to change it.

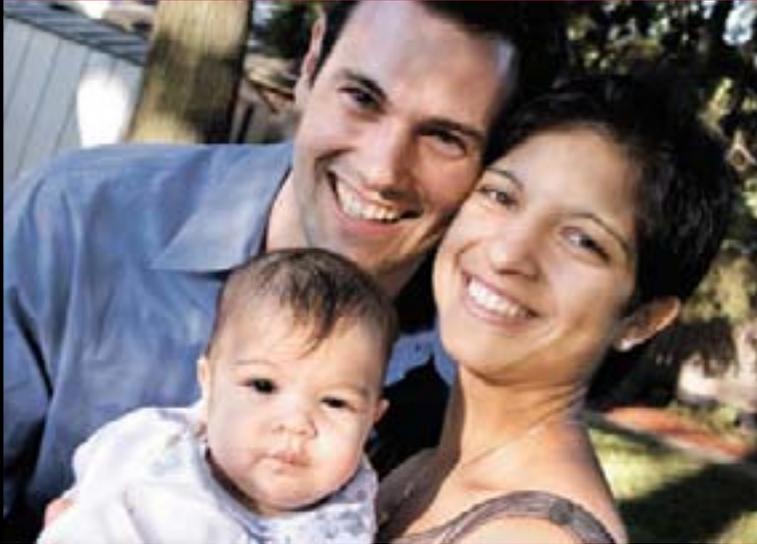
Be the model for the behavior you want to experience. Talking about how to have good behavior will only go so far. Your actions truly makes a difference!

Dr. Marcie Beigel is a behavioral therapist based in Brooklyn. She has worked with thousands of families for more than 15 years, and has condensed her observations into her practice and programs.

For more on her, visit www.BehaviorAndBeyond.net.



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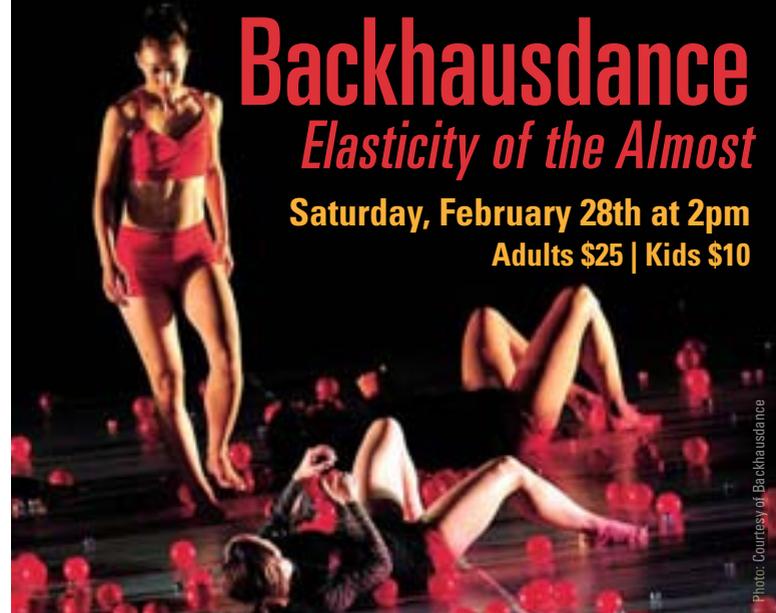
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Filing taxes for child care

Navigating the rules for paying your caregivers

BY CARE.COM

The new year is here, and many families are settling back down from the holiday rush. But for the millions of families that hired a nanny, babysitter, or other childcare professional to work in their home last year, there's still work to do before they can say goodbye to 2014. That's because the IRS considers any family that pays \$1,900 or more to one of these employees to be a household employer with tax responsibilities similar to many businesses.

The majority of these responsibilities have already been met, but below are what families should do between now and the April 15 tax-filing deadline to make sure their taxes and their employee's taxes are properly taken care of:

By Jan. 15, send your fourth estimated tax payment to the IRS. You will use IRS Form 1040-ES to send the Social Security, Medicare, and federal income taxes you withheld from

your employee during the months of September, October, November, and December, as well as pay the Social Security, Medicare, and federal unemployment insurance taxes you owe as a household employer.

NOTE: Families are allowed to include this 1040-ES payment with their personal income tax return. However, there is a risk the family could be assessed an underpayment penalty due to the IRS's safe harbor rules.

File your state tax returns (generally) by Feb. 2. All families must file their state unemployment insurance taxes and most will also file state income tax returns (if they live in state with income taxes). However, the frequency the family has to file and the deadline may not be the same for all families. Generally, state unemployment insurance and state income tax returns are filed quarterly and due by the last day of the month following quarter close. However, this year that day falls on a Saturday, and many states will allow one additional business day for returns to be filed.

That means families will need to file their fourth quarter state tax returns no later than Feb. 2. To check the requirements in your state, visit www.myhomepay.com/Answers/RequirementsByState.

NOTE: If you live in a state with income taxes, you may also be required to file an annual reconciliation form. The form simply summarizes the state income taxes you withheld from your employee during 2014.

Prepare and send your employee a W-2 by Feb. 2. You have the option of mailing the W-2 or giving her the form in person, but she'll need it to file her personal income tax return. The W-2 lists the wages she earned from you and the taxes you withheld from her pay throughout the year. Like the state returns, normally

W-2s are due on Jan. 31, but the IRS allows an additional business day to take care of this requirement since the due date is on a Saturday.

Send Form W-2 Copy A and Form W-3 to the Social Security Administration by March 2. These forms list the same information as the W-2 form you provide your employee. The Social Security Administration uses these forms to give her credit toward her eventual Social Security income and Medicare during her retirement years.

Note: Families that file their W-2 Copy A electronically have an extended deadline of March 31 and do not have to file a W-3.

Attach a Schedule H to your personal income tax return. A Schedule H is used to summarize the Social Security, Medicare, federal unemployment insurance and federal income taxes sent to the IRS throughout the year. The total household employment taxes you paid for 2014 should be entered on line 60a on your personal income tax return.

Once these items are checked off your list, you've completed all your household employer tax responsibilities for 2014! Additionally, you've helped your employee both in the short and long-term, because paying legally allows her to have the following benefits:

Employment history. An employment history is required for a car loan, a mortgage, and other lines of credit. If your employment is not documented, it's as if you don't work.

