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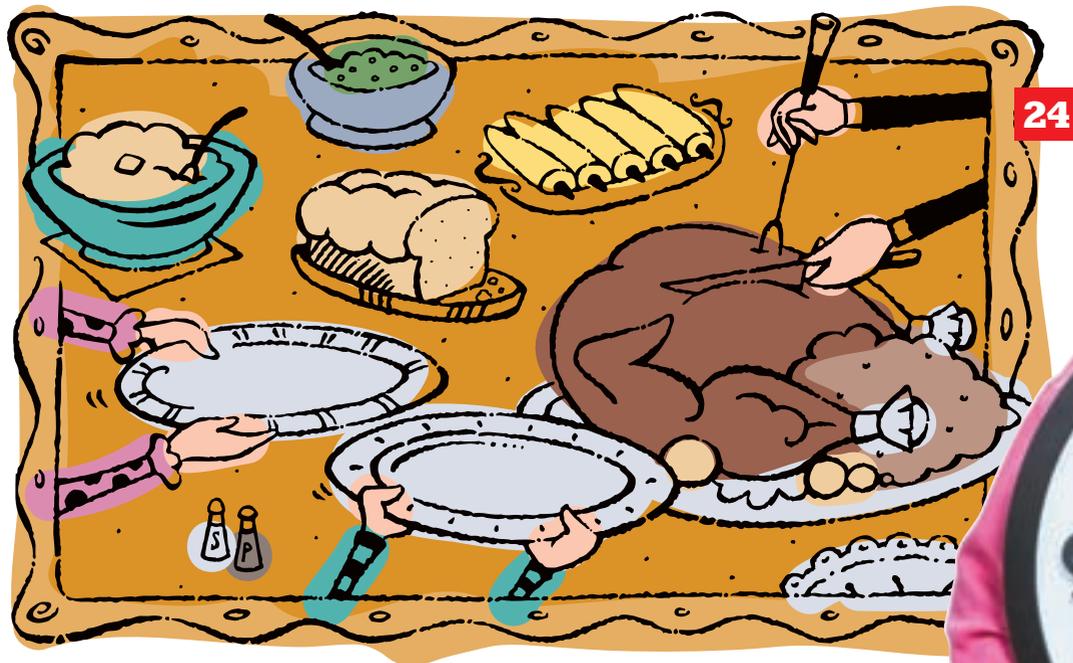


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Giving thanks every day

A must-read essay is in this issue: Stewart J. Frimer, a local clinical social worker, has written a provocative piece on how we raise our sons. "Boys, Guns and Violence" is an important and timely serious look at how we raise men. This ties in very well with Part II of our series on Teen Girls and dating violence. How we raise our men affects how they interact not only with women, but with the whole world around them. Parents need to be more and more educated about the important role they have in the ultimate social development of their children. Our writer, Tammy Scileppi, has once again taken on a topic of enor-



Our future depends on it. We are here to evolve and it takes guts and determination to step outside of the status quo.

Another important reality is divorce. More and more prevalent, the question remains, how to talk with your children when the decision has been reached? When marriage is over, the conversation is not. Children are not exactly blind to the realities, especially if they

are older. The younger children, however, may not be acknowledging the signs around them and communication is key. Then again, when is it not?

Violence inhabits the nightly news and the daily headlines. It is our duty as parents to educate ourselves to the best of our ability to raise a healthy and functional family.

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday and I think I'm not alone. Even when I was a vegetarian, we made a super holiday feast, just minus the turkey. With all the hype from the media, it almost seems as if Thanksgiving is about the turkey and the holiday shopping. It's good to try and keep in mind what it's really about, the crops coming in and having sustenance for the winter ahead. Every culture has their own version of our Thanksgiving and as a result it's perhaps the most inclusive of our holidays. Celebrating the harvest is an important acknowledgment of our good fortune and something we must never take

for granted.

This year my daughter will not be at our table for the first time. I am feeling a bit weird about that although I knew eventually it was coming. The chicks leave the nest. This Mama bird wishes sometimes that they didn't.

Every day is reason for thanks, but setting aside a special day to do it is, I think, a great priority deserving of our attention and respect. Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

Thanks for reading.

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Boys, guns, violence

Taking a look
at how we
raise our sons
to deal with
anger and
frustration

BY STEWART J. FRIMER

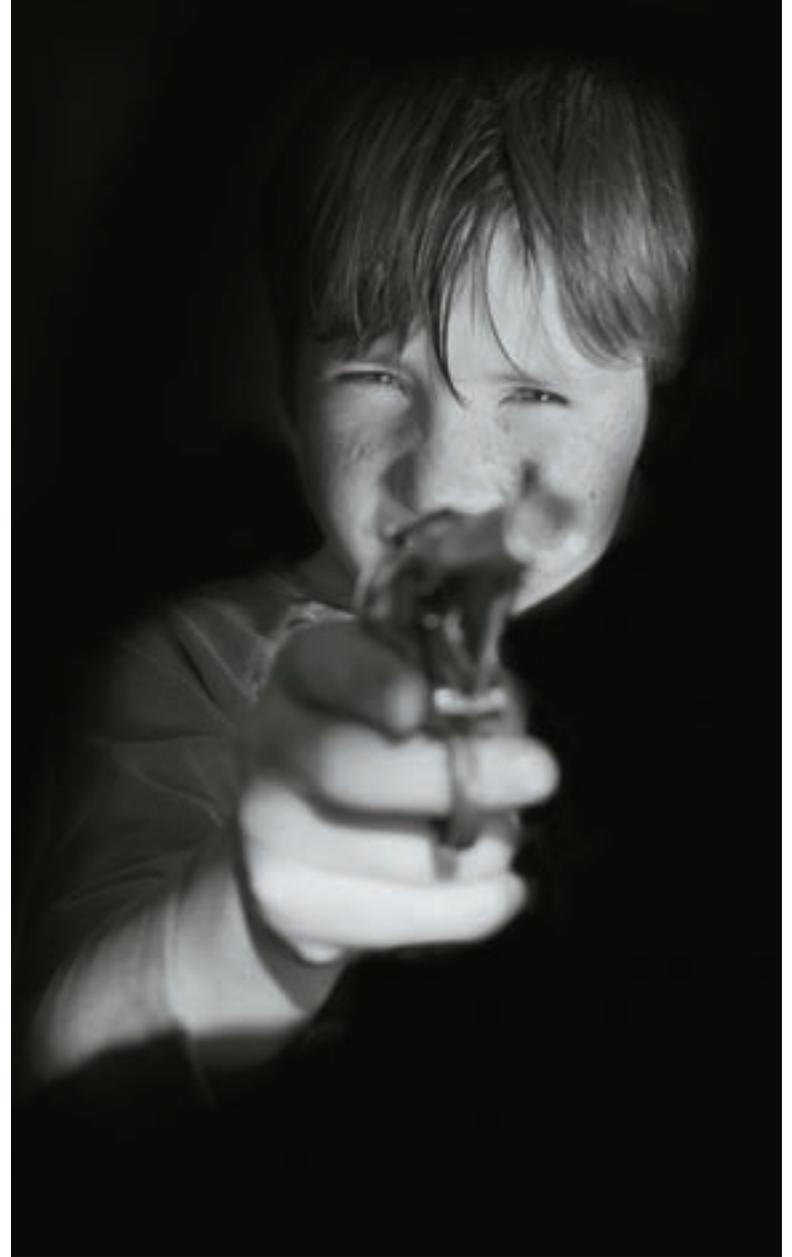
The recent and unfortunately recurring mass shootings by mostly white males is not, to me, an issue of gun control, but rather a sign that we have to take a more serious look at how we, as parents, teachers, and society, raise men.

Boys are taught that to take on the “man” role, they are not supposed to show their feelings, that they are not supposed to cry. To do so would bring on shame, as a boy who is emotional is weak — a baby, a sissy, and, heaven forbid, “a girl.” Boys are stuck in limited behavioral and emotional repertoires in becoming a man.

But repressing feelings is pretty dangerous. Think of the body as a box — the box, like the body, has a shape and size. We put things — feelings — inside it, and things also come out — expressing emotions. But if the box is expected to continually hold emotions inside, at some point, the box can’t contain them anymore, and it explodes. That’s what happens to our boys. We all have our limits, and for boys, it’s pretty toxic.

The issue of shame is a huge one here. When a man cries, we hear, “He broke down and cried.” I remember how ridiculed Dan Rather was when he expressed feelings when 9-11 broke. This whole concept has to change — crying is a *breakthrough*, not a *breakdown*. Guilt is feeling bad about something you did (a good thing) and is correctable. Shame is a sense that there is something wrong with you and is not correctable — which means there is no hope.

I can’t tell you how many boys I have worked with — in my job as a social worker — who acted out in school out of frustration that they couldn’t do their work and felt hopeless, and out of shame, got themselves out of those situations. Show me an oppositionally defiant kid, I will



show you a shame-based one.

We keep hearing about men blaming women for their behavior and why they acted out. (A perfect example of this was the recent hearings on Planned Parenthood where the committeemen bullied Cecile Richards.) A huge part of it is about power, control, and men struggling with their own “unacceptable” feelings. Several things happen to boys here: the inability to control the girls’ behavior connects to the sense of male entitlement (an issue we see in spousal abuse). Another issue for the young boy is how a wider range of feelings are allowed in girls. They can cry, and it is accepted, they will even get nurtured for it (though thinking of all girls as overly emotional can hurt just as much). But as teachers and parents comfort girls when they cry, boys crave the same nurturing attention, and when they don’t get it, they are further hurt. By not being taught how to deal with his emotions and

shame, the boy expresses his rage at — guess who? — the girl who rejected him and “made him do it.”

Shame becomes blame — and that is dangerous, as we’ve been seeing. We need to make it a part of our parenting, schooling, and culture to validate and accept a wider range of feelings in our boys, making sure we do not let the “box” fill up. I do have some sense of hope. The New York Mets’ Wilmer Flores became a sports folk hero when he showed tears upon thinking that he had been traded from the only home he’s had since age 16. Our hearts went out to him — to me he was the most-valuable player in baseball.

We need to do the same for all of our boys.

Stewart J. Frimer has been a clinical social worker for more than 40 years, working in child welfare, education, and in the prevention of child abuse and neglect using role theory and role play in his work.

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Why I loved returning to work

After years as a stay-at-home mom, a refreshing experience

BY SUE LEBRETON

When I began to tell people that I was returning to work full time in a downtown office after 14 years as a stay-at-home mom, their eyes would widen, and after congratulating me they would inevitably say, "Oh your life is about to change." Their tone implied that my life was not about to change for the better.

On my optimistic days, I reassured myself that I had once successfully returned to work after a six-month maternity leave and this was just a very long maternity leave. On my less optimistic days, I considered calling to say I'd made a mistake and would not be arriving for my first day of work. I reminded myself that the people who hired me knew about that big hole in my resume and wanted me anyway.

In the days before my official start date, I felt like I was about to bungee jump off a cliff. Would the thrill of the jump overcome my fears?

I put on a brave face, determined not to let my anxiety show to my children. It was time to heed the advice I had always given to my children, now teens, who have faced so many new teachers and



new schools with my assurance that all would be well, once they settled in.

Six months later, I can admit, yes, some parts are difficult. As every mom has heard more times than she can count, there is no such thing as having it all, but for me, the pleasures have outweighed the burdens.

As I step off the train in the morning, I weave between people threading in all directions. I lift my face up to the skyscrapers greeting me. Each day a slightly different hue bounces off that hammered glass blue building that it is my current favorite. I soak in the sights that still feel foreign to me after so many years in the suburbs. I want to spin and fling my hat exuberantly into the air like Mary Tyler Moore did in the opening credits of her old television show.

As it turns out, all of those wide-eyed, "life is going to change" people were right. My life has changed since returning to work, but mostly in ways that I love:

1 I feel like a grown up again. I know, it sounds weird. My teenagers don't get it either. For more than a decade I've been living life immersed in theirs, some days feeling like I was stuck in whatever developmental age they were.

2 I actually have less responsibility at home. Now that I'm commuting to downtown, my husband is the closest parent to the children's schools. Bonus! When I leave the house every morning, I shed my parenting responsibility to a degree that's not been possible for many years.

