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The end of another year approaches

Thanksgiving is over and so is the first of the big fabulous holiday meals. Now we have the December festivities and a month long of more festive eating to look forward to. We're very big on food at New York Parenting and in fact earlier in November sent out an e-blast to our subscribers with our staff member's memories of their favorite part of the Thanksgiving meal. It was so interesting to reminisce and to share family holidays of long ago.

We would welcome any of your family eating stories by the way, and any recipes you might want to share with our readers. Enough said about food, at least for now.



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We also have a number of articles and columns in this issue that address the pressures and realities of the December holidays from a parent point of view. But it's not strictly light weight. We like to approach all angles regarding the parenting experience in a big city like NYC and there are some serious articles as well that may be risk taking and provocative. Time will tell.

In addition, our calendar reflects the great events that are going on around town and without a doubt there are many of them. Of course!

This is New York! Every borough has great celebrations taking place throughout December. If you want to get the full picture, again, go to our website and see what's going on around the whole city.

A personal recommendation, if you've never been there before, and don't mind fighting the crowds, there are the amazingly decorated houses of Dyker Heights, Brooklyn. Every year they go all out to create a magical world in their community and truthfully one has to wonder how, between the lights, the crowds, and the noises of the displays themselves, they get any sleep in these weeks before the new year.

The end of the year is a great time to give thanks and I certainly do. Most of all I'm thankful for my family, great friends, and for good

health. I'm also grateful to have a job I enjoy and a staff of people to do it with who are all not only talented, but funny and entertaining. Thanks to our editorial staff, our art department, our distributors, and to our contributing writers. We are blessed to be able to do a job we can feel proud of at the end of the day. It is an honorable thing to be a parent and honorable for us too.

Happy holidays to all and thanks so much for reading.

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Delicious ideas

The perfect homemade gifts — for everyone on your list

BY MALIA JACOBSON

Making a homemade holiday gift is a fun way to get kids involved in gift-giving — but finding the perfect handmade present can be tougher than last year's fruitcake. If your list includes some hard-to-please folks, and you're running low on time and creativity, don't throw in the towel. Instead, choose from this collection of culinary gifts for everyone on your list. These tasty treats are thoughtful, easy on the wallet, and usually come together in less time than it takes to go the mall. Give them a try, and you'll be rewarded with heartfelt thanks and cherished family memories.

The foodie: Herbed salts

Give the gourmet in your life the gift of perfectly seasoned meals. Make an herb salt blend by mixing one part crushed or ground herbs and five parts salt. For cumin, marjoram, or thyme salts, use ground herbs; for others, such as basil or rosemary, let kids help crush the herbs with a mortar and pestle or a rolling pin. Use single herbs, or experiment with different combinations.

Pour the finished mixture into a salt-shaker, and be sure to label your custom blend.

The snow bunny: Hot cocoa mix with marshmallows

Send warm wishes to friends and family in cold climates with this charming chocolaty twosome. Whip up a dry hot cocoa mix and combine it with powdery, fluffy homemade marshmallows (locate recipes online).

Package the cocoa in a small tin, and seal the marshmallows in a plastic bag if they'll be shipped. Add a large cocoa mug for an extra-thoughtful touch. Kids will love making and tasting this sweet pair of treats, but be warned: once they taste hot cocoa perfection, they may not go back to the store-bought stuff.

The film buff: Popcorn and homemade seasoning mix

Cold weather calls for cozy movie



nights at home, so give your favorite film fanatic a couch-worthy snack. Begin by filling a large mason jar to the top with bulk popcorn kernels and fastening the lid. Next, have kids help prepare the seasoning mix and scoop it into small mason jars.

To finish, tie the pair of jars off with twine or ribbon, and present with a new DVD or a popcorn bowl. Try this sweet-and-salty combo: mix a quarter cup sugar with one teaspoon each of ground cinnamon and ground salt.

The coffee connoisseur: Vanilla bean syrup

Treat a coffee-lover to homemade vanilla syrup that will add layers of flavor to her morning java. This project is best for older kids, who will be fascinated by the funny-looking vanilla bean and the aromatic flecks inside.

First, bring one cup water to a boil. Once the water is boiling, add one to two cups of sugar (more sugar will yield a thicker syrup) along with the vanilla bean and stir constantly until

the sugar dissolves. Remove the pan from the heat and allow the syrup to cool. Take out the vanilla bean, and pour the syrup into a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. In addition to flavoring coffee, this sweet concoction can be added to sparkling water, lemonade, cocktails, or poured over ice cream or yogurt.

The calorie-counter: Infused vinegars

With sugary treats as far as the eye can see, the holiday season can be trying for those on restricted diets. Herb-infused vinegars make an attractive gift that fits anyone's diet plan. To start, scout discount stores and craft stores for pretty glass bottles. Remove the bottles' lids and insert herbs from your garden or the grocery store.

Using a small funnel, pour in warmed (not hot) distilled white vinegar and seal the lid with hot wax. Some combinations to try: oregano, thyme, and basil; lemon balm, nasturtium, and dill; and sage, thyme, basil, and rosemary.

Malia Jacobson is an award-winning health and parenting journalist and mom of three. Her latest book is "Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades."

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Protecting your child against HPV

The vaccine can make a huge difference

BY ALEXA BIGWARFE

The human papilloma virus is a sexually transmitted infection that is so common, nearly every sexually active person will eventually contract one of the 40 types at some point in their lifetime. Yet, the vaccine is not always being enthusiastically recommended by doctors, despite the proven safety of the vaccine. Less than 42 percent of those eligible to receive the vaccine got it last year, and of those girls that received the first vaccination, less than a third of them received all three.

But here's the scary truth: the Center for Disease Control estimates that more than 80 million people in the United States have the virus, and another 14 million people will contract it in the next year. Even worse, more than 17,000 women and 9,000

men will develop cancers caused by it in a given year.

Why should you talk to your doctor about human papilloma virus vaccinations for your teen or tween?

It's so common: This virus is incredibly prevalent, with more than 40 strains that cause a variety of issues, from genital warts to cervical, anal, penile, and oral cancers. In some cases, it will go away on its own. However, not generally so in the strains that cause cancer.

It's safe: The vaccine has been tested and proven to be safe. More importantly, immunization can significantly reduce rates of human papilloma virus-related cancers later in life for women and men. The Center for Disease Control estimates the US could reduce 50,000 cases of cervical cancer if the vaccination rate of girls rose to 80 percent. As with all vaccines, some people should

not get the vaccine. Be sure to read the vaccine information sheet for more information. (www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/hpv-gardasil.pdf)

Boys benefit, too: Recent studies show men benefit indirectly when girls are immunized. Boys still need the immunization to prevent them from developing related cancers, but an increase in girls vaccinated would actually help in the reduction of related cancers. A study by the Dutch in May 2015 provided statistical data predicting how cancer levels would change if more girls and boys are vaccinated. An increase in the vaccination of girls (at a rate of 90 percent vaccinated girls) would reduce the number of related cancers in men by about 37 percent. The numbers would drop even more drastically if more boys receive the vaccination.

The risk of cervical cancer: The overwhelming amount of related cancers in adults is cervical cancer. The Center for Disease Control recommends girls ages 11 to 12 get the vaccine to help prevent cervical cancer.

So many human papilloma virus-related issues can be prevented if parents and doctors are talking about the vaccination and starting the vaccination program when their children are 11 or 12 years old. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the goal of the vaccine program is to prevent infection of the cancer causing strains of human papilloma virus. To do this, it's necessary to immunize teens and tweens before they become sexually active.