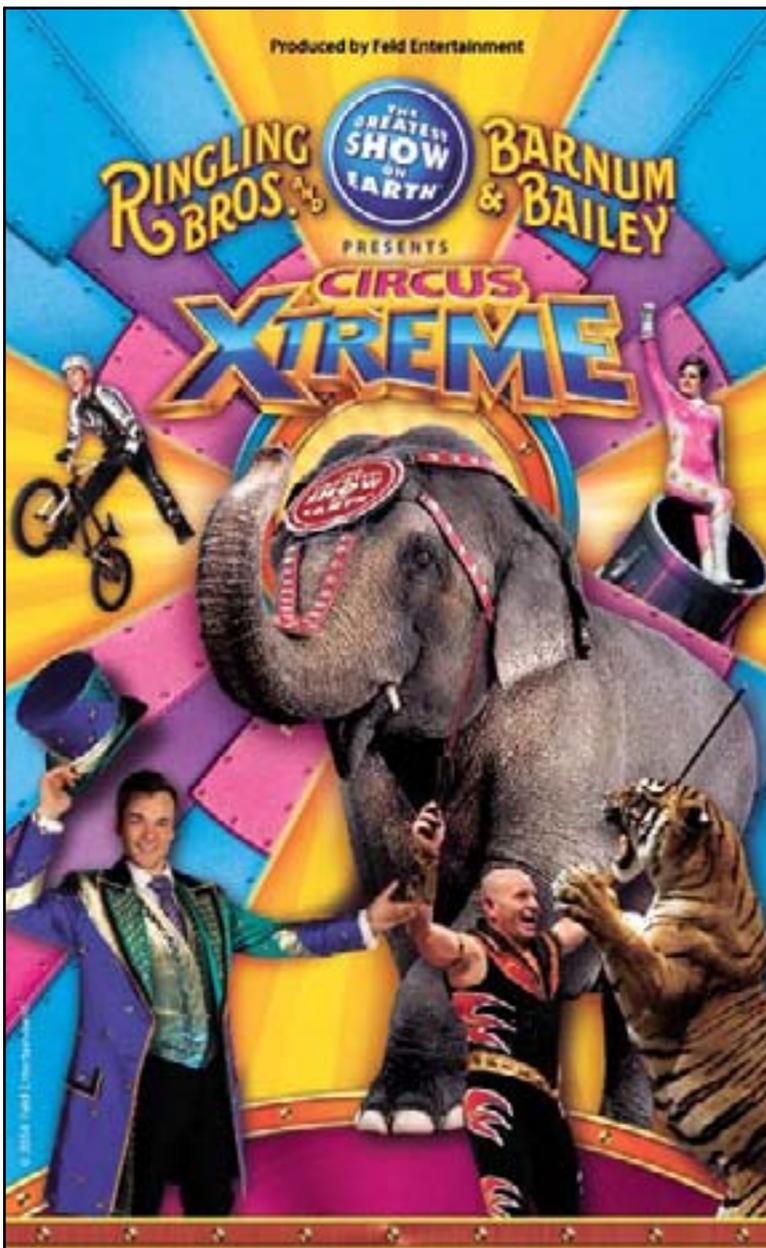
Unemployment benefits. When paid legally, employees are entitled to receive approximately 50 percent of their salary for up to six months if they lose their job due to no fault of their own.

Social Security and Medicare benefits. When your employee retires, she'll receive money for living and medical expenses. How much she receives is based on how much is paid into her Social Security account. Those who are paid under the table don't receive any retirement benefits, so they'll never be able to stop working.

Healthcare subsidies. The Affordable Care Act requires all individuals to have health insurance or pay a fine. If your employees purchases an individual policy on the health insurance Marketplace and is paid on the books, they could qualify for a subsidy to reduce the cost of their premiums.

It is tax season, and the experts at Care.com HomePay can offer excellent helpful insight.





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This team is taking the figure skating world by storm

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

All over the city lots of families are celebrating winter by hitting the ice and getting their glide on. Skating is a cool bonding activity, a great form of exercise, and a fun way to get rid of those winter blues. And it really doesn't matter much whether you and the kids are agile skaters or kind of uncoordinated (in a cute way). Skating is an exciting and "forgiving" sport that's open to everyone, at any level. So go ahead, put on those heavy sweaters, dust off and lace up those skates, and get to the nearest rink. And when you're done, relax and take a hot cocoa break.

There are several great rinks in the city, from the iconic Rockefeller Center and the Sky Rink at Chelsea

Piers, to Queens' World Ice Arena and City Ice Pavilion, as well as Brooklyn's popular McCarren Park Rink, just to name a few.

If your family adventure takes you to the Sky Rink, you may catch a glimpse of a fabulous skating team, Reach for the Sky Rink All Stars, rehearsing for its next show on Feb. 14.

Under the direction of the team's beloved coach Marni Halasa, this all-girl group of awesome figure skaters has been Sky Rink's longest-running ensemble team for the past seven years, and has performed various routines at Rockefeller Center. Check out www.youtube.com/watch?v=atUvMRQrBKw for a look at the team's in action.

The girls range in age from 12 to 18 years, and the close-knit, 15-mem-

ber team has been together for six to seven years. When you watch them skate, you can tell they're having fun — and it's no wonder, because they all love the artistic creativity that goes into creating unique choreography. And they know the importance of being an inclusive community, while enhancing the very precious relationships they have with each other.

The talented skaters come from private and public schools in the city, and dedicate at least three to six days a week at Sky Rink. Their strong team spirit, collective drive, and passion for skating, combined with their amazing "perform on a dime" skills, will definitely help them succeed in their future careers, and in everyday life. Skating has taught them valuable lessons.

"I'm really proud of these girls, even though they have rigorous school schedules, battle injuries, lack of sleep ... they are all really committed and keep the team going," said Halasa. "We performed five shows in December and even with different casts, and not much rehearsal time, the girls made it work 'on the fly.'"

Watch this video featuring the girls performing as Santas at the 2014 Holiday on the Hudson Skating Show at Chelsea Piers' Sky Rink, where they wowed the audience with their humorous routine to the holiday hit (from the movie "Elf"), "Nobody Cares About Santa Claus" this past Dec. 19: www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-xaxcOs7WA.

The team members, who were the 2014 and 2013 Showcase National medalists, won first place at the Great Neck (Long Island) ISI Competition on Dec. 7.

"The competition was fierce and judging is always subjective, but the girls managed to pull ahead in spectacular fashion," said Halasa. "I try to teach them that it's not always about skating perfectly; it's about the chemistry they have with each other, emotionally connecting with an audience, becoming a character and taking risks during performance to up the ante — intangibles that



Photo by Peter Cerece

(Above) Coach Marni Halasa with Reach for the Sky Rink All Stars. (Opposite) Rehearsing at Sky Rink in 2010.



Photo by Marri Halasa

can catapult a performance to an entirely new level.”

About the All Stars

The Reach for the Sky Rink All Stars is made up of senior and junior teams, and the great thing about being on a showcase team like theirs is that it accommodates all levels of skating. This means that your teen daughter doesn't have to be an aspiring Olympic athlete to get in.

Team Captain Catherine Mayer, 15, lives on Manhattan's Upper West Side and skates on the senior team.

“It's hard work, but it really pays off. Being on the team gives me a chance to practice many different

skills that I'm sure I will use later in life,” she said. “What's great is that I get to be a leader, as well as a friend to my teammates. But what I really notice is our overall progress — with every experience, we are all becoming more confident in our own skins.

“Seeing the audience's reactions is an incredible feeling. We throw in a lot of comedy and I love hearing the audience laugh throughout our performances.”