3 I feel valued and validated. Mothering may be the most important job in the world, but I sometimes struggled to feel valued. I no longer need to wait for Mother's Day to get a pat on the back. My colleagues' praise fills my self-esteem bucket, and I enjoy being on the receiving end after so many years of giving daily encouragement.

4 I earn money. Let's face it, for many of us, working is about the money. We live in an expensive city, and university is only three years away for my oldest. When I see the bank

account growing, I feel as if I can finally relax a little about the future. Every deposit increases my sense of personal power.

5 I have a new wardrobe. Building a wardrobe beyond yoga pants is time-consuming and challenging, but also fun. I still love my yoga pants, but now I also have a professional wardrobe. And who doesn't love great shoes? My teen daughter, who is usually quick to curl her lip and ask, "Are you wearing that?" now sometimes even gives me a nod of approval. She recently commented, "You are more fashionable forward since you went back to work."

6 I learn something new every day. When my children would moan and complain about homework, or chorus that "school is boring," I would tell them I wished I could go to school. "Yes, we know you love to learn," they would say with a heavy sigh and a headshake. Going back to work feels like getting paid to go to school.

7 I have more personal time. When I worked at home, I often felt guilty about sitting down to read. Chores beckoned all day long. Now I have a total of 60 minutes every day on a commuter train where I read guilt free.

8 I have more confidence. I have been pleasantly surprised at how quickly my professional skills and my confidence have returned. In the past, my husband's work functions picked away at my self-esteem when people slithered away to seek more interesting conversation after hearing I was a stay-at-home mom. Now when people ask what I do, I am excited to tell them.

...

As it turns out, all those eyebrow-raisers were right. My life has completely changed — but for the better.

And I was also right during all those years when I coached my kids through tough situations. I told them everything would be fine once they settled in. And as it turns out, this was the best advice of all.

Sue LeBreton is a health and wellness writer and mother to two teens.



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Healing scars

Part two in
our series
on teens and
domestic
violence

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

In 1967, Aretha Franklin said it all when she belted out her hit song about wanting a little R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

In their heated quest for love (or sex), many young people seem to ignore or forget that basic notion — one that's at the core of every healthy relationship. Perhaps we parents should keep reminding them that "old-school" values are always cool and never go out of style.

According to recent statistics, one in 10 teenagers reported experiencing violence in their romantic relationships in the last year, and one in three say that they've been verbally, emotionally, sexually or physically



(Above) Rainy survived an abusive older boyfriend. (Below) Former Bronx resident Mari Santos got help for her sister.

abused by a dating partner.

In September, WNYC's Radio Rookies program — a New York Public Radio initiative that provides teenagers with the tools and training to create radio stories about themselves, their communities, and their world — partnered with Day One, an organization that aims to end dating abuse and domestic violence, to help illuminate the pressing issue of teen dating abuse and take listeners behind the scenes.

Rainy shared her story of survival, and Mari spoke about help-

ing her sister end an abusive relationship.

Rainy

On her high school ID card, Rainy has a black eye. When her guidance counselor inquired, Rainy just told her, "It's a long story, you'll get to know me."

Rainy's first-person audio diary spanning two years chronicles her sad and painful but, ultimately, positive journey. It aired nationally on the acclaimed public radio show and top iTunes podcast "This American Life," over the weekend of Sept. 19 and 20. The young teen talks about her roller-coaster relationship: separating, reuniting, and separating again from her older, abusive boyfriend.

Rainy, now 19, hails from Brooklyn but currently lives out of state. She met "Tony" when she was just 14 and he was 21. She says at first, he was sweet. On their first date, he didn't even try to kiss her. But suddenly, his behavior changed dramatically and he became verbally abusive. Rainy withdrew; she wouldn't go to school and stopped hanging out with her friends, even her mom. By the time Tony became physically abusive, the scared teen was isolated from anyone who could have helped her.

Rainy opened up about her experience and started reporting her story in 2013, when she and Tony had been broken up for five months. As the piece progressed, she got back together with him then quickly disappeared. Occasionally, she'd show up at school and kept a diary. She was so confused about why she felt compelled to stay. It took a lot of gumption and courage to get out of that messy relationship, especially because she was so young, but Rainy finally left. Even when you're older, leaving a bad



relationship can be hell when you're a victim of abuse.

Hear Rainy's story, "Why Do I Stay?" at <http://www.wnyc.org/story/why-do-i-stay/>

Mari

How do you help someone in an abusive relationship? Figuring that out can be scary and frustrating for a teen. Mari Santos's older sister Alison always went out with the same type of guys: controlling, possessive, and self-centered. At 18, Mari just figured that when you're dating someone, you cry, argue, and break up every few weeks. She knew something wasn't right with that idea, so she joined Relationship Abuse Prevention Program, a school-based, peer education group run by the city. Mari, who now lives in Florida, was living in the Bronx at the time.

Knowledge empowered her, and she soon realized her sister was actually in an abusive relationship. Although terribly worried, she was afraid to talk to Alison, but the sisters wound up having their first open and honest talk on tape.

Listen to Mari's account, "We Just Don't Talk: One Family's Silence About Dating Abuse" at <http://www.wnyc.org/story/we-just-dont-talk-one-family-s-silence-about-dating-abuse/>

The entire series can be found at: <http://www.wnyc.org/shows/rookies/series/crushed/>

Young women at risk

According to a June 2015 report by the U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics:

- Twenty-five percent of women have experienced domestic violence.
- Women ages 20 to 24 are at the greatest risk.
- On average, three women and one man are murdered by their partner each day.
- Two out of 10 female high school students reported being physically or sexually abused by a dating partner.
- Fourteen percent of teens reported threats from their boyfriend or girlfriend to harm them or themselves to avoid a breakup.

And youth who experience dating violence are more likely to experience the following (according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):

- Symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Engagement in unhealthy behaviors, i.e. tobacco, drug use, al-

cohol.

- Involvement in antisocial behaviors.
- Thoughts about suicide.

Young people who are victims of dating violence in high school are at higher risk for victimization during college.

How to help

How can you help? Parents and guardians should do the following:

- Tell your teens and young adults that abusing someone is a choice. People commit domestic violence because they choose to do so, not because they can't stop themselves.
- That positive, healthy relationships are all about trust and respect. And in time, if that special someone genuinely cares about you, he will show you that he's sensitive to your needs and feelings.

• Explain that controlling behavior isn't love.

• Finally, if you or your teen notice that a family member or peer is in a violent relationship, help her get help. Pursuing a protective order reduces the likelihood of a physical attack by about 80 percent.

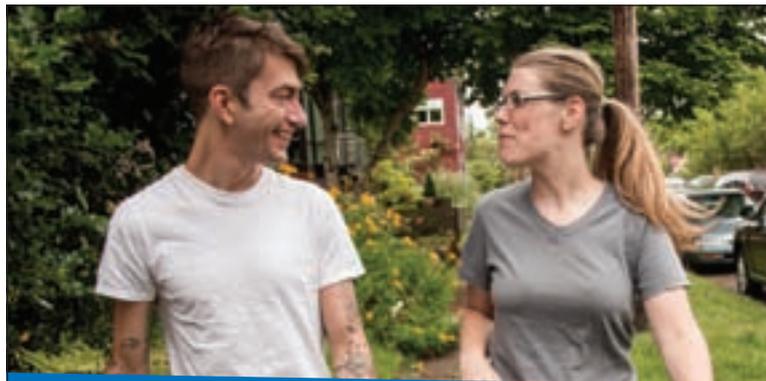
Teens, remember that no one deserves to be abused. The abuse is never your fault. Everyone has the right to a safe, healthy relationship. In order to protect yourself, you should know the warning signs of an abusive dating partner (see dayoneny.org):

- Extreme jealousy or insecurity.
- Constant put-downs.
- Possessiveness or treating you like property.
- Telling you what to do.
- Constantly checking in on you.
- Explosive temper.
- Making false accusations.
- Isolating you from your friends and family.
- Preventing you from doing things you want to do.

Dating relationships are complicated, especially for teens — and things can easily spiral out of control, so knowledge is power. At Day One, young people between the ages of 16 and 24 learn how to identify and maintain healthy relationships. They can obtain legal protection when necessary and assist others experiencing abuse.

Day One toll-free hotline: (800) 214-4150.

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



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FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN

How I give thanks

Sometimes it's a challenge to convince young children that Thanksgiving Day is really not all about the deLysscious food. Of course there is turkey, stuffing, gravy, sweet potatoes, favorite family recipes, and pies. However, hidden inside this palate-driven holiday is an opportunity to teach the meaning behind the celebration. It is a day to give thanks for all that we are fortunate to have. I try to remind my children each and every day that we are fortunate to be happy and healthy. I am going to try and give my family a Thanksgiving Day that is served with memories that will last a lifetime.

Thanksgiving time in New York City is just magical! This year, I am going with my kids to check out the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade Balloon Inflation. We will go to the Upper West Side (beginning at 79th Street and Columbus Avenue near the Museum of Natural History) on Thanksgiving Eve to watch as they fill up the balloons for the Thanksgiving Day Parade. I can't wait for the kids to see them go from deflated shapes on the ground to sky-high, blown-up balloons. I personally can't wait to see Hello Kitty at the parade.

The Big Apple Circus is back, kicking off its 38th season with a brand-new production, "The Grand Tour," transporting families to the Roaring '20s when ships, planes, trains, and automobiles transformed travel as we knew it.



My family loves to watch famous characters come to life at the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade Balloon Inflation.

This is always a favorite for city families. (Big Apple Circus in The Grand Tour at Lincoln Center Oct. 21, 2015-Jan. 10, 2016, Damrosch Park, 62nd Street between Columbus and Amsterdam avenues in Manhattan, www.bigapplecircus.org.)

This year, I will be volunteering

with the children. We love God's Love We Deliver; visit the website (www.glwd.org) and see if you can sign up to help.

Many churches and synagogues also have programs through which you can volunteer. Call around in the beginning of the month before all the spots fill up.

As for our Thanksgiving Day, I'll be filling up on an amazing feast my sister will be cooking — with my boys lending a helping hand as her sous chefs. I cannot wait to spend quality time *unplugged* (no iPads, iPhones, etc.) all day and night. We are going to make place cards for everyone's spots at the Thanksgiving table, and write why we are thankful for each family member. I can't wait to see what my boys come up with.

I wish everyone a fabuLyss and wonderful Thanksgiving spent with family and friends.

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

Brown sugar-glazed sweet potatoes with marshmallows

A favorite recipe of mine for Thanksgiving is brown sugar-glazed sweet potatoes with marshmallows (or as my younger son calls them, "smarshmallows").

INGREDIENTS:

4 pounds red-skinned sweet potatoes (yams), peeled, cut into 1-inch pieces
2/3 cup packed golden brown sugar
5 tablespoons butter

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
Pinch of ground ginger
2 cups miniature marshmallows
1/2 cup sliced almonds

DIRECTIONS: Preheat oven to 375-degrees Fahrenheit. Arrange potatoes in 13-by-9-by-2-inch glass baking dish. Combine sugar, butter, cinnamon, salt, nutmeg, and ginger in heavy, small saucepan over medium heat. Bring to boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Pour over pota-

toes; toss to coat. Cover dish tightly with foil.

Bake potatoes for 50 minutes. Uncover; bake until potatoes are tender and syrup thickens slightly, basting occasionally, about 20 minutes. Increase oven temperature to 500-degrees Fahrenheit. Top potatoes with marshmallows and nuts. Return to oven; bake until marshmallows begin to melt and nuts begin to brown, about 3 minutes.

From Epicurious.com: www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/brown-sugar-glazed-sweet-potatoes-with-marshmallows-813

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Continued on page 16



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Continued from page 14

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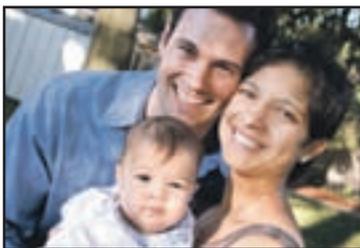
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Put an end to your child's procrastination

How to get ahead of them running behind

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Many parents grow weary of prodding their children to do homework, get ready for school, or complete household chores. But it doesn't have to be that way. Kids who procrastinate can break the habit if parents teach them the skills and self-discipline needed to start and complete tasks. Here are 13 tips to help:

Consider the source. Think about why your child is procrastinating. Could he be challenged by a lack of motivation, distractions, disorganization, or fear of failure driven by perfectionist ten-

dencies? Once this is determined, you can help him begin breaking the habit.