The United States has three vaccines available: Cervarix, Gardasil, and Gardasil 9. The vaccine program includes a series of three shots over six months. Data from research shows that Gardasil and Gardasil 9 have been shown to protect against genital warts and anal cancer in both men and women.

More information for you and your tween/teen on the HPV vaccine:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/hpv/>
- <http://www.gardasil.com/hpv-and-your-child/what-is-hpv/>
- <http://www.cancercenter.com/cervical-cancer/cervical-cancer-vaccine/>

Alexa Bigwarfe is a freelance writer and mother of three children. Her area of expertise is infant and children's health topics.

SOURCES: Karen Canfell, D.Phil., director, cancer research division, Cancer Council NSW, Sydney, Australia; Dr. Hans Bogaards, research scientist, National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, Bilthoven, the Netherlands; May 12, 2015, BMJ, online.

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Photo by Rosalie O'Connor

Rosie's Theater Kids co-founders Rosie O'Donnell and Lori Klinger with students from the program and gala honoree Kristin Chenoweth on the red carpet.

On with the show!

How Rosie's Theater Kids gives children a moment in the spotlight

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

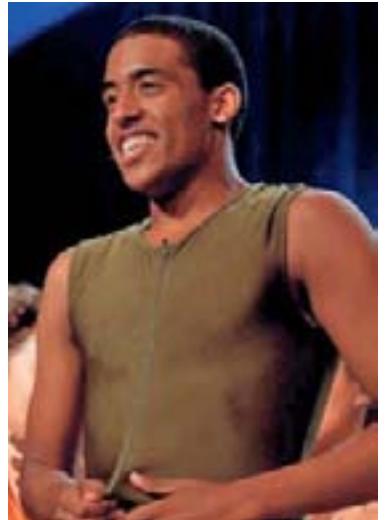
Rosie O'Donnell may not like Donald Trump, but she loves kids and can't do enough for them. The wisecracking, outspoken actress and comedian is co-parenting five children and has her hands full, but she has always made time for her other kids — the students in her Rosie's Theater Kids arts organization, many of whom happen to live in underserved communities here.

Back in early November, O'Donnell hosted a star-studded gala event at the Marriott Marquis on Broadway, which featured a special performance by her super-talented Rosie's Theater Kids students. Thanks to the arts organization she co-founded in 2003, the lives of more than 50,000 city students' lives have changed for the better.

Honoring Emmy and Tony Award-winning actress Kristin Chenoweth, and raising more than \$800,000 to benefit the city's public school students, Rosie's Theater Kids' 12th annual Gala recognized Chenoweth for her ongoing dedication and focus on arts education. One hundred percent of the proceeds from the benefit will be used to support the organization's academic and artistic programs, which more than 2,000 local



Zi-Ying Cao, 17, performed at a recent gala event honoring Kristen Chenoweth. She is a senior at Stuyvesant High School and lives in Chinatown, Manhattan. She won a scholarship at Rosie's Theater Kids and is now a Scholastic and Artistic Merit Scholar.



Rosie's Theater Kids graduate Daniel Estrella, now 22, first joined the program in the fifth grade. He's currently a student at the University of Michigan, received a scholarship from the university and is expected to receive a degree in musical theater in the summer of 2016.

students utilize annually.

Chenoweth spoke to the importance of the organization, and how O'Donnell has inspired her.

"My love for kids who love the arts is never ending! I am simply

here to help inspire them to follow their dreams, whatever they may be. When a child finds their purpose, they have no bounds. That combined with self-esteem, of course," said Chenoweth. "My job and Rosie's

job is to keep them on their path. She has inspired me to start my own theater arts camp in the summer in my home state of Oklahoma. Giving back really inspires the one doing the GIVING. We are proving [that] the arts in schools and summer camps can change lives."

It was an evening to remember. Many Broadway celebs were there to celebrate Rosie's Theater Kids, among them actor BD Wong, comedian Fran Drescher, singer Orfeh, and actresses Jessie Mueller and Tatum O'Neal. But the real stars were the kids themselves. After welcome remarks by O'Donnell, the kids performed "RISE" (with music and lyrics by Stevie Wonder and Sara Bareilles), "A Little Medley," and "Me, You, We," inspired by the book, "I Am Malala," by Malala Yousafzai, the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate.

"We are grateful to all of those who were able to join us at the gala," said Rosie's Theater Kids Co-Founder Lori Klinger. "It is through everyone's continued support that Rosie's Theater Kids has been able to provide such meaningful experiences and ultimately enriching the lives of students through the arts. For many of our students, Rosie's Theater Kids is so much more than an afterschool program — it is a family, a second home. The lessons they learn during their time with us are not just preparing them for the stage, they are preparing them for life."

Rosie's Theater Kids has teamed up with expert staff and guest Broadway professionals, so students can benefit from classes in music, dance, and drama, life skills development, academic guidance, and if needed, additional funding for higher education.

As one of the largest arts-in-education programs serving grades pre-K through 12, it is one of the only organizations that provide all of its core services free of charge to students and schools.

Thanks to O'Donnell's vision, the organization helped creative students like Stuyvesant High School senior Zi-Ying Cao from Chinatown get a jumpstart in life. The rest was up to her.

Zi-Ying, now 17, is currently with the program. (She was one of the gala performers who sang "Me, You, We.")

After winning a scholarship at Rosie's Theater Kids, she became a Scholastic and Artistic Merit Scholar and is now applying to Ivy

League schools. The scholarship assists students in need of "gap funding," which is the remaining balance of funds needed to fill the gap between a student's financial aid reward and the cost of tuition. The funds will be used to cover tuition, room and board, books, and other necessary items that come with the cost of higher education.

Zi-Ying's parents were born and raised in small villages in China. She moved with her family to the US when she was 2. Because her parents knew very little English upon arrival, they were forced to work low-paying, laborious jobs.

Despite her modest upbringing, Zi Ying's family always placed an emphasis on the importance of education. Her mother valued education so much that she made sacrifices in order to pay for tutoring for Zi Ying and her younger sister.

In addition to her many academic achievements, she is also an incredibly talented performer, having channeled her inner artist during her time at Rosie's Theater Kids.

Daniel Estrella, now 22, is a scholarship student studying at the University of Michigan, as a member of its prestigious Musical Theatre program. He's a Rosie's Theater Kids graduate. He explains his involvement in the program:

"It was more than 10 years ago that I was introduced to RTKids' PS Broadway program, which provided me, an overjoyed fifth grade student from the Bronx, who loved Motown, with an outlet to perform. My weekly RTkids classes at PS 153 introduced me to Broadway — a place accessible by way of a handful of subway stops, yet seemingly worlds away. This introduction to musical theater ended up truly changing my life."

"In addition to a multitude of unforgettable and professional experiences, Rosie's Theater Kids helped me get into one of the top performing arts high schools in New York, provided me with SAT classes and tutoring, and offered intense, personalized assistance as I applied to colleges," said Estrella. "I would not have had access to these resources otherwise."

For more about Rosie's Theater Kids [445 West 45th St., Manhattan], visit www.rosiestheaterkids.org.

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer and parent. Interviewing hundreds of New York City's movers and shakers has been an amazing adventure for her. Scileppi's work has appeared in a variety of media outlets.