Emma Wender, 16, who lives in Midtown West with her family, enjoys embodying a whole host of characters in her routines.

“I'm normally pretty shy, but when I perform with my friends, I come out

of my shell. I've been a quirky circus character, a Santa Claus that doesn't get any respect, and Velma's annoying husband from Chicago's ‘Cell Block Tango,’” she recalled. “Playing all these different characters is not only fun, but helps me feel more comfortable with my solo skating and other athletic activities.”

Chelsea resident Jean-Li Spencer, 15, also feels incredibly accepted by her teammates.

“When I skate with my friends I feel really free, which is a feeling that is really hard to achieve skating solo. Skating together with my friends is a place where we can all be ourselves and do what we love together.”

Mona Johnson, 16, who calls Chinatown home, feels that during the past seven years the team has become a second family, “and we know we're there for each other.” Although she says she's not at every practice, she has realized that the team really provides “a safe environment, where we can brainstorm and experiment with ideas. We push each other to achieve the best of our abilities, but also don't judge each other.”

Halasa says that this kind of artistic team skating “is significant for the universe of figure skating” because membership had been dropping from the US Figure Skating, the national governing body of the sport.

“No longer do parents strive for the unrealistic goal of going to the Olympics as an individual, but support their child's participation as a member on a national synchro or production team,” she added.

Now that more children are involved in figure skating, membership for the US Figure Skating and Skating Club of New York has increased, she said, and the new trend allows New York families to embrace more realistic expectations for their children, because “showcase teams don't have such rigorous participation rules; anyone of any level can join, and be part of the team — which fits in well with the rigorous schooling of city schools.”

The All Stars also have an outreach mission, in which they've taught kids in Brooklyn to skate at the Abe Stark Arena, helped children hard-hit by Hurricane Sandy, and donated their time to Ice Theatre of New York for community service.

Teens and parents can now see, first-hand, how skating can be a wonderfully fulfilling activity.

“Participants learn skating skills, social skills, responsibility, time-management, dedication, and how to generate good ideas,” Halasa said. “We have a U.S. Nationals pair competitor, a Showcase National individual bronze medalist, as well as Ice Skating Institute competitors all skating together to create an amazing production number. You don't really get that chance in other sports, to compete on a national level, and the kids really benefit from that experience.”

For more on the team, check out its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/skyrinkallstars?ref=br_t

All Stars at the Skating Club of New York's Showcase Competition at the Sky Rink [61 Chelsea Piers 23rd St. at the Hudson River in Chelsea, (212) 336-6100, www.chelseapiers.com] Feb. 14.



ASK AN ATTORNEY

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The facts of life insurance

Why would I need life insurance and how should I structure it?

Among the common purposes of life insurance are:

- To provide your loved ones with immediate liquidity to pay estate taxes and funeral expenses until your estate is administered through probate or a trust. This is especially helpful where an estate consists primarily of illiquid assets such as real property.

- To equalize beneficiaries who have received other assets (say, the family business), or to leave disproportionate assets to beneficiaries if that is your intention.

- To buy out a business partner, so that you need not remain in business with your partner's spouse when your partner dies.

- To pay any outstanding mortgages or maintain properties until other assets can be liquidated.

- To ensure that your beneficiaries have funds available to pay other potential future tax liabilities, such as estate, annual estate income or capital gains taxes.

A common misconception about life

insurance is that it is not "tax free." Income generated by whole-life policies are income tax free but they are not estate-tax free. The proceeds of a policy will be calculated as part of your gross taxable estate for the purpose of calculating the applicable estate tax.

An irrevocable life insurance trust can help exclude life insurance from your gross taxable estate and thereby from estate taxes. It is a form of irrevocable trust that owns (and controls) and is the beneficiary of your life insurance policies. It is irrevocable, which means that it cannot be changed or amended once created (although the grantor can always stop making gifts to the trust to pay the premiums). Existing policies are transferred to the trust, or the trust buys new policies on the grantor's life. The trust is named beneficiary of the policy, and the terms of the trust dictate who receives the proceeds of the policy and when.

For owners of small businesses, life insurance can be a crucial part of a solid estate plan. For many business owners, their net worth is inextricably intertwined with the business itself, and the business is an illiquid asset that cannot be readily sold. The Internal Revenue Service is not sympathetic. It demands that estate taxes be paid in cash within nine months of death, even if you file for an extension to file the taxes. Although there is a provision in the tax code for applying for an "installment plan," it is not a request that is readily granted and the government charges interest on the installments. Often the survivors of business owners must use the little cash or liquid investments that were left to them — and on which they expected to depend to satisfy daily needs — to pay the estate taxes and expenses of administering the estate. Some are forced to sell the business in a fire sale under duress to raise the funds. Life insurance can help

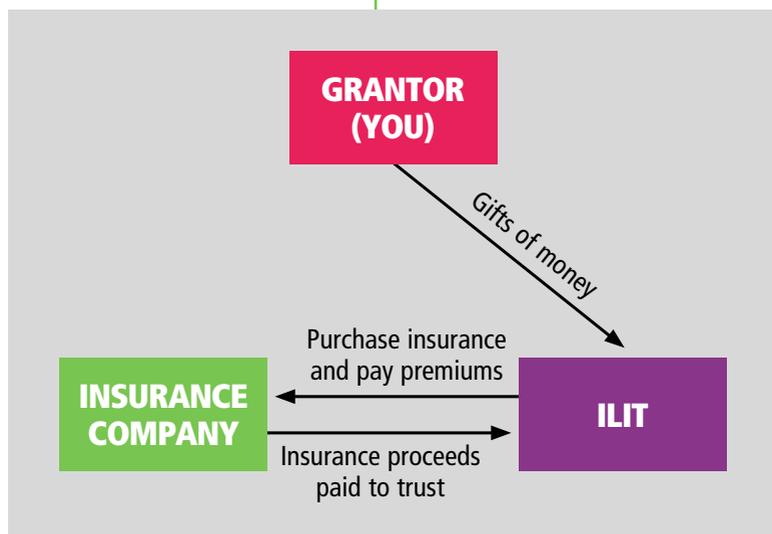
cushion the blow of a tax bill arising from a small business ownership interest. An irrevocable life insurance trust can be used as a vehicle to hold insurance policies so that the death proceeds are payable to the trust and pass to the trust beneficiaries free of estate tax.

How does an irrevocable life insurance trust work?