Stick with the S.T.I.N.G. approach.

"S": Select one task you want your child to do. If it is a large, overwhelming job, break it down into smaller, manageable tasks.

"T": Set a timer in keeping with your child's developmental level — five or 10 minutes if he's younger, longer if he's older.

"I": Ignore everything else while the timer is ticking. Help him stay focused and free from distractions. Don't let him start another task until the first one is done.

"N": No breaks allowed until the timer goes off.

"G": Give him a reward when the timer sounds. This can be a snack, a break to play outside, or special time to read a book with Mom or Dad.

Maintain rules. Establish house rules and follow through with consequences when rules are broken. Even if your child never sees the value of a clean room, he needs to know it's a rule.

Teach technique. Don't just assume your child knows how to do something. He may need to be taught how to organize a closet, clean out the toy box, or tackle a long assignment. Discuss the project with your child and guide him toward successfully completing it. Check in with him from time to time to see how he's doing.

Reinforce positive behavior. Recognize when your child is taking steps toward being responsible and proactive. Praise the progress along the way.

Maintain daily routines. This is particularly true for young children. They will be less likely to procrastinate if their structure is familiar.

Make a list. Some children feel a sense of accomplishment and stay on task when they make a list and cross items off.

Consider teachable times. Wait until your older child is feeling the

natural consequences of his procrastination — being late for school, having to miss an activity, or getting a poor test score. Then, rather than chastising him, suggest and encourage use of tactics to break the procrastination habit.

Work as a team. If you are a procrastinator, suggest teaming up and breaking the habit together. Share successes and mistakes in the journey.

Add variety and options. If your child procrastinates because of chores, rotate jobs on different days of the week or with different family members to give kids some flexibility and options.

Look at the long haul. Realize the long-term impact of procrastination on your child's self-esteem and confidence. Young people form their identity based on experiences and beliefs. If they continually see failing grades, get punished, or are yelled at for procrastinating, it becomes a vicious cycle that chips away at their self-esteem.

Allow trial and error. Remember there is no one-size-fits-all technique when it comes to motivating children to break the procrastination habit. Discuss with your child what method works best for him and allow some trial and error until he settles into a routine.

Gradually turn over the reigns. Breaking the procrastination habit is a gradual process that occurs over time and many children need to be taught how to do it. Once they learn how to break down tasks or organize information, gradually up the level of expectation and let your child become more independent while you continue to provide guidance and coaching.

Most important, remember, whatever effort you invest now in breaking the procrastination habit will positively impact every area of your child's life — now and in the future!

Denise Yearian is the former editor of two parenting magazines and the mother of three children.





Divorce

How to tell your kids

BY CHRISTINA MELNYK HINES

Your marriage is over and now you have the heart-wrenching task of telling your children.

How should you break the news?

Tell them together. Barring a

harmful or abusive situation, your children need you both to continue parenting together.

Even if your children are at different ages of maturity, they need to hear the announcement as a family, says Dr. Martye Barnard, a pediatric psychologist.

After that, you and your spouse should talk to each individual child. When you discuss your break-up, keep in mind that different age groups typically require different approaches:

Preschoolers

"It's amazing how much (preschoolers) understand," Barnard says. "They're pretty insightful, but

they don't understand the time element quite like the grade schooler or high schooler would. When you say this is going to happen this month, it doesn't make sense to them."

Adrienne Dreher, a family counselor, suggests using a calendar to help your preschooler count the days to when she will see each parent.

"Children need to have stability and know what to expect. The sooner a regular parenting plan that works for everyone can be set up, the better," she says.

Wondering what your child is feeling? Children often express feelings through play, Dreher says. Also, read age-appropriate books together, like "The Way I Feel" series, to help your child learn to share his feelings, including anger, sadness, and loss.

School-age

Define what divorce means by explaining that you and your spouse will no longer be living under the same roof. Again, explain that the divorce is not about your child, but avoid blaming the other parent for the divorce.

"None of the adult stuff should be shared with the kids," Barnard says.

Questions to anticipate

When preparing to tell children you and your spouse are divorcing, expect to hear the following, or variations of these common questions:

- Does this mean that Daddy (or Mommy) isn't going to live with us?
- Does this mean we won't see him (her) anymore?
- Does this mean we won't do things as a family anymore?
- Did I do something wrong? (Your child might not ask this question aloud, but she may wonder if she's somehow to blame.)

Source: Dr. Martye Barnard, University of Kansas Hospital

Children's books about divorce

Need additional resources? Local bookstores, your library, and Amazon.com have an assortment of helpful books geared for both adults and children. Look for these titles:

"Two Homes" by Claire Masurel

"It's Not Your Fault, Ko Ko Bear" by Vicki Lansky

"Was it the Chocolate Pudding? A Story for Little Kids about Divorce" by Sandra Levins

"Standing on My Own Two Feet: A Child's Affirmation of Love in the Midst of Divorce" by Tamara Schmitz

"Dinosaurs Divorce (A Guide for Changing Families)" by Marc Brown and Laurie Krasny Brown



Films dealing with divorce

Movies can help facilitate conversation between parent and child. Check out these flicks:

- "Because of Winn Dixie"
- "Mrs. Doubtfire"
- "Hope Floats"
- "Step-Mom"
- "Trevor Romaine: Taking the 'Duh' out of Divorce"

Check out CommonSenseMedia.org for comprehensive reviews of movies and to decide if a film is age-appropriate for your child.

"Those kids really need to be reassured that they have parents that love them."

Adolescence

As children enter adolescence, parents may be tempted to explain the divorce. Barnard urges parents to avoid sharing details of why the divorce happened.

"I know adults that aren't old enough to understand it," she says.

Address guilt

Reassure your children that they did nothing to cause the divorce. Explain to them that even though you are no longer married, you are their parents first and your love for them won't change.

Grief is normal

Grief associated with divorce occurs without closure since, unlike death, there's no funeral.

"Children grieve very much like they grieve if one of the parents had died or if they had lost a sibling," Barnard says.

If your child's grief doesn't lessen over time or if she expresses a wish to die (even a preschooler), consult with a counselor or child psychologist. The most common sign of depression among school-aged children is irritability, including acting out, disrespect, and mis-

behavior at home and school.

Manage wishful thinking

Children often fantasize about their parents getting back together and may continue to harbor these hopes for years.

"It's very, very difficult for kids to put closure on that and to understand that that's not going to happen," Barnard says. Gently remind your children periodically that you and your ex won't be remarrying.

Help children cope

Whenever possible, continue to partner as parents to your children by attending school activities, parent-teacher conferences, and birthdays together. And, don't turn your child into the go-between messenger.

"If you have a message to give your former spouse, that should be done by phone. If that's not possible because of anger, then e-mail or text," Barnard says. If possible, avoid dating for at least a year to help your children adjust.

Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines specializes in family communication issues. She is the mom of two boys and the author of "Happy, Healthy & Hyperconnected: Raise a Thoughtful Communicator in a Digital World."

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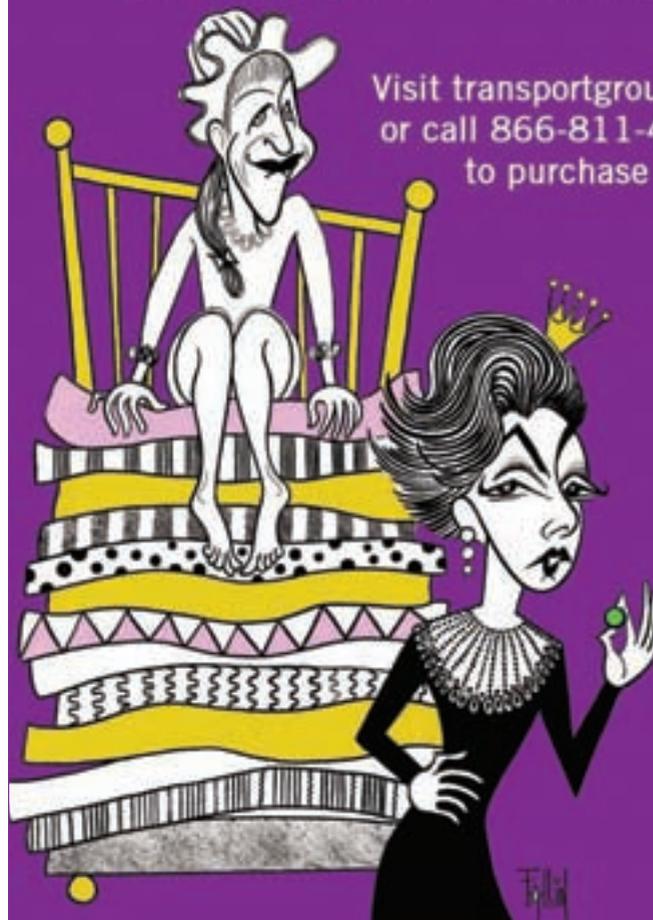
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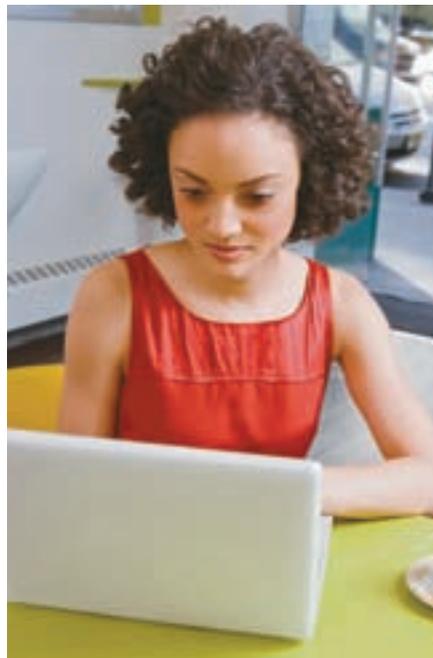
I have a variety of social media accounts — Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, not to mention my blog, website, and other various sign-ins! What happens to my digital accounts if I die?

We live in a digital age. Most of our lives are online. Even the least tech-savvy among us has some degree of digital assets. Digital assets include any online account requiring a username and password; any file or other intangible work stored electronically, whether on a computer, compact disc, flash drive, or in the cloud. It has been said that there is more data and information created since 2003 than in all of civilization put together.

Planning for your “digital afterlife” is important for two reasons. One, the identities of 2.5 million deceased Americans are stolen annually. Two, preserving your stories and memories is important. Your heirs will likely want to have access to your digital content — not just on Facebook and Instagram, but also your pictures, videos, and documents, or e-mails.

Many of us have more than one e-mail account, from Gmail to Outlook to Apple. In the course of a single day, you leave a wide swath of digital footprints. You check Facebook when you wake up, then you do some online banking. You place an order on your iPad for fresh direct and diapers.com. Your electric and gas bills are paid automatically. Your photos and videos are stored on a cloud server. These moderate online activities add up to a significant digital presence. They also leave little, if any, paper trail.

The number of passwords required to access this digital media is dizzying, impossible for each of us to



keep up with our own methodology for setting arcane combinations of lower and upper case letters, numbers, and symbols. There is little, if any, paper trail, for obvious reasons. To write down passwords is to invite thieves or other unauthorized access. Yet, those very same requirements designed to prevent identity theft and hacking are the very same insurmountable hurdles. When you die, that information dies with you. This impedes family members from accessing accounts in the event of incapacity or death. The terms of use of most online companies rarely if ever allow for the immediate or automatic transfer of the account data to the personal representative of an estate. Many of them actually provide for deletion of an online account within a certain amount of time after a user’s death. This can jeopardize the ability to recover information, marshal assets, and otherwise ad-

ministrates your affairs. For example, without access to a decedent’s bank and investment accounts, a fiduciary will encounter difficulty in obtaining the necessary information to distribute a person’s estate. This also risks overlooking an asset or account. Importantly, anyone with a Pay Pal account may have a balance left in that account that needs to be transferred.