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Make your holiday season FabuLyss

It's the most FabuLyss, wonderful time of the year in New York — our magical wonderland filled with the best of the best! Hopefully we will get some snow in Central Park this month and the kids can go out and sled, make snow angels, and, of course, build a snowman or two. There are many wonderful family events and happenings to explore this month all around the city.

Did you purchase your tickets yet to see the "Radio City Christmas Spectacular"? This is always a family favorite of ours.

My boys are already asking when they can go ice skating and have DeLysscious hot chocolate. We love ice-skating at the Bryant Park Winter Village Rink and the Standard Hotel rink in the Meatpacking district.

I will be taking my boys to see "School Of Rock" musical at the Winter Garden Theatre over the break. "Elf" will be at Madison Square Garden throughout the month of December.

Did you know that you can have tea with Santa? The Plaza Hotel has a yummy tea at the Eloise at the Plaza shop. You can have tea sandwiches, desserts, story time, and, of course, photos with Santa.

We love the magical holiday windows at all of the big department stores. I cannot wait to see the beautiful Bergdorf Goodman windows, and I know my boys just love the holiday windows at Bloomingdales.

If you and your husband are looking for a night out during the holidays, so you can see a show, take a

selfie in front of the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center, or have a wonderful meal, make sure to check out Sitterycity's new app Hello Chime (www.hellochime.com). Babysitters on demand will engage and play with your children.

Visit the FabuLyss Chord Club with the kids over winter break. They can take a DJ class, a music lesson, or record a song. Your kids will never want to leave this beautiful, new, state-of-the-art recording studio. Parents can also enjoy this facility (www.thechordclub.com).

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy new year! Hug your loved ones closely and enjoy the beautiful holiday season!

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

DeLysscious Gingerbread Recipe

via Food Network.com

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/gingerbread-house-recipe.html>

INGREDIENTS:

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, at room temperature

1/2 cup dark brown sugar

1/4 cup light molasses or dark corn syrup

1 tablespoon cinnamon

1 tablespoon ground ginger

1 1/2 teaspoons ground cloves

1 teaspoon baking soda

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 tablespoons water

For assemblage and decoration:

Melted white chocolate or Royal Icing (recipe follows)

Gumdrops, licorice, and peppermints, as desired

ROYAL ICING:

1 pound (3-3/4 cups) powdered sugar, sifted if lumpy

1 to 2 large egg whites, or substitute 4 teaspoons packaged egg whites and 1/4 cup water

1 teaspoon almond extract, vanilla or lemon juice

DIRECTIONS:

Gingerbread House:

In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter, brown sugar, molasses, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and baking soda together until the mixture is smooth. Blend in the flour and water to make a stiff dough. Chill at least 30 minutes or until firm.

Preheat oven to 375-degrees Fahrenheit.

Cut out the following paper patterns for the gingerbread house template: two rectangles, 3-by-5 inches, to make the front and back of the house; two rectangles, 3-by-5 1/2 inches for the roof; two pieces for the ends of the house, 3 inches wide at the base, 3 inches to the roof line, and slanted to a peak 5 1/2 inches from the bottom; four smaller rectangles, 1 1/2-by-1 inch for the roof and sides of the entryway; and one piece,

2 inches wide at the base, 1 1/2 inches to the roof line, and slanted to a peak 2 1/2 inches from the bottom for the front of the entryway.



Roll gingerbread dough out to edges on a large, rimless cookie sheet. Place paper patterns onto the rolled out dough. With a sharp, straight-edged knife, cut around each of the pieces, but leave pieces in place.

Bake at 375-degrees Fahrenheit for about 15 minutes until dough feels firm.

Place patterns on top of the gingerbread again and trim shapes, cutting edges with a straight-edged sharp knife. Leave to cool on baking sheet.

Place royal icing into pastry bag with a writing tip and press out to decorate individual parts of house, piping on decorations, windows, door, etc., as desired. Let dry until hardened.

Glue sides, front and back of house together at corners using royal icing. Place an object against the pieces to prop up until icing is dry. (It only takes a few minutes.)

Glue the two roof pieces to the pitched roofline of the house. Then, similarly, glue the sides and roof of the entryway together with icing. Attach the entryway to the front of the house.

Continue decorating the house, gluing on gumdrops, licorice, and peppermints, as desired.

Royal Icing:

Mix all of the ingredients together using an electric hand mixer, until the icing is smooth and thin enough to be pressed through a pastry bag with a writing tip. Add more lemon juice, if necessary.



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Silent nights

Helping kids sleep well during the holidays

BY MALIA JACOBSON

Parents' holiday wishes are simple: children tucked snug in bed, dreaming of sugar plums. But for families with small children, the winter holidays aren't always sleep-friendly. From late-night parties and holiday travel to school performances and visiting relatives, the holiday season is packed with sleep disruptions. Unfortunately, this can leave children tired and cranky during holiday celebrations — just when parents are looking forward to relaxed family time.

Happily, parents can support sounder sleep during this hectic time of year, and doing so can make the holidays more enjoyable for all family members, says Dr. Charles Shubin, pediatrician with the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore. Read on for age-appropriate tips to keep holiday nights silent and restful, so kids can enjoy a merry season:

Tuckered-out traveler

When holiday travel spans the nighttime hours, plan ahead for a smooth bedtime on the airplane or in the car. An on-the-go bedtime routine should mimic your child's at-home bedtime routine, Dr. Michael Hobaugh, president of



the medical staff at La Rabida Children's Hospital in Chicago, says. Familiar bedtime rituals serve as cues for sleep, easing a child into peaceful slumber.

"Bring a child's regular pajamas, toothbrush, storybooks, and anything else used in the bedtime routine at home," Hobaugh says. "On an airplane, go to the bathroom and brush teeth and wash up, and read bedtime stories as usual. This

serves as a transition to bedtime and helps children understand that it's time to sleep."

Sleepy scene

Similarly, if a holiday trip has your family sleeping at a hotel or relative's home, create a familiar sleep scene for your child by bringing a few bedroom elements from home, like a special blanket, pillow, nightlight, even a special framed

Travel means new faces and new places, which can equal stress and poor sleep for little ones; surrounding a child with familiar comforts at bedtime reduces the stress of travel and helps children fall asleep more quickly — and wake less often.

photo for the nightstand. Children crave routine and familiarity, says Shubin.

Travel means new faces and new places, which can equal stress and poor sleep for little ones; surrounding a child with familiar comforts at bedtime reduces the stress of travel and helps children fall asleep more quickly and wake less often.

Cabin fever

Don't expect children to bed down easily at night when they've spent the day cooped up in a vehicle or airplane, particularly if they've been napping during the trip, says Hobaugh. Kids need around 60 minutes of physical activity per day to help prepare for restful sleep at night.

Take every opportunity to let kids burn off energy en-route: walk up and down airplane aisles, do a loop around the airport terminal when switching planes, and on car trips, stop at a rest stop and allow kids a 15-minute play break every 90 minutes.

Comfort cues

When kids sleep fitfully in the winter, check the temperature. During the winter, bedrooms are flooded with stale, dry, overheated air — this is especially true in hotel rooms — and parents often dress children in footed fleece pajamas, pile on warm blankets, and dial up the heater in an attempt to keep kids cozy at night. This can backfire, because sleeping in a room that's too hot can result in poor-quality sleep and nightmares; per the National Sleep Foundation, sleeping in an overheated bedroom is a contributing factor in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

The ideal temperature for sleep is on the cooler side: around 20-degrees Celsius or 68-degrees Fahrenheit. Dry, heated air can worsen coughing and snoring; some children may benefit from

a bedroom humidifier to ease nighttime breathing.