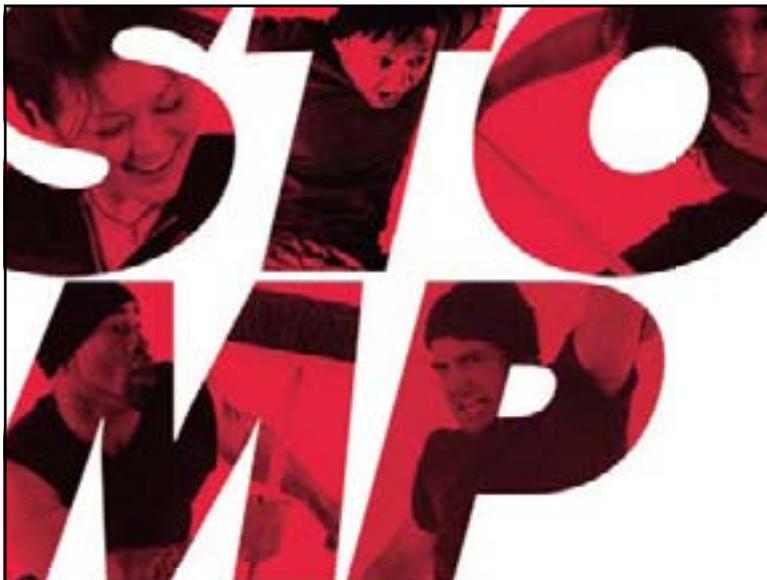
You gift money to the trust. Usually, you transfer enough money to cover the annual premium. In order to avoid paying gift taxes on the gift (or decreasing your available tax exemption at death), the trust usually gives the trust beneficiaries an immediate right to withdraw the gift contribution (usually a short window like 30 days). This is known as a "Crummey power" for the court decision that sanctioned it permissible for rendering the transfer qualified for the annual gift tax exclusion (\$14,000 in 2014). Although not expressly stated in the trust itself, the beneficiaries usually understand that they will ultimately receive more by not exercising their withdrawal right and leaving the gift inside the trust to purchase the life insurance.

The trustee of the trust then purchases life insurance on your life (depending upon how the trust is set up, the trust may purchase insurance on the joint lives of you and your spouse). When you die, the trust receives the insurance proceeds from the life insurance company.

The irrevocable life insurance trust has many other benefits depending on the client's objectives, such as ensuring preservation of principal against creditors, remarriage of your spouse or of children-beneficiaries, or from the beneficiaries themselves in the case of a spendthrift or where substance abuse is an issue. It can help ensure that capital will remain in the trust for future generations if desired. A forced sale of other assets under duress or in bad market conditions can also be avoided or the impact softened. In short, the irrevocable life insurance trust is an excellent vehicle for ensuring your financial legacy, regardless of your net worth or anticipation of estate taxes.



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Calendar

FEBRUARY



Photo by Evgenia Eliseeva

Float on at New Victory

“Floating Around Like A Princess” floats into the New Victory Theater from Feb. 27 through March 8.

After a young princess is cursed by a wicked witch to float through life forever, she must find a way to come back to earth by her 16th birthday or be doomed to defy gravity forever. The show features the princess twirling above the stage, through the kingdom and into a magical forest. Directed by Allegra Libonati, the production

showcases the brightest talents of Harvard’s graduate acting program. This funny and romantic musical features original songs, and is suited for ages 6 and up.

“Floating Around Like a Princess,” Feb. 27 through March 8. Tickets are \$10, \$13, \$18 or \$25 for members, with full price tickets starting at \$15.

The New Victory Theater [209 W. 42nd Street between Seventh and Eighth avenues 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!

SUN, FEB. 1 IN MANHATTAN

Sunday Science Spectacular: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 10 am–noon; \$15.

Children ages 6 to 11 can climb into a portable planetarium and watch the constellations come alive. Learn about Johannes Kepler and Galileo, and see what awed them as they explored the skies. All in attendance must have a ticket; children must be accompanied by a supervising adult.

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

Families discover New York history through tales of the past, and celebrate our Chinese-American exhibition with Lunar New Year tales. For ages 4 to 7.

Power Portrait Family Day: The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.; (212) 423-3200; thejewish-museum.org; Noon–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children view Helena Rubenstein's striking collection of paintings, African masks, and other treasures, and then design a headdress or mask, have their face transformed into a work of art, and create a costumed family portrait.

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 and 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Discover the art of using quilts to share stories and symbols. Learn the meanings of some popular West African "adinkra" symbols, then decorate a quilt square to hang at home.

To the Moon: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St.



Fun with folk art

Families will have fun with folk art on the first Saturday of the month at the American Folk Art Museum on Feb. 7.

This interactive workshop introduces children to folk art through discussion based tours in the galleries followed by a hands-on, art-making class inspired by objects in the museum. Children

can create their own illustrated storyboards that illustrates the answer to "What Happens Next?"

Families and Folk Art on Feb. 8 from 1 to 2 pm. Free with museum admission. Registration required.

American Folk Art Museum [2 Lincoln Sq. at Columbus Avenue and 66th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 265-1040; folkartmuseum.org]

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.

MON, FEB. 2 IN MANHATTAN

Music for Aardvarks: South Street Seaport, Corner of Fulton Street and Front Street; (212) 732-8257; www.southstreetseaport.com; 10 am; Free.

Music fun for children with catchy tunes and an interactive experience.

WED, FEB. 4 IN MANHATTAN

Jam with Jamie: South Street Seaport, Corner of Fulton Street and Front Street; (212) 732-8257; www.southstreetseaport.com; 10 am; Free.

Families enjoy upbeat and interactive musical entertainment for ages children up to 7 years old.

Choosing Child Care: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 10:30 am–noon; \$10.

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.

THURS, FEB. 5 IN MANHATTAN

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

Beginning cross stitchers and younger children will learn the basic stitch and create a bookmark with their new skill. More seasoned stitchers and older children and adults make a handcrafted gift for someone. Ages 7 and up.

A Gilded Age Salon Music from Paris and New York: Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets; (212) 534-1672; www.mcny.org; 6:30 pm; \$20 students/seniors; \$25 general public.

Acclaimed chamber ensemble the

Sylvan Winds plays music from the Gilded Age in the City Museum's Rotunda. Before the concert, guests are invited to join curator Donald Albrecht for a tour of the newly refurbished exhibition Gilded New York. A wine reception will follow. RSVP required.

FRI, FEB. 6 IN MANHATTAN

"Cambuyón": The New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues; (646) 223-3010; www.newvictory.org; \$15 and up.

Through body percussion, tap dance, hip-hop, and drumming, performers trade robust beats and cultural cadences to form unique rhythms with African, Irish, Spanish, and American influences. Days and times vary; consult the website.

Bilingual Birdies: South Street Seaport, Corner of Fulton Street and Front Street; (212) 732-8257; www.southstreetseaport.com; 10 am; Free.

Music and language immersion class that encourages cross-cultural awareness through foreign language and live music curriculum.

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, FEB. 7 IN MANHATTAN

"Cinderella": Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. between Madison and Park Avenues; (212) 355-6160; www.nytb.org; 11am, 1 pm and 3:30 pm; \$35 for children, \$40 for adults.

A dancing clock, two wacky step-sisters, and everyone's favorite rags-to-riches princess are all part of this enchanting story.