Enter digital estate planning. Digital estate planning is the creation of a plan where a person chosen by you can access your digital assets and implement your wishes. Some practical sense and a minimal amount of effort can ease a potential burden on you and your loved ones. For the average user, this includes anything stored on a laptop

or computer server, like business and financial documents, personal photos and stories, or recipes, or even purchased e-books and music. Some, but not all, terms of use grant a purchaser a non-transferable license to use these works during the purchaser’s lifetime. For some people, usually creative, digital assets can have significant monetary value. For example, Stieg Larson (author of “The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo”) left behind a laptop computer. His girlfriend, who had possession of the computer when he died, claimed that his last close-to-finished novel resided on the hard drive of that computer, giving rise to questions as to whether she had authority to sell the material and whether she owned it. Consider also that when the renowned composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein died in 1990, he left an electronic, password-protected draft of his memoir, titled

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“Blue Ink.” The password was so strong that apparently no one has yet cracked the code!

Of course, with every dilemma arises a budding industry. There are businesses that service people looking to pass on their online presence. For a fee, you can upload all your passwords into an online account. In the event of disability or death, the designated individuals are notified and can access the information. Other sites like AssetLock (formerly YouDeparted.com) provide an online vault to store important documents and passwords. The account can be unlocked once a number of people set by the owner sign in and confirm the owner's death. Last Pass is also a great solution.

The best practice is to take steps to do digital estate planning rather than letting the uncertainty of law in this area and the policies of individual online companies dictate a result. Here are some steps you can take on your own:

Inventory your digital assets: This can be done just as you would inventory your household items for insurance purposes (also a good idea for estate planning purposes!). You can keep a separate worksheet in an Excel spreadsheet for this purpose.

Create a list: Using the same spreadsheet, create a list of all your devices, accounts, usernames, passwords, and the answers to the “secret questions.” This is good practice not only for your agents but to jog your own memory when you change and update passwords! If desired, you can password protect this list with an easy-to-remember PIN that your spouse or trusted family member or friend will know.

Leave instructions: Leave information — either in the spreadsheet or a separate document — that includes instructions on how to access mobile devices, computers, e-mail accounts, and other online subscriptions. This letter of instruction can be kept in a safe place with your will and advance directives. It would convey information that an agent or executor needs, such as logins and passwords.

Grant authority: Some online sites — like NY Saves for 529 accounts — allow you to designate a limited power of attorney to access an account on your behalf. You can also include language in your power of attorney to allow your agent to handle your digital

assets. You can bifurcate the powers granted to an agent, so that one person is designated as a “digital assets” representative.

Identify your wishes: You should specify your wishes as to each online asset. Do you want your social media shut down, or continued after your death and for what purpose? Do you want your computers and all of its data given to a particular person, and for what purpose? For example, you might want your writings to be compiled in a memoir, or your digital photographs compiled in albums. You might not want those assets to be made public or posted anywhere, or you may want them disseminated openly and often. Make those wishes known, either in your Will or a personal property memorandum referenced in the will. You can also appoint a “digital executor” to deal solely with these digital issues.

Facebook recently enabled an option to allow users to add a “legacy contact” to manage their account after they die, or elect to have the account terminated and deleted. This can easily be designated in the member profile area. The legacy contact has no authority to edit material that was posted during the decedent's lifetime. Google has allowed a similar option since 2013. As of now, there is no federal legislation addressing the issues relating to digital property. However, nine states (including New York) have legislation addressing access to digital assets. Delaware grants an executor complete access to digital assets in its Fiduciary Access to Digital Access Act. However, many internet service providers are in California, which lacks digital asset legislation.

Our reliance on digital information will grow, and so too will the value of digital estate planning. The law is slow to evolve to keep up with modern developments. In the meantime, taking the time to organize this information will, in the long run, ease any burden on your loved ones, avoid confusion, protect priceless memories, and avoid any unnecessary conflict and the resulting legal cost.

Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of Arden Besunder P.C., where she assists parents with their estate planning needs. You can find Alison Besunder on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at www.besunderlaw.com.



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A brave

new world

Looking at options and resources for same-sex couples pursuing adoption

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Just a half decade ago, same-sex marriages were considered quite controversial. We've come a long way since, and in this new "age of enlightenment," laws are gradually changing in favor of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities. The conversation is expanding and now veering toward a thornier, more complex topic: same-sex couples and adoption.

A couple's desire to grow their family and have children of their own — by whatever means possible — is one that transcends gender and sexual orientation. It's an intrinsic human need that's embedded in our DNA.

Manhattan-based, licensed Clinical Psychologist Dr. Melissa Robinson-Brown, agrees that the process of conceiving a child can be stressful between two heterosexual people, but she points out that with same-sex couples, there are inevitably other parties involved that ultimately add to those stress levels.

"Whether that be the adoption agency, a surrogate parent, a sperm or egg donor, another biological parent, or a lawyer, someone else is necessary to make having a child possible," she says. "These processes are often time-consuming, monetary burdens, and emotionally-laden affairs." She notes that while the outcome is often worth the stress, "it's important to recognize the emotional toll that this can have on any couple."

According to recent statistics, approximately four percent of adopted children are being raised by gay and lesbian parents. Dr. Robinson-Brown notes that literature

"It's been an amazing journey getting to help people experience the joy of becoming parents. Some didn't feel it was an option until recently, as marriage equality spread and services for LGBT people building families became more available."

suggests that when compared to children of heterosexual parents, children of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer parents show no differences in adjustment, peer relationships, depression, or anxiety. In fact, in some instances, Dr. Robinson-Brown said children of lesbian and gay parents tend to have better outcomes in terms of social and academic functioning. Moreover, they tend to have less behavioral difficulties. Overall, though, these children may face more external challenges from peers and society versus in their own homes.

"Probably one of the most important aspects of this process is seeking out legal counsel that is well-versed in the laws of the state in which the parents reside and attending to all necessary points as identified by the couple's attorney," she adds.

Brooklyn-based adoption lawyer Brian Esser, who regularly works with same-sex New York City couples, is raising two happy, high-energy sons with husband Kevin O'Leary in Park Slope.

"The fact that I'm an adoptive dad really resonates with people — gay and straight," says Esser, 40, father of Keith, 4, and Jason, 17 months, both adopted at birth.

Esser has been a lawyer for more than 15 years. He started his career at large law firms handling complex litigation matters for major corporations. About three years ago, he started doing adoption-related work, after he and his husband adopted Keith, he launched his solo practice two years ago.

Tammy Scileppi: You say you empathize with your clients, because you've been in their shoes.

Brian Esser: When I started my practice, I was surprised to learn that there were no out LGBT lawyers who worked with families pursuing independent adoption in New York City. There are many who do second-parent adoptions, but none who focus on birth parent placement adoption. They see that I understand where they are coming from, and that I can sympathize with their concerns, without them having to articulate them, because I've been in their shoes.

It's been an amazing journey getting to help people experience the joy of becoming parents. Some of my clients always knew they wanted to be parents, and it was just a question of when and how. Others didn't feel it was an option until recently, as marriage equality spread and services for LGBT people building families became



Park Slope husbands Brian Esser and Kevin O'Leary adopted sons Keith, now 4, and Jason, now 17 months, at birth.

more available.

Living in New York, we're fortunate that there are services for LGBT people, and our courts are generally welcoming to these families. We like Brooklyn, because

there are all kinds of families here and our children don't stand out because they were adopted, or because they have two gay dads.

As my clients network with potential birth parents and deal with

professionals in other states, I see firsthand the discrimination families face in other states.

I really found my calling when we began the process of adoption. I felt I could take the information I'd learned

— and the empathy I had developed as an adoptive parent — and share it with the world. I immersed myself in family building information — not just adoption, but also surrogacy, sperm, egg, and embryo donation. I wanted to learn all the different ways people build families.

TS: What was your adoption process like?

BE: We were waiting for a match for about seven months with our older son and about six months for the younger ... really quick wait times by most standards, but it didn't feel fast.

Then there is a whirlwind of activity. You try to learn everything you can about the child that might be your baby. You want to know everything about the birth-parents. Then you meet them — which was amazingly emotional.

Then comes another wait. The wait from when you think you have a match until the baby is actually born. We were mostly certain that neither of our sons' birth mothers would re-think their adoption plan, but you never know. The births of both boys were truly amazing!

TS: What has the adoption process been like for other families?

BE: A recent success was obtaining a second-parent adoption for a Brooklyn gay male couple who welcomed their son via surrogacy in India. My most recent independent adoption placement was for a gay male couple in Queens.

When we started the process of adopting, we didn't know a lot of people who were adoptive parents. Since then, people have "come out" to us as adoptive parents and as we've been at various preschools and day cares, we've met other adoptive parents, with kids our boys' ages.

My two boys are the light of my life. They give me purpose and make me want to be a better person. People were incredibly supportive of us becoming parents. I think people could see that we were very happy together and wanted us to share that love with a child.

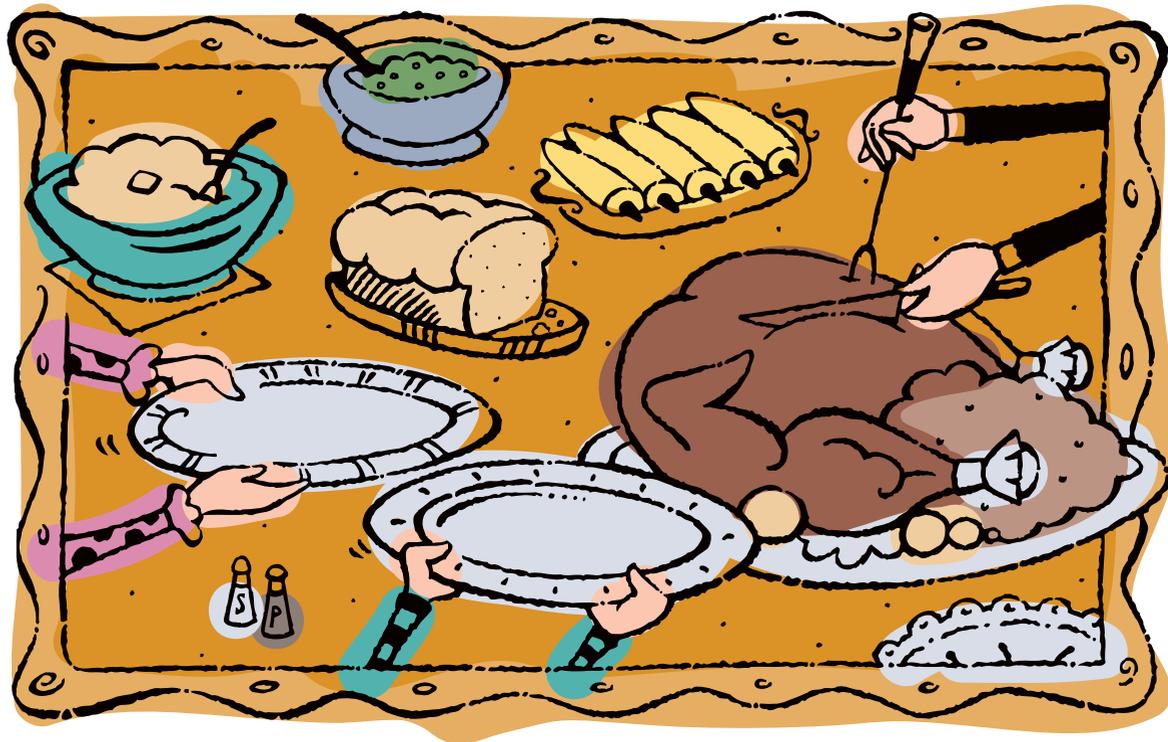
For families looking for adoption information, contact the Law Office of Brian Esser [540 President Street, third floor, between Third and Fourth avenues in Park Slope, (718) 747-8447, www.esserlawoffice.com]

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance journalist and parent.

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DANIELLE SULLIVAN



Hostess with the mostest memories

With Thanksgiving just days away, most parents have already made their dinner plans. Many moms I know are attending family functions, and others are hosting.