Bedtime bend

Attending a long-awaited holiday party that you don't want your child to miss? It's okay to bend bedtime rules on special occasions, says Dr. Gary Feldman, medical director of the Stramski Developmental Center at Miller Children's Hospital in Long Beach, California.

"It's not fair to ask children to miss out on the excitement of the holidays, but you don't want them to stay awake to the point of exhaustion, either," he says. Keep the party fun for all, and a child's daily routine intact, by altering a child's bedtime slightly without completely disregarding it.

For children under 10, set a "party" bedtime up to an hour later than a child's normal bedtime. Bend bedtime by two hours or more, and you may be asking for a meltdown.

Morning after

When children stay up later than normal, parents may be tempted to let them "sleep it off" the following morning, says Hobaugh. But allowing children to sleep in hours later than normal can throw off that night's bedtime, resulting in a routine that's off-kilter for days.

The morning after an exciting holiday party, let children sleep in up to 30 minutes later than normal, and accept that they'll be tired that day. Plan for an appropriately early bedtime that evening; a good night's sleep will help children bounce back from party-induced over-tiredness quickly — and help everyone enjoy all the season has to offer.

Malia Jacobson is an award-winning health and parenting journalist and mom of three. Her latest book is "Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades."



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Welcome to the neighborhood

Ten useful details for your new neighbors

BY SARA MARCHESSAULT

Once you have kids, moving can be hard. If your kids are several years old, and you've lived in the same place since they were born, you had time to find the perfect medical care, preschool, favorite parks, grocery stores, and

coffee shops that are kid friendly.

U.S. Census Bureau data shows that couples with young children are the most likely demographic to move. It makes sense. Kids and careers tend to grow alongside each other as parents work hard both in and out of the home.

The challenge is that with a move

to a new city, we might not have the luxury of exploring lots of options before making choices. Schools have to be selected. In many cases, families need childcare quickly. In all cases, families need to know a few basic things about their new city: where are the parks, grocery stores, and kid-friendly restaurants?

Newcomers can spend hours perusing the internet for resources available in their new neighborhood. After spending all of that time researching schools, doctors, and pediatricians, new parents still might not get the answers they really want. That's because the surface-level information that we can find online is a helpful place to get started, but there is nothing like talking face-to-face with people who know the community resources.

The surface-level information that we can find online is a helpful place to get started, but there is nothing like talking face-to-face with people who know the community resources.

The next time you're at the playground or a school event, and you meet a family that's new to your city, here are 10 pieces of information you can share with them that are both great conversation pieces and could be immensely helpful to them:

Pediatrician info. Not just the most popular pediatrician; the pediatrician with the shortest wait times. Or the office with a separate waiting room for sick kids.

Groceries. Some families are on the lookout for specialty products. You can help them out by letting them know where and when they can find farmers' markets or health food stores that carry specialty products and options for kids with food allergies.

Playtime. Where are the best playgrounds? What playground is next to an ice cream stand? Or a place they can grab lunch? What playground has something unexpected close by? It absolutely happens that a website might highlight a fun playground, but what it doesn't mention is that the playground is right next to a lake or beach. Parents like to know these things before they head out for playtime.

Preschool. A lot of families will want to know what the best preschools are for getting kids ready for kindergarten. What some newcomers might find valuable to know is which preschools are the ones where the kids learn through play all day long. Where are the kids making art and cooking?

Sports. Where are the places that kids are going to learn a sport with a level of intensity that prepares them for competitive sports as they grow? Alternatively, where are the organizations that are more focused on kids having fun?

Schools. It can be frustrating for

parents to arrive in a new city and have people tell them how great the schools are, but not back it up with any details. A new parent is looking for reasons to get excited about the schools and appreciates hearing specifics about why you like it.

Weather wise. If the new family has recently changed climates, like moved from a hot place to a cold place, mom and dad want to know what they need to survive. Instead of telling them to get ready for the winter, let them know what they will need to buy and when they'll need it, so that they are literally not left out in the cold.

Family-friendly places. Many parents of young children face challenges with going out to eat, shopping, or enjoying activities in public, such as movies. Your new neighbors will appreciate knowing the names of the places where kids can be kids. Is there a restaurant that has so much background noise that it doesn't matter how loud the kids are? A movie theater that runs specials for kids on certain days?

Kid-friendly coffee shops. Sometimes mom and dad just want to head out to grab a bagel and a coffee. Where can they bring the kids? What are the places that won't mind if the kids run around and which places (if any) should they save for adult-only time?

Gym or fitness center with reliable childcare. Lots of gyms offer childcare. Which one in your city staffs the childcare with employees who will play with and engage your children? Which one hires high school students that are allowed to play on their phones while they are with your kids?

When families move, what they really need is a sense of community and an opportunity to build new relationships. Mom and dad need new friends just as much as the kids do. People they can share dinner or play dates with or even just someone to meet up with for a drink. Being the person who moves is hard. Finding people in your new city who are welcoming and willing to share information and resources can make it a whole lot easier.

Sara Marchessault is a writer, life coach, and dedicated diarist. She is 110 percent dedicated to helping her clients and readers create a life full of joy. These days, journals are getting lots of details about playing with her kids and the awesome ups and downs of being a mom. Learn more about her work at saramarchessault.com.



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Talk with your kids about cyberbullying

Tackling the new frontier in cruel behavior among teens

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

The advances that have occurred over the past five years in the design and creativity of online platforms offered — whether used on a computer, tablet, or cellphone — is staggering. There are a number of benefits to social media, and it is a way of life for many teens. In fact, for the first time, there is a generation that has not experienced a world without the internet. This constant access to the internet is not only used for research and chatting with friends, it is also used for harm.

Teens now find their personal relationships and their actions being exploited online for the world to see by peers. As a result, many teens (and their parents) are left wondering how best to handle cyberbullying.

Before the internet, bullying often occurred on the playground, in the hallways, or on the school bus — all places that an adult is present and can assess a situation quite quickly with notification. Now, this same type of bullying behavior has spread to the greater public via the web, mostly on social media.

In many instances, the adults that could easily monitor face-to-face bullying or verbal teasing are not as knowledgeable of social media, and therefore, cannot successfully identify, monitor, or deter this behavior.

"According to a lot of different data, and depending on age and gender, it looks like young people are getting a mix of phone and text cyberbullying as well as on social media, and likely in tandem with these forms of communication," says Yoko Liriano, director of Citywide Teen Programs at the YMCA of Greater New York.

Like bullying, cyberbullying occurs amongst school-aged children

typically entering or in the midst of adolescence (e.g., pre-teens and teens) and involves a power imbalance between peers. Kids who are bullied are intimidated by the use of power — such as physical strength, knowledge of embarrassing information, or simple popularity. The bully uses that power imbalance over time and in different situations to control a situation or hurt the other victim's feelings, which can include a combination of in-person bullying and cyberbullying.

"Cyberbullying is a type of bullying, but it is done via social media in the form of comments and damaging pictures, texting, or using any type of communication device to perpetuate the bullying," Liriano says. "I would venture to say that the effects of cyberbullying are more lasting than most physical bullying, because anything done on the internet is on the internet forever."