"I Spy My New York": Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets; (212) 534-1672; www.mcny.org; 11 am–2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children see what familiar sites they can spot in the panoramic photographs of New York on view in Jeff Chien-Hsing Liao's New York: Assembled Realities. Then they can create their own "I Spy My New York" book celebrating the city.

Families & Folk Art: American Folk Art Museum, 2 Lincoln Square (Columbus Avenue at 66th Street); (212) 265-1040; folkartmuseum.org; 1 pm; Free.

Families participate in a lively discus-

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Calendar

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

Continued from page 39

sion based on a selection of children's portraits and then will create their own illustrated storyboards to answer the question: What happens next? Registration required.

FURTHER AFIELD

To the Moon: 1:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday, Feb. 1.

Janice Marie Robinson: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Cultural Connection presents a live performance in "Melodic Magic." This interactive event entertains children of all ages.

SUN, FEB. 8

IN MANHATTAN

"Cinderella": 11 am, 1 pm and 3:30 pm. Florence Gould Hall. See Saturday, Feb. 7.

A New York Love Story: Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets; (212) 534-1672; www.mcny.org; 11 am-2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Get inspired by cards from the City Museum's collection and then help the kids create their own New York valentine.

Music for Aardvarks Concert: The Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Ave. at 92nd St.; (212) 423-3200; thejewish-museum.org; 11:30 am and 2 pm; \$13 children; \$18 adults.

Children, ages 2-5, groove to the original rockin' sound of The Music for Aardvarks Band and enjoy cool, catchy favorites like "Modern Art" and "Taxi" to celebrate being a New York City kid.

Macy's Sunday Story Time: 11:30 am. New-York Historical Society. See Sunday, Feb. 1.

Ancient Chinese Arts Today: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 2 pm; \$15.

In this workshop, families with children ages 5 and up are introduced to Shaolin kung fu by an instructor from the New York Chinese Cultural Center.

"The African Drum": National Black Theatre, 2031-33 Fifth Avenue; (212) 724-0677; www.shadow-boxtheatre.org; 3 pm; \$10 in advance (\$15 at the door; \$8 group rates).

Listen to the wit, wisdom, and humor of traditional folk tales and learn how the turtle got its shell, and three more African fables woven into an interactive shadow puppet adventure of little Kjana and her animal



Photo by Julia Prieto

A time with 'Family'

"There's Nothing Like Family" in this original revue at TADA now through Feb. 16.

In this original musical revue, audiences experience a family reunion of sorts as kids learn how just how special and unique family can actually be.

The musical was directed and choreographed by TADA's Associate Artistic Director Joanna Greer, and originally con-

ceived and written by members of TADA's Resident Youth Ensemble.

"There's Nothing Like Family" Saturdays and Sundays now through Feb. 16 at 2 and 4 pm. Tickets are \$15 children and \$25 adults.

TADA! Youth Theater [15 W. 28th St. between Broadway and Fifth Avenue in the Flatiron District, (212) 252-1619; www.tadatheater.com]

friends. Presented by the Shadow Box Theatre.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Children of all ages learn to jump like Pearl, stretch like Alvin Ailey, and be inspired by African-American dancers. RSVP required.

To the Moon: 1:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday, Feb. 1.

MON, FEB. 9

IN MANHATTAN

"The African Drum": 10 am and 11:30 am. National Black Theatre. See Sunday, Feb. 8.

TUES, FEB. 10

IN MANHATTAN

"The African Drum": 10 am and 11:30 am. National Black Theatre. See Sunday, Feb. 8.

THURS, FEB. 12

IN MANHATTAN

Cross-Stitch Circle: 3:30 pm. New-York Historical Society. See Thursday, Feb. 5.

SAT, FEB. 14

IN MANHATTAN

A Valentine's Day Family Party with Gustafer Yellowgold: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$15.

Morgan Taylor and his full band present their annual multi-media concert of live songs, stories and animation.

A New York Love Story: 11 am-2 pm. Museum of the City of New York. See Sunday, Feb. 8.

FURTHER AFIELD

The Year of the Sheep: 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.

Celebrate Lunar New Year and learn about sheep in art from around the world.

To the Moon: 1:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday, Feb. 1.

Chinese New Year: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Puppetry in Practice presents this celebration with a telling of the story about the Chinese zodiac told with Shadow Puppets. A Dragon Parade follows.

3, 2, 1, Happy Chinese New Year: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 and younger celebrate the holiday and then create a New Year's craft to take home.

SUN, FEB. 15

IN MANHATTAN

Gilded New York: Jewelry Making: Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets; (212) 534-1672; www.mcny.org; 11 am-2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Parents, bring the kids to see the magnificent jewelry and costumes in Gilded New York. Then, help them create a brooch of their own.

Macy's Sunday Story Time:

11:30 am. New-York Historical Society. See Sunday, Feb. 1.

Washington's Birthday Ball:

Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden, 421 E. 61st St. between York and First avenues; (212) 838-6878; www.mvhm.org; 1-3 pm; \$15 adults, \$10 children under 12.

Celebrate the birthday of our nation's first president with live music and dance as New Yorkers did in the 19th century. Costumed dancers will perform and teach traditional and country dances and encourage everyone to join in. Festivities include toasts to George Washington, historic refreshments, and museum tours.

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

In "Young Love," the crew of very talented and funny teens are talking about holding hands, saying embarrassing things, and having to explain to parents that not every girl that you bring over to the house is your "girlfriend."

FURTHER AFIELD

The Year of the Sheep: 12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 14.

To the Moon: 1:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday, Feb. 1.

3, 2, 1, Happy Chinese New Year: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 and younger celebrate the holiday and then create a New Year's craft to take home.

MON, FEB. 16

IN MANHATTAN

Kids' Week: Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, Pier 86 (46th Street and 12th Avenue); (212) 245-0072; www.intrepidmuseum.org; 10 am-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Dozens of fun-filled activities, hands-on workshops, live shows, special guests and demonstrations that the whole family will enjoy in this annual week off from school. This year, Kids Week explores the theme of flight. For complete Kids' Week activity and performance schedules, visit www.intrepidmuseum.org.