Some of my friends declare they will never host and are fully content with making their one special holiday dish or dessert to bring to the party and then go home when they choose. They would never host a holiday, they say.

Then there are others who typically host. I fall into that category. Ever since we bought our house, we tend to host the holiday functions. Even when we were still living in our apartment, we hosted a lot.

I don't know what it is about hosting that I like the most, but I enjoy when people come over and have fun in our home. It has become more important since we have lost family members in recent years. I remember having them over for special events, and specific stories that happened, remembering the particular

room in our home where they occurred.

The year before my uncle passed away, we celebrated a crowded Thanksgiving in our little Park Slope apartment with my parents, my uncle, and my mother-in-law. My uncle proceeded to tell a story about how he saw a TV show where they taught you how to sharpen a knife with a plate. He demonstrated the whole technique and repeatedly told us all how fascinating it was. So much so, in fact, he had to tell the stories a few times throughout the day whenever someone new arrived.

By the end of the night, I jokingly asked him at the table, "Tell me again, how do you sharpen a knife with a plate?" and he started the story again until he realized I was fooling around, and then it was a joke that day that we kept up. It was silly, and not even really that funny, but it remains a special memory I have.

When I think of it, I clearly recall how our modest, black dining

room table was filled to the rim with dishes, and we gathered as many chairs as possible around it. It was intimate and despite being in a packed space, despite the lack of a beautiful home or a perfect picture setting, it was a memory I would not trade for the world.

And isn't that what the holidays are about, families coming together and getting through the inconveniences that sometimes come along with having families together all at once, and creating memories?

In the end, it doesn't matter what you eat, serve, or have, if you host or not, or if anything is perfect. It only matters that you are together, making more memories each year.

Wishing you and yours a memorable holiday season!

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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TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

CHEF JOANNA DEVITA

Seasonal delights!

Celebrating the bounty of fall produce at gatherings with family and friends is a true joy of the season. We all have our traditions and tried-and-true recipes. I am always looking for a few ways to tweak traditional recipes, with spices, flavors, and cooking techniques. I am also always looking for ways to get everyone, young and old, involved in creating a meal to share. I cherish the time spent with the people I love while we're cooking. A little planning and some setup makes this time together a true joy. Here are a few tips on updating some classic recipes and ways to get everyone in the kitchen:

Family time preparing Brussels sprouts

Brussels sprouts have been in the spotlight for some years now. Chefs and home cooks have been sharing tons of recipes and techniques for preparing this beautiful vegetable. You can caramelize them with some pancetta; separate the leaves and create stir fry with ginger, soy, garlic and chili peppers; or simply roast them with some red onion slices and balsamic vinegar. Buy a whole stalk at the farmers' market and have the kids pop off the little sprouts at the top.

Let the bigger kids use paring knives to cut the sprouts in half while the little ones separate the leaves for frying or adding to a salad.

Sweet potato and chipotle gratin

INGREDIENTS

- 3 lb. sweet potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
- 8 ounces aged white cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 pint heavy cream
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 pieces canned chipotle peppers in adobo, split with seeds scraped out, sliced thinly
- 2 tablespoons adobo sauce from the chipotle peppers
- 3 tablespoons butter

DIRECTIONS: Preheat oven to 325-degrees Fahrenheit. In a cas-

serole dish or gratin dish, butter the bottom and sides, reserving two tablespoons of butter for later. Layer in the sweet potatoes, seasoning each layer with salt, pepper, and a sprinkling of cheddar cheese. Bring cream, chipotle peppers, and adobo sauce to a boil in a small sauce pan. Once boiling, turn off the heat. Pour hot cream mixture over layered potatoes. Place small pats of butter and a last sprinkling of cheese on the top of the gratin. Cover and bake for 45 minutes. Remove foil and bake until gratin is brown on top and bubbling, and the potatoes are cooked through.

Let cool slightly to set up the gratin. Enjoy!

Buying the whole stalk at once may be a lot of work, but if you split it up, it can be a fun family activity.

Spice up your sweet potato

For family gatherings, I like to take classic family recipes and spice them up a bit. I take the basic potato gratin recipe and do a chipotle sweet potato gratin instead. (See the recipe below.)

You can scrape the seeds out of the chili to make it less spicy, and the smoky flavor is excellent with the earthy sweet flavor of the potatoes. This recipe can come together quickly and can be made up to two days ahead, making it a great dish to travel with. Just re-heat in the oven and serve.

Try braising turkey legs

One problem many cooks encounter on Thanksgiving is fully cooked turkey breasts, but underdone legs. One easy way to solve that is to pull the legs off and continue to roast in the oven. For an interesting twist, however, you can try braising the legs.

When the breast is done (internal temperature of 165-degrees Fahrenheit at the thickest part), remove the legs from the breast. Let the breast rest under a foil tent. Set the roasting pan over a flame on the stovetop. Add some white wine (about a cup), three cups of turkey or chicken stock, a bay leaf, a spring of thyme, one shallot, two garlic cloves, and the juice of half a lemon. Let this liquid come to a boil, then reduce heat until it simmers. Scrape the bottom of the pan to release the cooked bits that are there from the roasting process.

Nestle the partially cooked legs into this simmering liquid. The legs should not be submerged, liquid should just go about half way up the legs.

Cover the roasting pan with foil and allow the legs to braise in the oven for about 30 to 40 minutes at 300 to 350-degrees Fahrenheit. Remove the legs to a platter, strain the

cooking liquid and taste for seasoning. You can reduce the liquid further for a delicious turkey jus.

Use up all of those apples

Homemade applesauce is a great thing to have on hand. Kids love apple sauce as is, but it is also a great thing to have on hand for baking. Substitute applesauce for butter in cookies, muffins, brownies, and sweet quick breads.

Try your favorite recipes with half the butter or oil replaced with applesauce.

At Léman Manhattan Preparatory School, we make chocolate-chip cookies with applesauce and the kids love them! You can even make a big batch of applesauce and freeze it in pint-size containers.

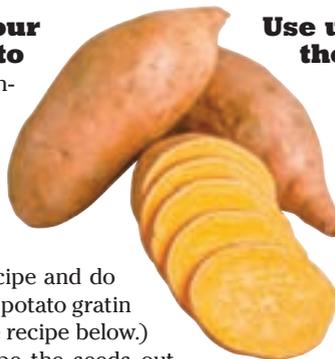
Try your root veggies raw

It's so easy and comforting to crank up the oven and roast root vegetables on sheet trays. Sometimes, however, a crunchy raw root vegetable salad can be the perfect counterpoint to a meal of braised meat or Thanksgiving turkey dinner. I use a peeler and a cheese grater to create these delicious salads.

Parsnips, carrots, beets, celery root, and fennel (not a root veggie but delicious raw!) all make great salads. The key is to use a flavorful dressing and to add texture. Chopped nuts, scallions, fresh herbs, toasted ground spices, citrus zest, chili peppers, acid (such as vinegar or lemon juice), and fat (oil, mayonaise, yogurt) in the right combination will produce a fresh salad to liven up an otherwise heavy fall meal.

And if you want to involve the kids, let them pick the herbs, grate the vegetables on the cheese grater, or even help you in toasting and grinding your own spices.

Joanna DeVita is the executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School and a mother of two who loves sharing her love and respect for nature, good ingredients, and the joy of cooking with her family.





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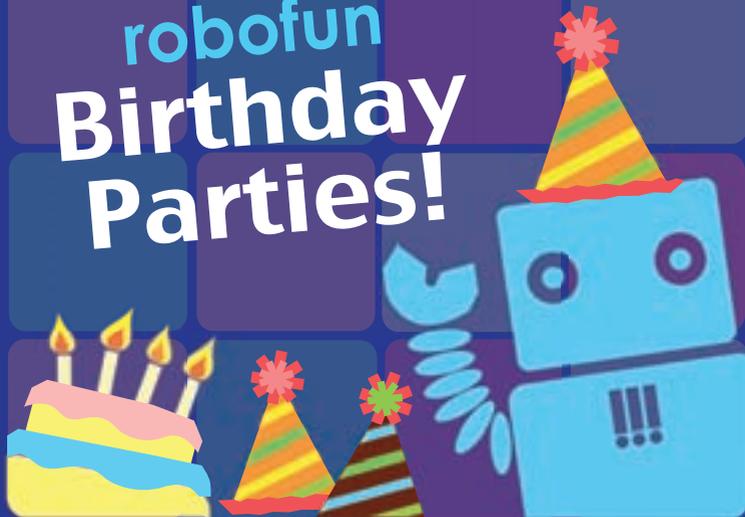
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After miscarriage

How to provide support

Helping a loved one with a very private pain

BY JUDY M. MILLER

A miscarriage happens in an instant or over days, however, its lasting effects can continue through the years. I am now blessed and wonderfully busy with four amazing kids, but pinches of sorrow revisit me every year: on the anniversaries of the day I discovered I was pregnant, the day I lost my child, Mother's Day, and the day I would have given birth. I view these days of grief and my consum-

ing mother's joy as two branches of the same tree, as intertwined reminders to be present and grateful.

What would have been, could have been, proved the most challenging to reconcile. I found it tough to cope with my grief over my miscarriage 18 years ago, along with the dreams of giving birth to and knowing my child, in part because I had virtually no support at the time.

My husband did not want to talk about the baby. In fact, for months he denied she had ever existed, and this distressed me deeply until I realized how much he hurt. He lost a child, too.

Family members and friends were often silent after they expressed their condolences. I desired more, expected more, but did not know how to ask others for what I needed. I did not have the emotional strength to ask. I stewed in the silence until I realized they did not know what to do.

I share this advice that follows from my perspective as a woman who has miscarried, to help you support your family member or friend who has miscarried. These are the things I would have expressed 18 years ago, if I only knew:

Encourage her to talk

Your family member or friend needs to talk; she may tell you her story over and over. Be patient. She is processing. Be attentive. Connect with your eyes, gestures, and touch. Be compassionate. Know when to remain quiet. Listen, listen, listen.

Encourage her to express and name the emotions she feels

I experienced denial, bargaining, anger, sadness, guilt, and shame. I felt hollow and adrift. My arrival to acceptance took many, many months.

Accept all feelings. What she feels are part of her grief process. Validate your friend or family member's emotions and feelings by having

conversations with her about her miscarriage and about her dashed hopes and dreams. Acknowledge her spouse or partner; be sure to ask how he is doing.

Ask about the baby

Your friend or family member was pregnant. The baby, regardless of its gestational age at the time of the miscarriage, was real. Acknowledge and respect her sense of loss. She may have named the baby; refer to the baby by name if she did. Just hearing you say the baby's name validates that it existed; this can help her heal.

Encourage her to take care of herself

Grief takes a toll on the mind and body. Accompany your friend or family member on a walk in a beautiful area. Watch a happy or funny movie with her, and encourage her to laugh by laughing yourself. Make dinner for her and her spouse or family. Hold her hand or put your arms around her shoulders when she cries. Inquire about her sleep, activity, and diet.

Stay in touch

Grief has a way of hanging around; it ebbs and flows, sometimes more pronounced during an anniversary or a milestone. A card, hand-written note, or time spent together talking communicating your remembrance will be much appreciated.

Take care of you

Supporting someone who is grieving can be emotionally and physically taxing. Be sure to take care of yourself. Have someone you can talk to, eat well, drink a lot of water, exercise, and get plenty of sleep.

Judy M. Miller is a freelance writer living in the Midwest with her husband and four children. She is a Certified Gottman Educator, and the author of "What To Expect From Your Adopted Tween" and "Writing to Heal Adoption Grief: Making Connections & Moving Forward."



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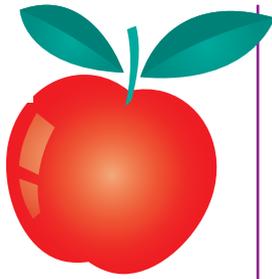
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DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
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Spotting signs of hearing loss in kids

Dear parents,

So much learning that your children do in school comes from listening to teachers and classmates. It is important to identify the signs that may indicate a possible hearing loss in your child as quickly as possible so that the next steps can be taken: testing followed by appropriate treatment and management.