This bullying behavior is repeated over time and can occur during or after school hours. Cyberbullying typically occurs among young people, but there are instances in which the person on the other side of the computer or device is an adult.

When an adult is involved, this type of conduct — which is often referred to as cyber-harassment or cyberstalking — there are potential for legal consequences. In all forms of cyberbullying, it can include harassment, threats, and embarrassment.

So how can parents protect their children? Pre-teens and teens are socializing online and using mobile devices at a greater rate than ever before, so it is hopeless to attempt banning access, especially as these tools become more integrated with typical personal and school interactions. Because cyberbullying can negatively affect a person's self-im-

age and behavior, one of the best steps to counter these consequences is to provide positive in-person interaction with adults and peers, which can reduce the negative impact of cyberbullying.

"I would say that we want our young people to feel like we trust them, because we do. Being 'Big Brother' could push teens away. Practice being on social media WITH young people — befriend them on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or whatever they are using. Ask them to help you with social media, so it feels like you are learning together. Make it a family affair!" says Liriano.

As parents, we are often protective, but early on, we must let our children take the lead.

"I am a firm believer that young people should be shown how to work out conflicts between each other first," says Liriano. "[To prevent bullying from being] pervasive in a school setting, most school administrations have strict policies against cyberbullying. Depending on the severity, the police may also be notified and brought into the situation. The more we work on building strong relationships and strengthening our communities, the less likely cyberbullying will occur. Let's start there."

If you suspect that your child is the victim of cyberbullying, the first step is to examine the many ways your child interacts with others online. Cyberbullying can be easy to spot when carried out through a text, tweet, or response to a status update on Facebook. Other, less obvious, forms of cyberbullying include antagonizing someone through fake online accounts and tagging the person on posts of embarrassing information, photos, or videos.

"Cyberbullying could happen in many forms, there have been cases



of young people (and even parents) posing as ‘love interests’ and tormenting young people to the point of suicide, college students outing their roommates for being gay (also resulting in suicide), as well as young people who share nude photos via text or online,” Ms. Liriano says. “They need to understand that ‘nudes’ are a form of child pornography, so taking a photo, sending it, or re-posting is all illegal — and very, very damaging. There have been too many cases of suicide due to cyberbullying, so it is increasingly important that we educate and advocate for our young people.”

The YMCA of Greater New York also provides great guidance for examining whether your child is the victim of cyberbullying, and some tips to help protect her from it:

Make face time with your kids —

the old-fashioned way. Spend time with your kids every day and give them your full, undivided attention. Turn off cellphones, televisions, and computers to create a conversation-friendly environment.

Learn the signs. A child who is being bullied may have a loss of appetite, may lose interest in favorite activities, and may withdraw socially and emotionally in other ways. Watch for changes in behavior and seek help if you suspect something is wrong.

Be available to talk — but don't force it. Kids may feel embarrassed, ashamed, angry, or confused about being bullied, and it may be difficult for them to talk about it with you. Give them time to open up, and let them know you are there and will be supportive if they need your help.

Let them know it's not their

fault. Never blame a child for being bullied or for not “fighting back.” It can be helpful to share one or two of your own personal stories so your kids know they’re not the only ones to experience this kind of behavior or feel the way they do.

Help find positive ways for them to feel empowered and regain self-esteem. Show that you are committed to helping them resolve the issue, and talk through ways to address or cope with the bullying behavior.

Parents need to be proactive in monitoring their children’s behavior in response to their online interactions, because they cannot rely on their children coming to them once the bullying has occurred. Many pre-teens and teens are hesitant to report being bullied, and recent studies have found that one in four teens

have been the victims of cyberbullying, and one in six admit to having cyberbullied someone else. In fact, girls are more likely than boys to be bullies and victims on the internet.

Use of the internet and social media is inevitable in the day-to-day socializing of pre-teens and teens. Parents should keep a close eye on children’s social media accounts and be aware of what is posted and made public. Also, reading the comments made by others will give parents a better understanding of interactions between their children and peers online. If your children are on social media, you should have an understanding of social media yourself.

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



TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

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Everyday meals in the holiday season

We all love a good holiday party. It is fun to indulge in all the traditional foods of the season and share these rich creations with friends and family. I always partake in these party favorites, but try to create balanced meals that are packed with nutrition on days when I am not at a party.

With a bit of weekend cooking, shopping, and planning, I can make sure that I have the staples I need on hand to create a healthful and wholesome meal in minutes. Keep your pantry stocked, so you can enjoy the holiday season!

Make a big batch of broth

A bubbling pot of soup on weekends was a constant in my house growing up. A hot bowl of soup dur-

ing the cold, dark months not only tastes and feels great, but is good for us, too!

I like to make a big batch of broth (recipe below) and portion it into pint containers. I freeze these containers, and then pull them out any time I feel like making a quick soup. You can add boiled tortellini and Parmesan cheese or puree with some roasted butternut squash. However you use your broth, you will have a restorative, healthful meal for the whole family.

Stock up on quick-cooking grains

Grains such as bulgur and pearled barley cook quickly and make the base of a great meal. Add lemon juice, chopped parsley, chopped tomatoes, and lots of olive oil to hydrated bulgur wheat for a tabbouleh salad.

Boil pearled barley with mushrooms and beef broth for a hearty beef and barley soup. The more stocked you are during those busy weeknights, the more likely you are to create something healthy!

Utilize party leftovers

Get creative with your party leftovers. Make potato cakes with leftover mashed potatoes by adding an egg and some extra seasoning to cold mashed potatoes. Form into small patties using your hands. Heat some oil in a pan until shimmering and brown the

cakes for about three minutes on either side. Finish the cakes in the oven until the centers are hot. Serve with a piece of seared fish and a bright salad for fun dinner on a dreary night.

It's citrus season, take advantage

Citrus fruits are at their best in the winter months. Try fun varieties of citrus such as blood oranges and pomelos. Cut segments of different citrus fruits and make a citrus salad. You can even invest in a citrus juicer and have the kids do the juicing!

Try making your favorite takeout at home

Steam some sushi rice and add seasoned rice wine vinegar. Cut nori seaweed into sushi wrappers. Cut up cucumbers, carrots, avocados, cooked shrimp, raw sushi-grade tuna or whatever else your family may like in sushi. Keep a bowl of hot acidulated water nearby to wet your hands.

Experiment with different rolls and shapes. It won't come out perfect, but the family will take pride in creating their own customized meal!

Joanna DeVita, executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School, is the mother of two children and loves nothing more than spending time with them outdoors and sharing her love and respect for nature, good ingredients, and the joy of cooking with her family.

Basic roasted chicken stock

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 chicken carcass (Can substitute beef or veal bones)
- 1 large onion
- 1 carrot
- 1 celery stalk
- 1 bay leaf
- 10 peppercorns
- 2 parsley stems

DIRECTIONS: Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Roast the chicken with the vegetables in the oven until well browned. Place all ingredients in stockpot and add water just to cover. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer. Simmer on low for 4–12 hours. A Crockpot works very well for overnight simmering. Strain. Serve immediately or cool and store for later.