City Sleuths: Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets; (212) 534-1672; www.mcny.org; 11 am-2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Explore the City Museum with the

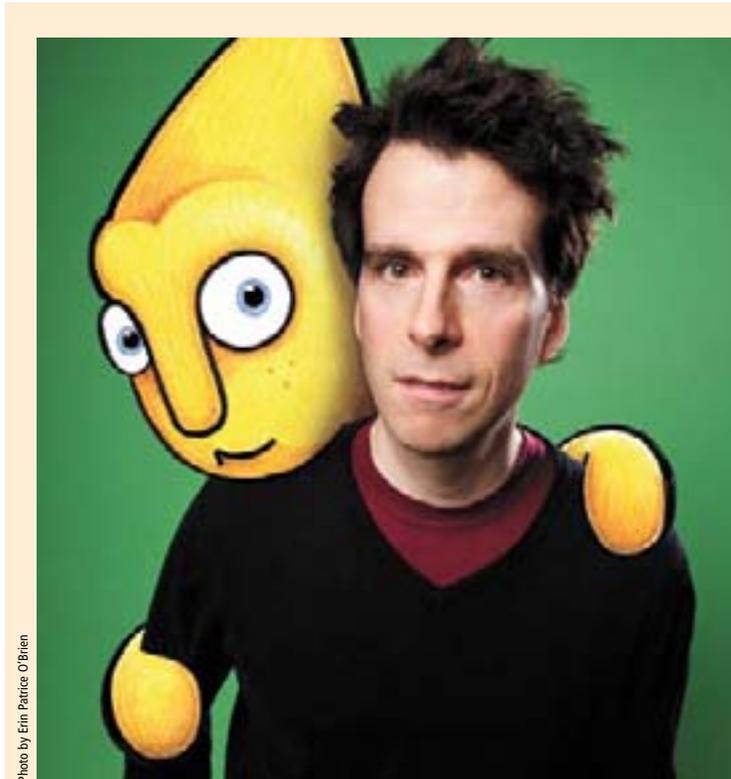


Photo by Erin Patrice O'Brien

Mellow Yellowgold

A drop of golden sunshine pops in as Gustafer Yellowgold pays a Valentine's Day visit to Symphony Space on Feb. 14.

The colorful visitor from the sun presents a live performance featuring new songs and an animated video sure to bring a little sunshine and love into your life on Valentine's Day.

The Valentine's Day Family Party with Gustafer Yellowgold presents Morgan Taylor and his

band as they introduce tunes from the new DVD and CD "Yellowgold's Wisdom Tooth of Wisdom" among plenty of old favorites. Children can then color a special Gustafer valentine to give to that special someone.

Gustafer Yellowgold on Feb. 14 at 11 am Tickets are \$15.

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

kids by following architectural clues during a Chet the Architect scavenger hunt. Afterwards, help them use shapes to stamp the building's façade onto their own tote bag.

Vacation Week Art Workshop:

The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.; (212) 423-3200; thejewishmuseum.org; 1-4 pm; Free with Museum admission.

Children, ages 4 and up, create a magical diorama inspired by the miniature rooms found in Helena Rubinstein: Beauty is Power, and then build their own miniature room with found and hand crafted objects.

Celebrate the Lunar New Year through Dance:

New-York Histori-

cal Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 2 pm; Free with museum admission of \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5-12.

See New York Chinese Cultural Center dancers perform traditional Chinese dances.

Chinese Paper-Cutting Demonstration:

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 3 pm; Free with museum admission of \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5-12.

Learn all about the delicate art of Chinese paper cutting during this special demonstration by an instructor from the New York Cultural Center.

TUES, FEB. 17

IN MANHATTAN

Kids' Week: 10 am-5 pm. Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 16.

Winter Wonderland Collages:

Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets; (212) 534-1672; www.mcny.org; 11 am-2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Bundle up and enjoy some festive collage making. After the kids put the finishing touches on their project, they can take in all the diverse exhibitions on view.

Vacation Week Art Workshop:

1-4 pm. The Jewish Museum. See Monday, Feb. 16.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Anansi the African Spiderman":

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.

Listen to tales of the mischievous Anansi and discover how this African tale traveled around the world. Children 2 and older make a spider to take home.

WED, FEB. 18

IN MANHATTAN

Kids' Week: 10 am-5 pm. Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 16.

Financial Planning: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 10:30 am-noon; \$10.

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.

City Sleuths: 11 am-2 pm. Museum of the City of New York. See Monday, Feb. 16.

FURTHER AFIELD

3, 2, 1, Blast Off!: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am and 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children take a journey and learn about African-American women in space. Dr. Mae Jemison tells of her trip into space. Children then make a space craft to take home.

Continued on page 42

Continued from page 41

THURS, FEB. 19

IN MANHATTAN

Kids' Week: 10 am–5 pm. Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 16.

Winter Wonderland Collages: 11 am–2 pm. Museum of the City of New York. See Tuesday, Feb. 17.

Vacation Week Art Workshop: 1–4 pm. The Jewish Museum. See Monday, Feb. 16.

Celebrate the Lunar New Year through Dance: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873–3400; nyhistory.org; 2 pm; Free with museum admission of \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5–12.

See the students of the National Dance Institute perform both traditional and modern dances inspired by their 2013–2014 curricular theme “China!”

Cross-Stitch Circle: 3:30 pm. New-York Historical Society. See Thursday, Feb. 5.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Red means stop, green means go. Then, make a traffic craft to take home.

Sing-a-Long: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735–4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 6 pm; Free with museum admission.

Gwen Sumpter tells a tale and then invites all to a sing-a-long featuring songs from the African-American spiritual tradition.

FRI, FEB. 20

IN MANHATTAN

Kids' Week: 10 am–5 pm. Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 16.

Shababa Bakery: 10:15 am. 92Y. See Friday, Feb. 6.

Family Mobiles: Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets; (212) 534–1672; www.mcnyc.org; 11 am–2 pm; Free with museum admission.

View home movies made by New York's Jewish immigrants, who traveled back to their Polish hometowns in the 1920s and '30s, in Letters to Afar: By Péter Forgács, music by the Klezmatics. Then, help the kids create a

Fun with Cinderella

Bippity, boppity, boop, “Cinderella” toe-tips in to the Florence Gould Hall on Feb. 7 and 8.

The New York Theatre Ballet's classic “Cinderella” braves the New York cold with a two-day performance of this perennial favorite.

Children will enjoy the dancing clock, the madcap sisters,

and everyone's favorite princess, Cinderella.

“Cinderella” on Feb. 7 and 8 at 11 am, 1 pm, and 3:30 pm each day. Tickets are \$35 for children and \$40 for adults.

Florence Gould Hall [55 E. 59th St. between Madison and Park avenues in Midtown East; (212) 355–6160; www.nytb.org]



Photo by Richard Termine

mobile of the people they cherish.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Black History Month is explored by learning about traditional African instruments.

SAT, FEB. 21

IN MANHATTAN

Kids' Week: 10 am–5 pm. Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 16.

Gilded New York: Fan Design: Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets; (212) 534–1672; www.mcnyc.org; 11 am–2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Parents bring the kids to admire the jewelry and clothing worn by New York's rich and famous in the late 19th century on view in Gilded New York. After visiting the gallery, help them create a fan using feathers inspired by those they've seen in the exhibition.

The Okee Dokee Brothers: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864–5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$15.

This traveling duo and special guests perform an interactive hootenanny of bluegrass songs for all ages.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Tells the story of Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American woman to be elected to Congress.

Arts of the African Diaspora: 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.

Children connect to the past and learn about the traditional and contemporary customs of the African people.

Grace Drums: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735–4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1 and 2

pm; Free with museum admission.

This performance introduces children to African percussion instruments, music and vocals from the African and Caribbean culture.

SUN, FEB. 22

IN MANHATTAN

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 its puppet pals nurture family bonds and bridge connections to Jewish life and traditions through its performance.