According to the Hearing Health Foundation, it is more difficult to identify hearing loss in children who have developed speech skills, as they may have unconsciously developed coping techniques to compensate for their loss. Watch for these signs in older children:

- Your child seems to hear fine some of the time and then not respond at other times.
- Your child wants the television volume louder than other members of the family.
- Your child asks “What?” or says “Huh?” more often than he used to.
- Your child moves one ear forward when listening, or he complains that he can only hear out of his “good ear.”
- Your child’s grades fall, or his teacher notes that the child doesn’t seem to hear or respond in the classroom.
- Your child says that he didn’t hear you. Many parents assume their children are not paying attention, when in fact, there may be an unidentified hearing loss.
- It seems as though your child is just not paying attention.
- Your child starts to speak more loudly than previously.
- Your child looks at you intently when you speak to him. He may be depending on visual cues.
- You just have a feeling. Sometimes you just can’t put your finger on what your concern is.

There are many possible causes of acquired hearing loss that appear months or years after birth. Most hearing loss in children without obvious risk factors (such as premature birth) has a genetic cause. If



you have concerns, contact your pediatrician for a referral to an audiologist, a professional who is specially trained to identify hearing loss in children of all ages, for a complete hearing evaluation.

Simple games to enhance math skills

Dear teacher,

Do you know any simple games that reinforce math skills that are not played on the computer? I would like to wean my children away from being online so much of the time.

Dear parent,

One way to lure children away from thinking that they can only have fun by being online is to play games with them. There are many board games that they should enjoy playing with you. Younger children can enjoy games that stress counting. Candyland and Chutes and Ladders are just two easy first games for children to play. In fact, any game that uses a spinner will have the youngest children practicing their counting skills.

As children get older, they can play more sophisticated games. Dominoes is a great choice for children who need to improve their adding skills. In addition, there are many dice games

and experiments that children can enjoy. Here are two:

The block game: Get out a lot of building blocks. They can be different sizes. Have your children take turns throwing a pair of dice and adding up the numbers that come up. The child then stacks that number of blocks. The winner is the player who stacks the highest block tower in 10 or 20 rounds of play. And, of course, a player loses if his or her tower falls down before the end of a round of play.

Dicey experiment: This game will introduce your children to probability. You’ll need a pair of dice. Have your child roll the dice 36 times and find the difference between the number of dots on the top faces of the dice each time. Record the results on a graph that shows the differences and the number of times that difference was rolled. Repeat the experiment three more times. Then ask the child the question: What difference is most likely to show up when you roll a pair of dice?

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

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Join a musical group featuring Brooklyn teaching artists Ora and Yoshie Fruchter and their puppet pals for a program that nurtures family bonds and bridges connections to Jewish life and traditions.

The concert will focus on a variety of values including caring for the environment, friendship, and love and kindness. Families, musicians, and puppets will sing and learn together as a welcoming community.

New Families-New Traditions on Nov. 8 at 10:30 am; free.

Museum of Jewish Heritage [36 Battery Pl. at First Place in Battery Park, (646) 437-4202; www.mjhmny.org]



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FURTHER AFIELD

NYC Marathon: Verrazano Narrows Bridge, Bay Street, Staten Island; 8 am to 9 am.

Get ready to run! The world's biggest and most popular marathon with 50,000 finishers is set to take off at 8 am at the foot of the Verrazano Bridge and ends in Central Park at the 79th Street transverse.

Ascarium weekend: 11 am – 5 pm. New York Aquarium. See Saturday, Oct. 31.

TUES, NOV. 3

IN MANHATTAN

Discovery tree walk: Chess Checkers House, Center Drive and 65th Street Transverse; (212) 772-0288; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am – 11:30 am and 1 pm – 2:30 pm; Free.

Hands-on exploration and identification of some of the majestic trees. Marvel at the beautiful fall foliage. For families with children over 5.

Field Day: Highbridge Park, Amsterdam Avenue and W. 177th Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am – 3 pm; Free.

It's the first ever fall field day. Families enjoy election day with javelin, bubble soccer, giant soccer, pillow polo, obstacle courses, and hand cycling. Field games include a tug of war, disc tic-tac-toe, and giant parachute. There is so much more, including a visit with Snoopy and a pumpkin smash.

SAT, NOV. 7

IN MANHATTAN

Frank Stella Family Day: Whitney Museum of Art, 99 Gansevoort St.



Associated Press / Diane Bondareff

Thanksgiving's giant kickoff

Get ready for the 89th annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade on Nov. 26.

The giant event features balloons, floats, marching bands, performance groups, and loads of entertainers. The 2.5-mile march kicks off at 77th Street, winding

its way downtown to the viewing stands in front of the world famous Macy's of Herald Square. Children of all ages will love watching the giant balloons floating high above the avenue. Bringing up the rear is always the ever popular Mr. and

Mrs. Santa Claus, with Rudolph at the head. Santa and sleigh heralds the end of the parade and the beginning of the holiday season.

Thanksgiving Day Parade, Nov. 26 from at 9 am to noon. Free *Macy's Herald Square (Broadway and W. 34th Street in Manhattan).*

and Washington Street; (212) 570-3600; www.whitney.org; 9:30 am to 3 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages are invited to celebrate the Frank Stella Retrospective and collaborate with artist Mckendree Key to build a mega-sized marble run, and learn about the work on view through gallery tours, art making workshops, and more.

Discovery walk: Charles A Dana Discovery Center, East Drive and E. 110th Street; (212) 860-1370; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am – 11:30 am; Free.

Families get out into nature and discover the plants, animals, and terrain of the park. Bring a backpack. For families with children 5 years and older. RSVP required.

Sci-tech workshop – Rainbow jars: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street;

(212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; 11 am – 1pm; \$6.

Catch the rainbow! Have you ever wondered why oil won't mix with water or why some liquids separate right in front of your eyes? Come explore some fun-facts about density while creating your very own liquid rainbow in a jar! Reservations of up to five children aged 6 and up can be made. RSVP required.

"The Great Red Ball Rescue": Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am and 2 pm; \$15.

Children will love this puppet musical premiere featuring original music and puppetry developed with the support of the Jim Henson Foundation. See what happens when a family trip to the beach turns topsy turvy when a young boy loses his favorite red ball to the tides.

Holiday Express: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 2 pm; \$8 plus museum admission.

All aboard for train enthusiasts and take a ride and learn fascinating facts and history about the history of transportation and trains, families will play with toy trains, lay wooden tracks, and work together to solve a special train-themed matching game. All participants will take home a special train souvenir! Recommended for children 3 to 6 years old.

Kids Cartoon: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 3 pm; \$20 (\$15 members).

Join educator and cartoonist Paul Swartz and learn how to create your own cartoon character. Plan, design, and draw all aspects of your char-

Continued on page 36

Calendar

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

Continued from page 35

acter in this two-hour class! Is it a superhero, a supervillain, or just an everyday hero? Students will learn about turnaround sheets, proportions, and why superheroes wear red and blue, while supervillains prefer purple and green. Make your characters jump, run, and interact in their worlds. In this two-hour class we'll collaborate on "jam comics" and play games like "Character Combat" to get our characters moving! Recommended for children 8 -12.

Taurid Meteor Shower: Pats Lawn in Inwood Hill Park, W. 218th St. and Indian Road; (718) 319-7258; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 to 8:30 pm; Free.

Urban rangers will be your guides to the stars and the event that produces five to 10 meteors per hour. In between, visitors will use telescopes to explore the night sky. For older teens.

SUN, NOV. 8

IN MANHATTAN

New Families-New Traditions: Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Pl. at First Place; (646) 437-4202; www.mjhnyc.org; 10:30 am; Free.

Join the musical group Yellow Sneaker and their puppet pals.

"Fantasia": Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 3:30 and 7:30 pm; \$15.

Celebrate the 75th anniversary of this Disney classic.

TUES, NOV. 10

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": Barclays Center, 620 Atlantic Ave. at Pacific Street, Brooklyn; (917) 618-6100; www.barclayscenter.com; 7 pm; Tickets begin at \$21.

Grab your Mickey ears and get ready to celebrate 100 years of magic. All your favorite Disney characters are live and on the ice skating to Disney's best music, including themes from "Frozen," "The Lion King," and "Toy Story." Presented by Stonyfield YoKids Organic Yogurt.

WED, NOV. 11

IN MANHATTAN

Minecraft and Space Engineering Workshop: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; 9:30 am to 3:30 pm; \$95.

Calling all young engineers! Join us as we partner with the tech edu-



Circus performance for special needs kids

The Big Apple Circus hosts a special performance of "The Grand Tour" for families with special needs on Nov. 17.

The Embrace Autism event will transport the audiences to the Roaring 1920s in ships, planes, trains, and automobiles. Clowns, jugglers, acrobats, and aerialists from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America appear with ponies, puppies and more; the troupe sets off on its own whirlwind adventure, accompanied by the live, seven-piece Big Apple band.

The Big Apple Circus has joined with autism spectrum disorder experts to adapt "The Grand Tour" for families with members on the spectrum and

create a joyful experience for all.

The adapted show includes the same world-class artistry as the full performance with a shorter running time of 75 minutes, adjusted lights and sound, a calming center, pictorial social narratives, and specially trained staff and volunteers to assure a memorable event for everyone.

"The Grand Tour" Embrace Autism performance, Nov. 17 at 11 am. Tickets are \$12.50 and \$37.50. For special-needs seating contact customer service at (800) 922-3772.

Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts [10 Lincoln Center Plaza on the Upper West Side, (212) 875-5374, www.bit.ly/BACEA15]

cation group MakerState to introduce back-to-back workshops. During the "Minecraft Workshop," kids will build Redstone circuits that program robotic turtles and create TinkerCAD models. Kids get introduced to the Newtonian physics of space flight during the "Space Engineering" workshop while also exploring gravity simulations, basic mechanical principles and simple C+ programming. A break will be given in-between workshops. Advanced reservations and payment is required.

Discovery walk: Belvedere Castle, 79th Street Transverse, West Drive;

(212) 772-0288; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am to 11:30 am and 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free (with membership).

Children enjoy a fun and explore the fall foliage, identifying the trees and learning all about the wildlife. Families only: maximum of three children per parent or guardian; no groups. Please arrive at the Visitor Center 15 minutes before the start of the Discovery Walk to allow time to check in and to pick up Discovery Kits. Pre-registration is recommended as space is limited.

Family Book day: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West

at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 11 am; Free with museum admission.

Families celebrate Veterans Day with a reading of "Courage Has No Color" by Tanya Lee Stone, featuring Triple Nickle Paratrooper, Kenneth Smith. Recommended for children 9 through 12.

Story time: Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Place at First Place; (646) 437-4202; www.mjhnyc.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Museum staff read from favorite stories, sing-alongs, and an afternoon snack.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": 7 pm. Barclays Center. See Tuesday, Nov. 10.

THURS, NOV. 12

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": 10:30 am and 7 pm. Barclays Center. See Tuesday, Nov. 10.

FRI, NOV. 13

IN MANHATTAN

8-Ball Billiards championship: Chelsea Recreation Center, 430 W. 25th St. and 10th Avenue; (212) 360-3300; www.nycgovparks.org; 4 pm to 6 pm; Free.

Top pool players compete for titles and prizes. Teens compete from 4 to 6 pm with adult tournaments following.

"Fantasia": 7:30 pm. Symphony Space. See Sunday, Nov. 8.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": 7 pm. Barclays Center. See Tuesday, Nov. 10.

SAT, NOV. 14

IN MANHATTAN

Riverwalk: Highbridge, W. 172nd St. and Amsterdam Ave.; (212) 795-1388; www.nycgovparks.org; 9:30 am to 11 am; Free.

Join with naturalist Mike Feller to search the plants, insects, birds and some of Manhattan's last remaining freshwater seeps and springs. RSVP required.

Discovery walk: Belvedere Castle, 79th Street Transverse, West Drive; (212) 772-0288; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 to 11:30 am, and 1 to 2:30 pm; Free (with membership).