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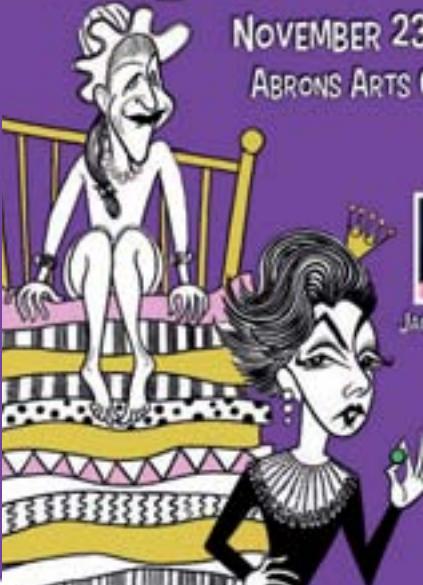
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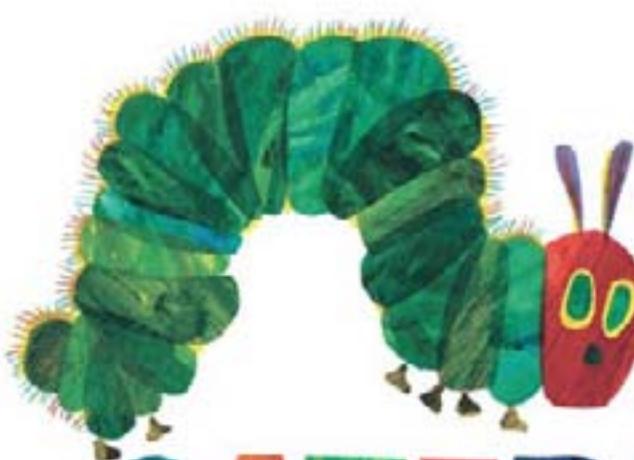
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The hidden risks of antibiotics

BY DR. WILLIAM B. MILLER, JR.

The discovery of the antibacterial activity of penicillin by Alexander Fleming in 1929 represents one of the singular moments in human history. The number of lives saved is beyond calculation. Medicine was revolutionized by that discovery.

The success of antibiotics is based upon their ability to interfere

with a bacterial growth, metabolism, or reproduction. The manner in which they work means that many types of bacteria are affected at the same time by any particular antibiotic, which is termed "broad spectrum."

Antibiotics are often miraculous and life saving, but people need to be aware that the use of them has negative effects.

Deep associations between gut

microbial composition and diabetes and obesity are now being discovered. A recent surprise has been strong evidence between the administration of antibiotics and increasing childhood obesity lasting into and through adulthood. It appears that the more antibiotics you get as a child, the stronger the effect. The antibiotics seem to be wiping out beneficial populations of gut bacteria and replacing them with others that are less so. The possibility that this might also link to the increasing incidence of Type II diabetes is being further explored.

Antibiotic resistance

In the last few decades, the problem of antibiotic resistance has become an increasingly reported clinical experience. Some antibiotics that had been effective against a certain type of bacterial infection have become less so, requiring a higher dosage or more prolonged treatment. In some cases, they might now demonstrate near complete ineffectiveness against a bacterial strain against which they had been highly potent previously.

What led to this unexpected outcome? Commonly, it is stated that the bacteria have mutated in response to antibiotics. However, that is largely incorrect. Antibiotic resistance is ancient. All common antibiotics are based on chemicals found in nature and used by other organisms to ward off bacteria. Over eons and long ago, bacteria themselves evolved to counter this form of defense by developing resistance to those defenses. What is occurring in our modern era is that our current antibiotic resistance is leading to an increase in the number of naturally resistant bacteria that become more common within bacterial populations. It is, in essence, a form of selective breeding for bacteria, for the wrong type.

Part of the problem is the pressure felt by physicians to offer antibiotics to their patients. The belief in the power of antibiotics can be very high among patients who are suffering. Many times, even though the treating physician might assume that it will not be effective, the default can be towards satisfying that demand with the consideration that "no harm will be done."

The danger of overuse

What we are now learning is that this attitude has been an incor-

A recent surprise has been strong evidence between the administration of antibiotics and increasing childhood obesity lasting into and through adulthood.

rect assumption. There are other forms of inadvertent harm beyond antibiotic resistance that can occur and these directly relate to the “broad spectrum” capacity of almost all antibiotics. Since they are active against many bacterial types, there is the suppression or eradication of many populations of bacteria at the same time, apart from the specific pathogenic bacterial type that is actually being targeted.

When antibiotics are used improperly, the critical balance of many essential bacterial partners in our body tissues is being upset. We do this every time we overuse antibiotics by administering them for the wrong indication.

Permitting their use in our food supply compounds these types of errors.

Crucial microbial cells

This enlarged understanding stems from the fact that all creatures on this planet, including humans, are actually vast collaborations between microbial cells, viruses, and our own innate cells. In fact, for us humans, microbial cells outnumber our own cells by more than 10 to one and are present in all of our body tissues. So when an antibiotic is administered for the wrong reasons, an exquisite balance between an enormous array of microbes and our own cells is being altered for no productive reason.

These partnerships between the microbial realm and our own cells serve vital purposes in our health.

The range of that interaction can be very surprising. They are intimately connected with our growth and development, metabolism, and even our neurological function and moods.

What happens then if there is

a breakdown of these crucial microbial partnerships? It is now known that there are very significant consequences. This has become a well-recognized issue, termed “dysbiosis.”

There are now a wide range of examples of these types of effects. An increasing number of diseases are now either being directly attributed to dysbiosis or linked to them. For example, the incidence and intensity of inflammatory bowel disease is now known to be associated with intestinal dysbiosis. Cases of a particularly nasty gut pathogen, *Clostridium difficile*, are now being actively treated by re-establishing the proper balance of the intestinal flora. Not surprisingly then, antibiotics use is now considered to be one risk factor for the incidence of both of these conditions.

It has been shown that the incidence of both childhood and adult allergy and asthma is on the rise and some research suggests that this, too, is related to antibiotic exposure.

Other reports suggest associations between dysbiosis and other extra-intestinal diseases such as autism, schizophrenia, rheumatoid arthritis, colorectal cancer, and even a tentative association with breast cancer.

Use with caution

What should we do with this new information? Clearly, despite some risks, antibiotics remain essential wonders of our modern medical palette. However, their use should be carefully tailored by physicians for only strict indications.

Patients and parents must be willing to accept that antibiotics should not be reflexively requested for many infectious illnesses. And surely, the use of antibiotics in our food supply should be very carefully regulated and restricted.

Dr. Bill Miller has been a physician in academic and private practice for more than 30 years. He is the author of “The Microcosm Within: Evolution and Extinction in the Hologenome.” He currently serves as a scientific advisor to OmniBiome Therapeutics, a pioneering company in discovering and developing solutions to problems in human fertility and health through management of the human microbiome. For more information visit, www.themicrocosmwithin.com.

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Private/Independent School Guide



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Talking about touching

Yes, it can be embarrassing. But there are good reasons to talk to your children about masturbation

BY JAMIE LOBER

Topics that used to turn heads and evoke giggles are now coming to the forefront as New York parents get involved with their kids' sexuality. Talking to children about masturbation can be uncomfortable, but it is an important conversation to have.

"The reality is that most parents and teens do not bring it up on a regular basis when they come to see a doctor — unless it is causing them problems," said Dr. Caroline Barangan, assistant professor of pediatrics and adolescent medicine specialist at Mount Sinai. A big reason is that either the patient or physician may not feel comfortable broaching the topic.

"How we educate our parents in regards to how to approach masturbation at home would be in the bigger context of how they bring up sexual behaviors and sexual activity in general," said Barangan. Some parents are comfortable bringing it up while others may not know how to begin. "The vast majority are not comfortable unless something came up to instigate the conversation — like a parent coming home and finding their teen with another teen making out on the sofa unexpectedly," she says.