Winter Wonderland Collages: 11 am–2 pm. Museum of the City of New York. See Tuesday, Feb. 17.

Vered and the Babes: The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.; (212) 423–3200; thejewishmuseum.org; 11:30 am; \$13 children; \$18 adults.

Families enjoy the lush melodies and playful harmonies of Vered and the Babes as they hear catchy tunes from its hit album Good Morning My Love.

Macy's Sunday Story Time: 11:30 am. New-York Historical Society. See Sunday, Feb. 1.

FURTHER AFIELD

“Unbought and Unbossed”: 11:30 am and 2pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 21.

Arts of the African Diaspora: 12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 21.

WED, FEB. 25

IN MANHATTAN

Dad's Essential Role: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415–5500; www.92y.org; 10:30 am–noon; \$10.

Led by 92Y Parenting Center direc-

George's birthday bash

We cannot tell a lie — George Washington's birthday ball is coming to the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden on Feb. 15.

Take a nostalgic trip back in time to celebrate the birthday of our Nation's First President. Families will enjoy live music and dance just the way New Yorkers did in the 19th century. There will also be costumed dancers on hand to perform and teach tradi-

tional and country dances. Festivities include toasts to George Washington, historic refreshments, and museum tours.

George Washington's Birthday Ball on Feb. 15 from 1 to 3 pm. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 children under 12, and members.

Mount Vernon Hotel Museum and Garden [421 E. 61st St. between York and First avenues on the Upper East Side, (212) 838–6878; www.mvhm.org]

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

tor 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.

THURS, FEB. 26

IN MANHATTAN

Cross-Stitch Circle: 3:30 pm. New-York Historical Society. See Thursday, Feb. 5.

FURTHER AFIELD

Free Thursday!: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3-6 pm; Free.

Join in for an afternoon at the museum.

FRI, FEB. 27

IN MANHATTAN

Upside Down Purim Dinner: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 6 pm; Free.

Wear your favorite costume to this topsy-turvy Shabbat dinner where fun and silly things will happen. Enjoy yummy kosher Chinese food, singing and a costume parade.

SAT, FEB. 28

IN MANHATTAN

Concert-Walter Martin: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$15.

Multi-instrumentalist Walter Martin of The Walkmen performs quiet and moving songs from his new album, *We're All Young Together*.

Gilded New York: Jewelry Making: 11 am-2 pm. Museum of the City of New York. See Sunday, Feb. 15.

Hablemos de la Historia y del Arte (Buildings that Have Shaped New York City): New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 2 pm; Free with RSVP (required).

In this Spanish-language program, families examine paintings of New York buildings and uncover the historical events and everyday lives that have transformed these spaces and our community. Families also create cut-out paper buildings and develop a story for each floor. Ages 4-10. Free with RSVP (required); e-mail paulina.perera-riveroll@nyhistory.org or call (212) 485-9276.

FURTHER AFIELD

Cosmic creations: Brooklyn Chil-

Wintertime crafts

Create Your Own Winter Wonderland at the Museum of the City of New York from Feb. 17 through Feb. 22.

There is nothing quite like winter in New York. Sure, it's cold and we can't leave the house without a scarf and gloves, but it is February after all. Treat your kids to a special day during winter break with some creative collage-making at the Museum of the City of New York.

Children can spend the time building their own winter wonderland collages while enjoying some good old-fashioned hot chocolate. Then they can view the exhibitions at the museum to round out the day.

Winter Wonderland from Feb.



17 through 22, from 11 am and 2 pm. Free with museum admission of \$14 for adults. Children under 19 are free.

Museum of the City of New York [1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets in East Harlem, (212) 534-1672; www.mcnyc.org]

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

Learn about astronomy and the planets, stars, and space with Dr. Neil Degrasse Tyson, a contemporary African-American astrophysicist. Make a shooting star to take home.

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

The Noel Pointer foundation presents this jazz, classical, and gospel concert celebrating Black History Month.

SUN, MARCH 1

IN MANHATTAN

Hot Cup-O-Jokes: 208 W. 23rd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues; (212) 877-6115; www.kidsncomedy.com; 1 pm; \$15.

Come warm up with some hot jokes from the city's funniest teenaged comics. Kids 'N Comedy presents a show so funny you'll forget about your landlord's refusal to raise the building's heat above 50 degrees.

FURTHER AFIELD

Cosmic creations: 11:30 am and 2 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 28.

LONG-RUNNING

IN MANHATTAN

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.

The Butterfly Conservatory: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 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.

Somebody Come and Play: The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, 40 Lincoln Center Plaza; (212) 875-5030; lincolncenter.org; Free.

The exhibition 45 Years of Sesame Street Helping Kids Grow Smarter, Stronger, and Kinder 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. 42nd St. between Madison and Lexington avenues; (212) 340-2583; www.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-foot 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.

Freedom Journey 1965: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Daily, 10 am-6 pm; Now - Sun, April 19; \$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.

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, Now - Sun, May 3; 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.

Daily Story Hour: Bank Street Bookstore, 610 W. 112th St. between 112th and Broadway; (212) 678-1654; bankstreetbooks.com; Daily, 10:30 am; Now - 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.

Lit Talks for Readers with Regina Teltser: Bank Street Bookstore, 610 W. 112th St. between 112th and Broadway; (212) 678-1654; bankstreetbooks.com; Saturdays and Sun-

Continued on page 44

Continued from page 43

days, 1 pm, Now – Sat, Jan. 31; Free.

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

“Jack and the Beanstalk”: Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, W. 79th and West Drive; (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.; \$10; \$7 children under 12.

This fresh retelling of the Swedish Cottage original production takes Jack 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.

“Everything About A Family (Almost)”: TADA! Youth Theater, 15 W. 28th St. between Broadway and Fifth Avenue; (212) 252-1619 X 4; www.tadatheater.com; Saturdays and Sundays, 2 and 4 pm, Now – Mon, Feb. 16; \$15 children and \$25 adults.

In this musical revue, audiences experience a family reunion like no other — where kids discover how quirky, fun, endearing and irreplaceable family can be!

Sunday Art Discoveries: The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.; (212) 423-3200; thejewishmuseum.org; Sundays, 11:30 am–12:30 pm, Now – Sun, May 17; 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.

Drop-in Art Workshop: The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.; (212) 423-3200; thejewishmuseum.org; Sundays, 1-4 pm, Now – Thurs, May 28; 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 E. 27th St. at Park Avenue South; (212) 576-2232; www.jazzstandard.com; Sundays, 2-3 pm, Now – Sun, May 17; 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 Feb. 1).

Breastfeeding Support Group: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; Mondays, 11:15 am–12:30 pm, Now – Mon, Feb. 23; \$20/session.

African tales in Harlem

“The African Drum” beats in Manhattan at two locations in February.

The National Black Theatre hosts Feb. 8, 9, and 10 and at Symphony Space on Feb. 11.

Presented by the Shadow Box Theatre, “The African Drum” is the tale of Kjana and her animal friends.