Children explore the fall foliage, identify the trees, and learn all about the wildlife. Families only: maximum of three children per parent or guardian; no groups. Please arrive at the Visitor Center 15 minutes before the

Calendar

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start of the Discovery Walk to allow time to check in and to pick up Discovery Kits. Pre-registration is recommended as space is limited.

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

Pop-rock family-centric tunes.

Star Stories: Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum, Pier 86 – W. 46th Street and 12th Avenue; (212) 245-0072; educationevents@intrepidmuseum.org; www.intrepidmuseum.org; 11 am; Free with museum admission.

Take a trip inside the Intrepid Museum's planetarium during Star Stories, a program for families. Learn myths from around the world that explain the stars in the sky, and then create your own constellation and myth in a storytelling activity. Advanced registration required.

Tech for Tots: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; Noon to 1 pm; Free with admission to the aquarium.

Learning with Computers. Bring your little ones to explore shapes, colors, and letters in a fun and exciting way while being introduced to some of the basic functions of a computer. Reservations for children at a pre-K to kindergarten learning level can be made.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": 11 am, 3 pm and 7 pm. Barclays Center. See Tuesday, Nov. 10.

SUN, NOV. 15

IN MANHATTAN

Carnegie Kids: Songs for Unusual Creatures: Carnegie Hall, Weill Music Room, 154 W. 57th St.; www.carnegiehall.org/for_families; Noon and 2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Multi-instrumentalist, composer and writer Michael Hearst and his band Songs for Unusual Creatures performs songs for families.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": 1 pm and 5 pm. Barclays Center. See Tuesday, Nov. 10.

SAT, NOV. 21

IN MANHATTAN

Discovery tree walk: Chess Checkers House, Center Drive and 65th Street Transverse; (212) 772-0288; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am – 11:30 am and 1 pm – 2:30 pm; Free.

Hands-on exploration and identification of some of the majestic trees. Marvel at the beautiful fall foliage.



Train extravaganza!

Come aboard the Holiday Express at the New York Historical Society on Nov. 7 and Nov. 22.

Budding train enthusiasts take a ride and learn fascinating facts about the history of transportation and trains, and families will play with toy trains, lay wooden tracks, and work together to solve a special train-themed matching game. All participants will take home a special train souvenir!

For families with children over 5.

Art workshop: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; Noon to 1 pm; \$5 per person.

What are you thankful for this season? Share what it means to give thanks and bring home your very own personalized placemat just in time for your Thanksgiving feast! Appropriate for all ages. Reservations of up to five children can be made.

Fire building: Riverside park, 116th Street and Riverside Drive; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Rangers teach the tips and tricks that will enhance your knowledge of the great outdoors. Whether you are preparing for a weekend in the the country or an extended journey through the woods, this class is perfect to sharpen those life-saving techniques. Recommended for families

Recommended for children 3 to 6 years old. The event coincides with the Toy and Train exhibit of the Jerni Collection that is on view now through Feb. 28, 2016.

Holiday Express, Nov. 7 and 22 at 2 pm; tickets are \$8 plus museum admission.

New-York Historical Society [170 Central Park West at 77th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 873-3400; <http://nyhistory.org>]

with children older than 8 years.

SUN, NOV. 22

IN MANHATTAN

MJH Kids: Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Pl. at First Place; (646) 437-4202; www.mjhnyc.org; 10:30 am – 12:30 pm; \$8 (children of members free).

Cool programs for young audiences for children 4 to 8 years old and their siblings. It's a theater kick off with My Favorite Something.

Gotham Comedy: Gotham Comedy Club, 208 W. 23rd Street; (212) 877-6115; www.kidsncomedy.com; 1 pm; \$15 plus one item minimum.

Talented teens tackle Thanksgiving. The pre-turkey show offers up some tasty jokes on pilgrims, turkey, and overbearing family dinners.

Holiday Express: 2 pm. New-York Historical Society. See Saturday, Nov.

7.

THURS, NOV. 26

IN MANHATTAN

Thanksgiving Day Parade: Macy's at Herald Square; 9 am to noon; Free.

Presented by Macy's, the 89th annual event heralds the holiday season with a fun parade. The 2.5-mile march kicks off at 77th Street and ends in front of the store at Herald Square.

FRI, NOV. 27

IN MANHATTAN

Hands-on Nano demo: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; 2 to 4 pm; Free with general admission.

Just HOW small is small? Join us to uncover the fascinating world of nanoscience and nanotechnology and participate in hands-on activities that explore the properties, structures, materials and scale of this exciting field of science. No reservation required. Best suited for ages 6 and up.

SAT, NOV. 28

IN MANHATTAN

Discovery walk: Charles A Dana Discovery Center, East Drive and E. 110th Street; (212) 860-1370; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am – 11:30 am; Free.

Families get out into nature and discover the plants, animals, and terrain of the park. Bring a backpack. For families with children 5 years and older. RSVP required.

Art Workshop: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; Noon to 1 pm; \$5 per person.

Secrets of Stained Glass. Have you ever wondered what makes all the beautiful colors in stained glass? Learn about the science behind colored glass and then get creative, making your own unique window decoration to take home using cell-o sheets and contact paper. Appropriate for all ages. Reservations of up to five children can be made.

SUN, NOV. 29

IN MANHATTAN

Nocturnal walk: Central Park, West 100th Street and Central Park West; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org; 5 to 6:30 pm; Free.

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Calendar

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Rangers lead intrepid youth on a walk on the wild night side and discover the animals that inhabit the park after dark. Recommended for teens.

LONG-RUNNING

IN MANHATTAN

Accessible Arts Initiative: 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.; Free.

The museum is beginning a pilot year of the program, which will enable any child with a disability and his caregiver, parent, therapist, or teacher, admission to programs during general public hours in exchange for feedback to help strengthen museum wide programs. The initiative is aimed at making the museum more accessible for all special-needs children. Registration is required. Families will receive a Welcome Kit upon entering the museum that includes the tools that will make the visit enjoyable and successful.

"If You Lived Here You'd be Home": Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; Mondays, Noon to 5 pm, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, closed, Thursdays and Fridays, Noon to 6 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm, Now - Sun, Jan. 17, 2016; \$12 (Free for members and children under 1).

This exhibition takes cartography and mapping as its starting point and includes contemporary artists whose work references maps and mapping.

Superheroes in Gotham: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Tuesdays - Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 am - 6 pm, Fridays, 10 am - 8 pm, Sundays, 11 am - 5 pm, Now - Sun, Feb. 21,

2016; Free with museum admission.

Superheroes are a part of our daily lives engaging our imaginations on the pages of comic books, television, and movie screens, as well as across the Broadway stage and the virtual world of gaming. Through comic books, original drawings, posters, video clips, costumes, early merchandise, and props, Superheroes in Gotham will tell the story of comic book superheroes in New York City. Organized by New-York Historical's Debra Schmidt Bach, Associate Curator of Decorative Arts, and Nina Nazi-onale, Director of Library Operations.

Toys and trains: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Tuesdays - Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 am - 6 pm, Fridays, 10 am - 8 pm, Sundays, 11 am - 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children will enjoy the magical wonderland with a dynamic installation from its renowned Jerni Collection of model trains, scenic elements, and toys from a bygone era. Organized by New-York Historical's Mike Thornton, Assistant Curator of Material Culture.

New York City Marathon exhibit: Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets; (212) 534-1672; www.mcn.org; Daily, 10 am to 6 pm; Included with museum admission.

This is the first exhibition to explore the history and experience of running New York's greatest race. Covering the period of 1970, when 127 participants ran laps around Central Park to the present, the New York City Marathon has developed into a spectacular five-borough event. The exhibition brings the fascinating history to life, capturing the energy, enthusiasm and spirit of community that makes New York's "Marathon Sunday" special.

Youth wheelchair basketball: Gertrude Ederle Recreation Center, 232 W. 60th St. at W. End Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; Sundays,



Photo by Heinz Klutmeier

Classics get colder

"Disney on Ice" comes to the Barclays Center on Nov. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15.

Grab your Mickey ears and get ready to celebrate 100 years of magic.

All your favorite Disney characters are live and on the ice skating to Disney's best music.

Selections include "Frozen Heart" from "Frozen," "Hakuna Matata" from "The Lion King" and "You've Got a Friend in Me"

from "Toy Story," plus many others.

"Disney On Ice" is presented by Stonyfield YoKids Organic Yogurt.

"Disney on Ice," Nov. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. Shows are 11 am, 1 pm, 3 pm, 5 pm, and 7 pm. Tickets start at \$21.

Barclays Center [620 Atlantic Ave. at Pacific Street in Prospect Heights, (917) 618-6100; www.barclayscenter.com]

Noon-2 pm; Free for children under 18 (\$25 annually for young adults between 18 and 24).

The New York Rolling Fury is hosting this sporting event for tweens, teens, and young adults with physical disabilities to learn how to play the game.

Block party: Battery Park City, 6 River Terrace; (212) 417-2000; www.batteryparkcity.org; Mondays, 10 am to 11 am, Now - Mon, Nov. 23; \$210 (10 sessions).

Young children develop and refine motor skills and lay the foundation of math, spatial relations and sequencing with building toys. For children ages 3 years to 4 years old.

Preschool play: Rockefeller Park, Warren St. and River Terrace; (212) 267-9700; www.bpcparks.org; Mondays - Wednesdays, 10 am to noon, Now - Mon, Nov. 23; Free.

Join other toddlers, parents and caregivers on a grassy lawn. Toys, books, water table, and play equipment provided.

Basketball: Rockefeller Park, River Terrace and Warren Street; (212) 267-9700; www.batteryparkcity.org; Mondays, 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm, Now - Mon, Nov. 23; Free.

Children learn the game with drills and pointers. Adjustable height



Nano demos at Sony

It is hands-on on nanoscience at the Sony Wonder Lab on Nov. 27.

Just HOW small is small? Join us to uncover the fascinating world of nanoscience and nanotechnology and participate in hands-on activities that explore the properties, structures, materials, and scale of this exciting field of science.

No reservation required. Best suited for ages 6 and up.

Hands-on Nano, Nov. 27, from 2 to 4 pm; free with general admission

SONY Wonder Technology Lab (550 Madison Ave. between E. 55th and E. 56th streets on the Upper East Side, www.sonywondertechlab.com).

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

hoops makes it suitable for children 7 years and older. Closed-toed shoes required.

Stories and Songs: Battery Park City, 6 River Terrace; (212) 417-2000; www.batteryparkcity.org; Tuesdays, 9:40 am to 10:20 am, Now – Tues, Dec. 15; \$360 (15 sessions).

Interactive performances for caregivers and little ones 6 months to 3 and half years.

Stories and Songs: Battery Park City, 6 River Terrace; (212) 417-2000; www.batteryparkcity.org; Tuesdays, 10:30 am to 11:10 am, Now – Tues, Dec. 15; \$360 (15 sessions).

Interactive performances for caregivers and little ones 13 months to 3.5 years.

Stories and Songs: Battery Park City, 6 River Terrace; (212) 417-2000; www.batteryparkcity.org; Tuesdays, 11:20 am to noon, Now – Tues, Dec. 15; \$360 (15 sessions).

Interactive performances for caregivers and little ones 13 months to 3 and half years.

Pre-school soccer: Rockefeller Park, Warren St. and River Terrace; (212) 267-9700; <http://www.bpc-parks.org>; Tuesdays, 2:30 pm to 3:15 pm, Now – Thurs, Nov. 19; Free.

Have fun kicking, running, and learning the soccer basics. For children ages 3-4. Closed-toed shoes required.

Young sprouts gardening: Rockefeller Park, Warren St. and River Terrace; (212) 267-9700; www.bpc-parks.org; Tuesdays, 3:15 pm to 3:45 pm, Now – Thurs, Nov. 19; Free.

An introduction to organic gardening for children 3-5 years old with accompanying adults. Space is limited.

Chess: Battery Park City, 6 River Terrace; (212) 417-2000; www.batteryparkcity.org; Tuesdays, 3:30 pm to 4:15 pm, Now – Tues, Dec. 15; \$300 (15 sessions).

An experienced tutor instructs the ins and outs of the game. For children 5 to 7 years old. Pre-registration required. Beginners.