Find an avenue to approach sexuality. Timing is everything.

"Bring up the conversation about sexual behaviors once kids start asking questions or if they see something on television or a reference in music," said Barangan. "It should be brought up at 9 years old, before puberty starts, to see what your kid knows or what he has heard from friends."

Some kids may not even know what masturbation means.

"You can see masturbation in young kids even before the age of 5, even though they do not realize that is what

they are doing. The reason you see it in kids between 4 and 8 years old is because they are exploring their body," said Barangan.

Giving your child time and respect can be helpful. "Curiosity can be normal because they do not realize what social norms are and the meaning of privacy."

The American Academy of Pediatrics defines masturbation as self-stimulation of the genitals.

It is your job as a parent to talk about what should be done in private and what is socially appropriate.

"When a kid in the kindergarten, first, or second grade is doing public masturbation, exposing himself, or trying to touch other people's genitalia, you think about autism spectrum disorder, developmental delay, or conditions where a kid cannot control himself or grasp it is inappropriate and should not be done in public," said Barangan.

From a medical standpoint, it is a concern whether or not the behavior is a sign that the child has been abused or neglected. Some forms of masturbation are unacceptable.

"If they are inflicting harm on themselves, inserting foreign objects into their genitalia, or forcing themselves on other kids, those are red flag signs that should be brought up with the doctor to see if more assessment needs to happen," said Barangan. By ages 10, 11, and 12, kids should be aware that masturbation should only occur in private.

When you have an older child, give him space.

"I want to advocate for the adolescent person with regards to making sure parents know they should not walk into anybody's room without knocking first in order to respect the adolescent's privacy," said Barangan.

Your child knows best when he is cognitively and emotionally ready to have sex if that is his choice.

"It is also cultural and depends on religious background, where kids may get messages that masturbation is bad and if you do it you will go blind, grow hair on your palms, or will hurt yourself in some way, and those things are false," said Barangan.

Encourage your child to ask questions of the doctor and make sure his provider is comfortable answering and reassuring him of what is healthy and safe.

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

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A parent's transition

Transgender
moms and dads
are becoming
more visible.

PART ONE OF A SERIES

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

When Kardashian parent Bruce Jenner revealed his true identity during that moving television interview, a firestorm of controversy was ignited. Then when a striking Caitlyn Jenner emerged, reactions ranged from shock to thumbs up.

In July, an E! docu-series titled "I Am Cait" gave viewers an intimate look into Caitlyn's private world and revealed all the challenging issues she had to deal with as a transgender woman. It became clear that it wasn't just about the long hair and make-up, or wearing pretty clothes.

Holly Maholm now feels quite accomplished as a transgender person and says she isn't content with just that superficial stuff either. Married twice, she actively co-parented her three daughters (now adults) from her first marriage.

Born John S. Oney, at 67, Maholm says she has fully embraced her change. Like Jenner, she began her transition to living full-time as a woman, later in life (in 2013), and it has been a rough journey getting there.

Holly has experienced rejection, loneliness, and being ignored by family, friends, and acquaintances. One day, she decided to capture some of her feelings in a story, and express them through the transgender character, Connie, in her new book "Brave in Ribbons." Inspired by Charles Dickens's classic tale, "A Christmas Carol," Holly's humorous version has a modern, unexpected twist.

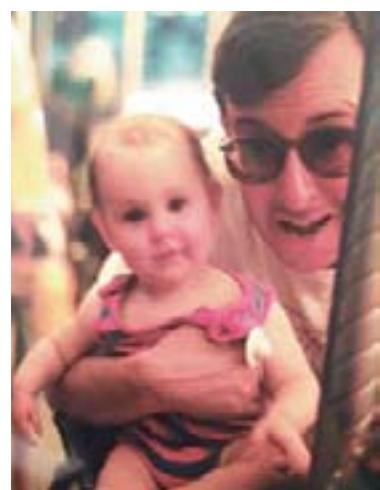
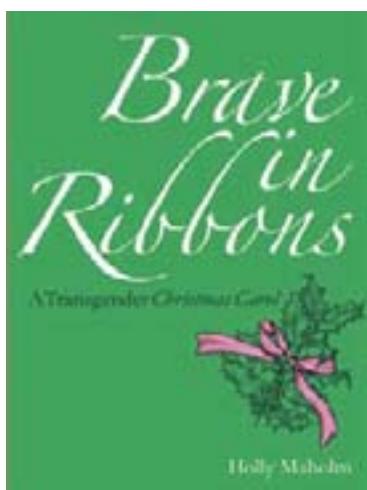
Maholm, who is a Yale graduate, practices law in Cleveland, Ohio, where she's a longtime resident and an active member of the local LGBTQ community. She also has ties to New York, having had a best friend (now passed), who once lived in Brooklyn, and has visited Gotham many times.

She shared her story with New York Parenting:

"I had great accomplishments before my "change" and since my change. I have written "Brave in Ribbons" as a kind of extension of my earlier book "When Once I Lived." Now I am Holly, and I see so many things differently, and so many the same. I hope to demonstrate that



Shaker Photo Studios, Limited



Victoria Ashley

Holly Maholm is a transgender woman who penned a new book, "Brave in Ribbons." (Above right) Holly with her youngest daughter Emily when she was a baby.

transgender people can accomplish great things, and being transgender is no great barrier to achievement.

"I have so many more friends than before. I have a much deeper sense

of sympathy for others, and I am so much more interested in the emotions of others. Becoming Holly has opened up a new and more loving world for me.

"When I became Holly at 64, there was no celebration, believe me! It was a shock, and I struggled to understand what was happening." Even when she was younger, Maholm insists she never felt like a girl, as her transgender friends had, and was always comfortable being male.

The transitioning process

"Like most transgender women, I started hormone replacement therapy as early as I could. For me, this was January, 2014. I have taken the female hormone every day since. I let my hair grow and recently had it colored. This past May, I had a boob job (breast augmentation). It really gives me a better shape and gives me confidence. I will not get the sexual reassignment. I just don't want to face such a radical surgery at my age. If I were 21 I would do it in a heartbeat. I will also not (for the same reason) get any facial surgery (I really shudder to think how much pain Caitlyn Jenner has gone through, with all the surgery she has had.)"

Marriage and family

"At the time of my first marriage I had no idea about Holly. Victoria and I had three daughters. We got divorced in 1992, and had joint custody of the girls. I loved taking care of them and spent many weekends taking them to the mall, to the movies, and roller blading with their friends. Today, Vicki and I are on good terms and talk now and then about the girls and their issues.

"Each of my daughters reacted to the news differently. When I changed, Stephanie (now age 31), Meredith (age 26), and Emily (age 25) were already out of the house and living in other cities. I disclosed my change using a long letter (11 pages), so that I could tell them the whole complex story, and because they were all in different cities. So, I couldn't do it in person. Also, I didn't want to leave anything out, and I wanted each of them to get the same facts and feelings from me.

Stephanie accepted me from the first. It wasn't easy, but she did. Both Meredith and Emily at first, would not speak to me, and this lasted for almost a year. Then Emily went to a therapist; she has accepted me and we talk often — we have the same loving father-daughter relationship we had be-

fore. Recently, she invited me to go to Chicago to see her — which means she would finally see me dressed as Holly.