Children are invited to listen to the wit, wisdom, and humor of traditional folk tales and learn how the turtle got its shell, and three more African fables woven into an interactive shadow puppet adventure.

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.

Free Baby/Toddler Class: Franciscan Community Center, 214 W. 97th St. between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue; (212) 932-8040 X 38; blewis@fccnyc.org; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am–noon, Now – Thurs, April 30; Free.

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

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, Feb. 3 – Fri, Feb. 27; Free with museum admission of \$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 Pl. at First Place; (646) 437-4202; www.mjhnyc.org; 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.

Shababa Fridays: 92Y, 1395 Lex-

ington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; Fridays, 9:30–10:15 am OR 10:45–11:30 am, Now – Fri, Feb. 27; \$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.

Yippee Skippy Puppet Theater: Bank Street Bookstore, 610 W. 112th St. between 112th and Broadway; (212) 678-1654; bankstreetbooks.com; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, Sat, Feb. 7 – Sat, Feb. 28; Free.

Children enjoy creative storytelling through traditional tales with a twist.

School Vacation Week: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Daily, 1-3 pm; Sat, Feb. 14 – Sun, Feb. 22; Free with museum admission of \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5-12.

Celebrate President’s Day with a Presidential Scavenger Hunt throughout the museum and celebrate Lunar New Year with stories, special Chinese dance performances, and learn all about the intricate art of Chinese paper cutting.

“The Light Princess”: The New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues; (646) 223-3010; www.newvictory.org; \$15 and up.

Two witty wisemen sing a story of a young princess cursed by a wicked witch to float through life indefinitely. She must find a way to come back to earth by her 16th birthday or be doomed to defy gravity forever. Times and days vary; consult the website.

“Galapagos – Nature’s Wonderland in 3D”: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 11 am & 2 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 & 3 pm, beginning Sat, Feb. 14; \$6 adults; \$5 children.

In this 3D movie, travel to the Galapagos archipelago to meet giant half-ton tortoises and marine iguanas that spit sea-salt from their noses, hunt fishes with the colorful blue-footed boobies, and swim with tiny penguins.

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.

FURTHER AFIELD

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. Preregistration required.

Tropical discoveries: New York Botanical Garden, 200th St. and Kazimiroff Blvd., The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Fridays, 10 am–5 pm, Now – Fri, Feb. 27; Free with garden admission.

Children explore the differences between tropical and temperate plants in the Everett Children’s Garden, where they can pot a tropical plant to take home.

From Here to There: Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am–5 pm, Fri, Feb. 6 – Sun, May 10; Free with museum admission.

This innovative exhibit teaches the science of how things move by land, sea and air. Visitors can heat up and launch a hot air balloon, operate an authentic canal lock system to move a boat and experiment with pneumatics, pulleys, hydraulics, and levers to move objects mechanically.

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, Now – Fri, March 6; Free with museum admission.

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

“Galapagos – Nature’s Wonderland in 3D”: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 11 am & 2 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 & 3 pm, beginning Sat, Feb. 14; \$6 adults; \$5 children.

In this 3D movie, travel to the Galapagos archipelago to meet giant half-ton tortoises and marine iguanas that spit sea-salt from their noses, hunt fishes with the colorful blue-footed boobies, and swim with tiny penguins.

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— *Pamela M. - Battery Park mom*

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TAILS OF LOVE

Love can be expressed in many ways

CHERISH THE MOMENTS

BY PATRICK HEMPFING

“Mattie, will you be my Valentine?” On Feb. 1, I’ll pose this question to my wife of almost 30 years. She’ll be noncommittal. Over the 14 days that follow, I’ll continue to romance Mattie with poems, small gifts, and various acts of service in an effort to convince her that I’m the Valentine for her. Finally, late in the evening on Valentine’s Day, Mattie will say, “Yes, I’ll be your Valentine this year.”

We started playing this game before we were married. It’s not easy to come up with fresh rhymes 14 times each February, even for a writer. A wiser man would have quit years ago. I thought things would get easier when my 10-year-old daughter, Jessie, was younger. She joined in the efforts to convince her mom to select me. Unfortunately, my proponent turned into my opponent during

the last few years, as Jessie started lobbying for Mattie to choose her. Could Valentine’s Day get any more challenging? Surprisingly, yes.

Jessie is now also campaigning on behalf of our dog, Sadie, who joined in the competition to be Mattie’s Valentine. Jessie sends e-mails and handwritten notes, some stamped with an inked dog paw, and often with drawings or cut-out hearts, signed by the dog. One example read, “Dear Woofy Mom, I love you! Be my Woofitine.” How can I compete with dog love?

Recently, though, I witnessed a beautiful display of love that didn’t involve poetry, flowers, chocolate — or removing ink from a dog’s paw. The love came from Jessie’s head as she had nine inches of hair cut off and donated it to an organization that makes wigs for women fighting cancer. Of course, I had my camera and camcorder to capture Jessie’s haircut. Mattie pulled away from work. Even Jessie’s grandmother, who happened to be in town, came to watch. The beauty salon should have sold tickets.

As the hairdresser formed two

tight ponytails to prepare Jessie’s hair for the scissors, I observed a mother holding her 1-year-old son in the chair next to Jessie’s. The little guy did pretty well until the hairdresser broke out her noisy shaver, which resulted in a few tears. My eyes moved back and forth between the two young customers. The one received a slight trim, while the other lost a lot of hair.

My mind wandered back to the scene in our kitchen years ago, when Mattie gave Jessie her first haircut. At the time, I highly questioned her decision to do it herself, as I remembered Mattie’s only haircutting experience, the “trim” she gave our first dog. The long strands on the sheltie’s hindquarters touched the ground and dragged leaves into the house. That didn’t happen after Mattie made some lopsided cuts and then had to even them out. The remaining fur barely covered the poor dog’s behind. Thank goodness dogs can’t talk — oh that’s right, mine is competing to be my wife’s Valentine.

The hairdresser cut off Jessie’s two ponytails and carefully placed them in a plastic bag, then posed with our pretty, short-haired girl for some pictures. At home, we addressed a padded envelope and slid in the bag containing Jessie’s hair, along with her name and address. Many times, I’ve left the post office feeling happy that in a few days, a card, letter, or photo I had mailed would make someone’s day. I won’t soon forget the feeling I had when I mailed my daughter’s hair. Love can be expressed in many ways.

I’m confident that in the days ahead, I’ll overcome my daughter’s rivalry, as well as my dog’s, and win Mattie’s heart for another Valentine’s Day. And when I hug my Valentine this year, I’ll think about other husbands who are thankful they can hug their wives, regardless of how much hair either spouse has.

Until next month, remember to cherish the moments.

If you’d like to learn more about Pantene Beautiful Lengths and Locks of Love hair donation opportunities, please check out their websites at <http://pantene.com/en-us/experience-main-section2/beautiful-lengths> and www.locksoflove.org/.

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/patricklhempfing and on Twitter @PatrickHempfung.



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