Soccer: Rockefeller Park, River Terrace and Warren Street; (212) 267-9700; www.batteryparkcity.org; Tuesdays, 3:30 pm to 4:15 pm, Now – Tues, Nov. 24; Free.

Learn to pass, shoot, and improve skills through fun drills. For children 5 to 7 years old. Closed toed shoes required.

Chess: Battery Park City, 6 River Terrace; (212) 417-2000; www.batteryparkcity.org; Tuesdays, 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm, Now – Tues, Dec. 15; \$330 (15 sessions).

An experienced tutor instructs the ins and outs of the game. For chil-



Eyes on the ball!

Come and help Jasper get his ball back in “The Great Red Ball Rescue” at Symphony Space on Nov. 7.

Families enjoy this original puppet musical, developed with the support of the Jim Henson Foundation, and created by the award-winning master puppeteer Faye Dupras.

The show tells the tale of a family taking a trip to the beach and having it all go topsy-turvy

when Jasper, the timid kid with a big imagination, has his favorite red ball whisked away by the tides. Will he be brave enough to try and get it back? Come and find out.

“The Great Red Ball Rescue” Nov. 7 two shows at 11 am and 2 pm; tickets are \$15 for all seats.

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

dren 7 to 10 years old. Pre-registration required. Intermediate.

Soccer: Rockefeller Park, River Terrace and Warren Street; (212) 267-9700; www.batteryparkcity.org; Tuesdays, 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm, Now – Tues, Nov. 24; Free.

Learn to pass, shoot, and improve skills through fun drills. For children 8 to 11 years old. Closed toed shoes required.

Preschool art: Rockefeller Park, Warren St. and River Terrace; (212) 267-9700; www.bpcparks.org; Thursdays, 10 am to noon, Now – Thurs, Nov. 19; Free.

Very young artists are introduced to paper, clay, wood, and paint with projects planned by an art educator/artist. Dress for a mess!

College Prep courses: Highbridge Recreation Center, 2301 Amsterdam Ave. at W. 174th Street; (212) 927-2012; Erica.serrano@parks.nyc.gov; www.nycgovparks.org; Thursdays,

6 pm to 8 pm, Now – Thurs, Dec. 3; Free with membership requirement.

High schoolers interested in attending college receive course mentors to guide them through the college admissions process, including help in essays, scheduling college tours, and financial aid. Pre-registration and pre-acceptance interviews required.

Toddler time: Highbridge Recreation Center, 2301 Amsterdam Ave. at W. 174th Street; (212) 927-2012; www.nycgovparks.org; Mondays, 10 am to 11 am, Mon, Nov. 9 – Mon, Dec. 21; Free (with membership).

Children ages 1 to 5 do a fun activity to keep moving and interested with activities like bowling, mini-hoops, building blocks, soccer, and more. The kids stay involved with a new activity each day. Free children memberships is required.

Silicon City- Computer History Made in New York: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park

West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Tuesdays – Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 am – 6 pm, Fridays, 10 am – 8 pm, Sundays, 11 am – 5 pm, beginning Fri, Nov. 13; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate New York’s central role in the digital revolution, highlighting the pioneering work and technological innovations that have transformed daily life. The exhibit examines New York as a technological hub where the intersection of commerce and innovation gave birth to the first computers and tech companies.

“Fancy Nancy Splendiferous Christmas”: The Theater at St.

Jean, 184 E. 76th St. at Lexington Avenue; (212) 579-0528; <https://iseats.net/reserve/vtselectproduction.php?u=8680488adf31f8eefba3100b1d1f6f9b>; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, Sat, Nov. 28 – Sun, Dec. 27; \$49.50 to \$59.50.

What could be fancier than Christmas? Presents with elegant wrapping paper, festive decorations, Christmas cookies with sprinkles — and who could forget the tree? Nancy is especially excited. After selling some of her old gowns and accessories, Nancy has enough money to buy a brand-new sparkly tree topper. She can’t wait to decorate the Christmas tree. But when things don’t turn out the way Nancy planned, will Christmas still be splendiferous? For children ages 2 to 7 years old. Presented by Vital Theatre.

FURTHER AFIELD

Heart and Seoul: Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm, Now – Sun, Jan. 3, 2016; Free with museum admission.

The Brooklyn Children’s Museum will ride Hallyu (the Korean Wave) with a new exhibit that brings modern-day South Korea to New York City.

Holiday Train Show: New York Botanical Garden, 200th St. and Kazimiroff Blvd., The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Daily, 11 am – 5 pm, Sat, Nov. 21 – Mon, Jan. 18, 2016; Included with an All Garden Pass.

The annual event returns with more trains and more tracks with an additional 3,000 square feet of exhibition space. Displays include: Grand Central Terminal, Radio City Music Hall, the historic Hudson River Valley houses, Brooklyn Bridge, and Rockefeller Center.



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Keep it or toss it?

My friend, Gail, called me with a question: “I have a container of eggs in my refrigerator with a sell-by date of two weeks ago. Are they safe to eat?”

I get a lot of food and nutrition questions from friends and family. But how long food can be kept is the top query. Cooks want to stay safe, yet, they don’t want to throw away perfectly good food.

Surprisingly, food scientists agree that many foods, if stored properly, can be consumed for days or even weeks past the package date.

A 2013 study out of Harvard Law School and the Natural Resources Defense Fund found consumers falsely believe sell-by and best-by dates indicate food safety.

Fact: It’s the manufacturers that often decide on their own how to calculate shelf life — and they’re basically a guess. These dates confuse consumers, leading many to throw out food before it actually goes bad.

What the terms mean:

Sell-by. These are used to tell retailers how long to display a food. You should purchase it before this date, but the food can still be eaten after it. For example, milk has no off-flavor up to five days after its sell-by date and can be consumed until then.

Best-by. These are based on sensory evaluations by product developers and do not reflect food



safety.

Use-by. These dates indicate the last day of peak food quality. Food stored properly is not necessarily unsafe to eat after this date according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

How long is it good?

Lunch meat. Three days for fresh-sliced meats. Ditto for prepackaged deli meats once you open them.

Ground meat. Cook within one to two days of purchase. After cooking, three to four days.

Leftovers or prepared foods. Four days in the fridge. *Listeria monocytogenes*, a bacteria linked

to food-borne illness, can grow at refrigerator temperatures as low as 40 degrees.

Packaged cookies and crackers. If they have a paint-like smell or taste, their oils have turned rancid and should be tossed.

It’s important to note foodborne illness (a.k.a. food poisoning) comes from bacterial contamination and not spoilage. Eyeballing and sniffing just detects the presence of spoilage microorganisms, not necessarily food pathogens. Most of the organisms in food that can make you sick do not create slime, stink, and smell.

Common sense dictates if a food looks moldy or smells awful, it’s time to toss.

Gail was relieved when I reassured her that eggs, if kept refrigerated, should last at least three to five weeks after the sell-by date stamped on the carton.

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

Spinach wild rice salad

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pouch Uncle Ben’s Ready Rice Jasmine Rice
- 1 pouch Uncle Ben’s Ready Rice Brown, Red, Black Rice
- 1 pouch Uncle Ben’s Ready Whole Grain Medley Brown & Wild

- 4 cups baby spinach
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 cup crumbled goat cheese
- 6 Tbsp balsamic vinaigrette

DIRECTIONS: Prepare rice according to package directions. Refrigerate and cool until just before serving.

For each serving of salad, toss 1/2 cup cooled rice with 1 cup baby spin-

ach, 1/2 cup cherry tomato halves, 2 ounces crumbled goat cheese, and 1 tablespoon balsamic vinaigrette.

NUTRITION FACTS: 310 calories, 43 g carbohydrate (2 g sugar), 9 g protein, 12 g fat (3.5 sat), 4 g fiber, 670 mg sodium, 60 percent DV vitamin A, 30 percent DV vitamin C, 10 percent DV iron and eight percent DV calcium.

Adapted from UncleBens.com

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Play ball

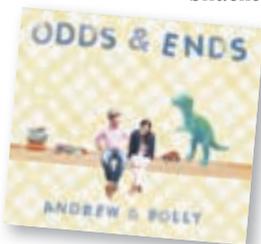
The new Noisy Ball from Eeboo is more than just a ball — which already makes children happy and gets them moving. This “traditional folk form” is improved on with built-in gaps that are perfect for little fingers searching for a good grip. The Noisy Ball lives up to its name by making satisfying sounds.

It crinkles and squeaks when squeezed, and gently jingles when shaken or rolled across the floor. The soft, velour ball — covered in rich, stimulating colors (such as royal blue, spring green, and bright red) — is even machine washable. Recommended for babies and toddlers, this 5-inch-wide toy will be an instant favorite.

Noisy Ball toy by Eeboo, \$24.99, www.eeboo.com.

These ‘Ends’ are up

“Odds & Ends,” the latest from Andrew & Polly (aka Andrew Barkan and Polly Hall), is enjoyable for ears of all ages. The album includes delightful original songs such as “Little Bitta You” and “Please Be Mine” (“I love you...like a nice warm sweater and a piece of cheddar!”) as well as covers of classics such as Bob Dylan’s “Forever Young” (made new with a four-part harmony and electronic percussion) and Ray Parker Jr.’s “Ghostbusters” (contemporized



with the suggestion the listener text the phantom nabbers).

Hosts of the podcast “Ear Snacks”, Andrew and Polly’s songs are also featured on Nickelodeon’s television show “Wallykazam!,” so the duo are adept at teasing giggles out of kids.

With liberal doses of silliness, delicious word play, and countless — deftly played! — instruments, “Odds & Ends” is a must!

Odds & Ends CD by Andrew & Polly, \$9.99, www.cdbaby.com.

Beam me up, Smartie

Laser Maze Jr. is a single player logic game for kids 6 and older that makes a traditional board game seem like a snooze-fest.

The object of Think Fun’s version is to bend the beam of a real laser (that is anchored to the game tray), so it can make contact with and “ignite” the rocket.

Laser Maze Jr. includes the kid-friendly laser, 11 game tokens (such as satellite mirrors to deflect light, space-rock blockers to absorb light, rocket targets, and a beam splitter), and 40 challenge cards ranging in difficulty from beginner to expert. (The

game does require two triple-A batteries, which are not included.)

If the answer to one of Wei-Hwa Huang’s puzzles is evading your little rocket scientist, the game also includes an instruction booklet with the challenges’ solutions.

But it will be much more fun if your child tries to trial-and-error it out himself, because this space-themed game is truly out of this world.

Laser Maze Jr. by Think Fun, \$30, www.amazon.com.



Spoiler alert!

Every family that is visited by the Easter Bunny or Santa Claus needs to have a copy of Emily J. Parnell’s “Society of Seasonal Secretkeepers Field Guide” on hand for the day when “the mysterious, maybe awful truth” is revealed. This wonderfully designed, softcover book is a labor of love by a mother-author who has penned an empowering, encouraging, nurturing way to keep the magic in the holidays for parents and children alike.

Her Seasonal Secretkeepers gift set includes a black briefcase-esque zippered bag that holds the secret agent field guide and a keepsake token to bestow upon the child who will now be entrusted with this classified knowledge. Instead of grieving the loss of magical beings, the child comes to understand that they now have important knowledge, and they can earn the status of secret agent by swearing an oath of secrecy. Thus, the child is inducted into a society of Seasonal Secretkeepers, people “in the know,” who are trusted to guard the truth for younger children.

And Parnell takes it a step further with mission ideas which encourage children to think of ways they can bring the magic of kindness and thoughtfulness into the world.



A pinky swear bonds the child with a trusted adviser who will assist with his agent training. (The adviser is an important resource for those times the child has questions about his family’s traditions and beliefs.)

Recommended for children ages 5–13 who have learned the true nature of magical beings, the guide is also a workbook with pages where the child can record their family’s traditions and brainstorm ways to keep the magic alive in their own hearts — and in the hearts of the people they care about.

The companion website, www.s3hq.com and Facebook page have more tips and support for parents. Parnell’s gift set is sure to become as much a part of the holidays as Dr. Seuss’s “How the Grinch Stole Christmas.”

Society of Seasonal Secretkeepers Field Guide and Secret Agent Kit gift set, \$27.99, www.s3hq.com.



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