"Meredith will not speak to me and in Dec, 2013 sent me a one-line email telling me not to contact her in any way, for any reason. I haven't spoken to her since. She started therapy in July, but no results yet. But I have my hopes."

The second marriage

"I got re-married (to Barbara) in 2005. My change to Holly came during this marriage, and I told her about Holly in November, 2013. She was at first supportive (maybe hoping I would change back), but in three months gave up on that and became unbelievably angry and hostile. She was very hurt. I do not feel a moral responsibility, since being Holly was never a choice I made. On the other hand, I did (and do) love her, and it hurts me that she is suffering. She thought we were going to grow old together, and now that is all gone. So my heart goes out to her. We're divorced and do not speak, nor do I expect to.

"I focus on my daughters and on my friends. I became Holly very late in life, and I expect I will not have very many years to enjoy seeing the world through her eyes. So, every day is important to me. I have a rewarding life and feel very, very lucky."

...

What does all this mean to you, as parents raising children in 2016? How do you feel about telling your young children: Uncle Johnny is now Aunt Mary? And explaining to them what it means to be transgender? Or, if you happen to be the parent of a "questioning" teen, what do you do?

You'll get more insight into these complicated topics and others, in Part 2 of this series, which will feature an interview with a local filmmaker, who is the daughter of a transgender woman.

"Brave in Ribbons" is currently available on NetGalley and on Amazon.

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer/journalist and parent and a regular contributor to New York Parenting. Interviewing hundreds of New York City's movers and shakers has been an amazing adventure for her. Scileppi's work has appeared in a variety of media outlets. She has also written book cover copy for Simon and Schuster.

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Book gift guide

What to give EVERYONE this holiday season

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Looking for a cost-effective gift your loved one will use again and again? Here's a great gift idea: books! How about one of these?

Little kids' books

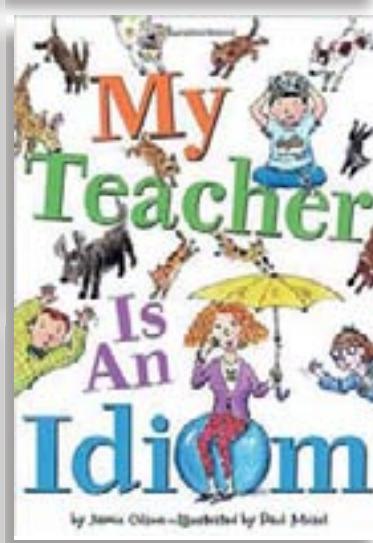
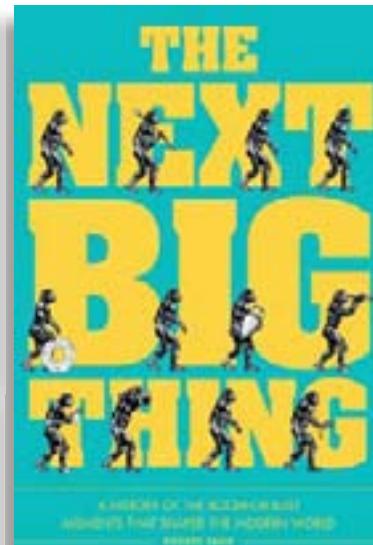
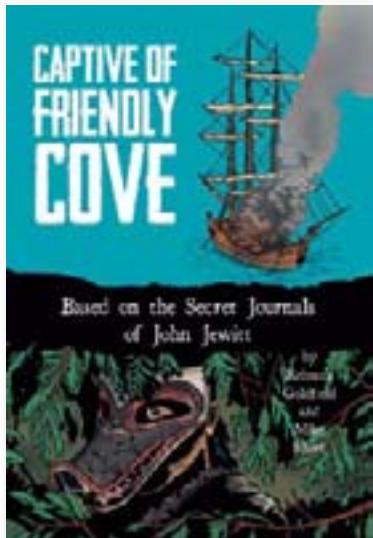
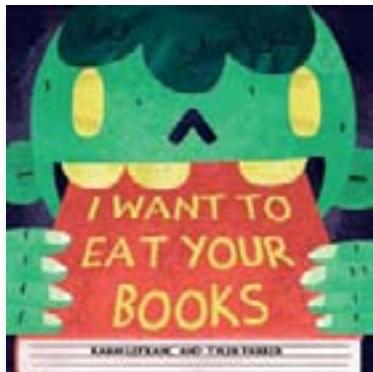
If there's someone on your list who just started school this fall (or will soon), then "School Days around the World" by Margriet Ruurs and Alice Feagan would make a nice gift. It is a kid-friendly look at the school days of kids in other countries. Wrap it up with "I Want to Eat Your Books" by Karin LeFranc and Tyler Parker, a cute story of a monster at school who's determined to make literary mischief.

For the child who desperately wants to be a mermaid, you'll get lots of hugs when she opens "Tallulah, Mermaid of the Great Lakes" by Denise Brennan-Nelson, illustrated by Susan Kathleen Hartung. It's the story of a little mermaid in search of a gemstone that gives her mermaid powers — but where could it be? For another twist on a classic — and for the child who dreams of becoming a princess — look for "Interstellar Cinderella" by Deborah Underwood, illustrated by Meg Hunt.

Every kid needs a dose of bravery now and then, and "Max the Brave" by Ed Vere is the gift to wrap and give it. It's the story of a fearless kitten in a not-so-fearless search for a mouse. I loved the illustrations! Wrap it up with "Leopold the Lion" by Denise Brennan-Nelson, illustrated by Ruth McNally Barshaw, for more fearlessness (and plenty of cute!).

Middle-grade readers

For the 9-to-12-year-old who loves language, "My Teacher is an Idiom" by Jamie Gilson, illustrated by Paul Meisel, is a good choice to give. It's the story of a boy who befriends a new classmate whose first language is not English. That leads to a lot of miscommunication — and laughs. Wrap it up with something a little more serious (but no less smart): "National Geo-



graphic Book of Nature Poetry," edited by J. Patrick Lewis, former U.S. Children's Poet Laureate. It is a gorgeous book of pictures and poetry to accompany them.

Your young fantasy fan will love unwrapping "Milo Speck, Accidental Agent" by Linda Urban. It's the tale of a boy who's rather small — in comparison, of course, to the ogres that stomp around the town where Milo lives. In with the fantasy is a bit of a mystery, too, and your

Linda Urban. It's the tale of a boy who's rather small — in comparison, of course, to the ogres that stomp around the town where Milo lives. In with the fantasy is a bit of a mystery, too, and your

10-to-13-year-old will love it.

The kid on your list who loves to make messes and experiment will love unwrapping "Junk Drawer Chemistry" by Bobby Mercer. It's a book filled with things your young giftee can do with things lying around the house. Don't tell them, but they might learn a thing or 50.

I can't think of any kid who doesn't like fun facts and trivia, and if there's such a child on your list this year, then "National Geographic Ultimate Weird but True! 3" is the just-right thing to give. This highly illustrated book is full of fun facts, graphs, tidbits, and things that will impress your youngster, as well as his friends. Wrap it up with any of the four Smithsonian Readers books: "Early Adventures" for the youngest readers; "Seriously Amazing" for kids who are a little more confident in their reading skills; "World of Wonder" for children who can read well; and "Endless Explorations," for kids who love books best.

The child with her head in the stars will love "Welcome to Mars" by Buzz Aldrin with Marianne J. Dyson. It's a photo-and-art-filled book about what life could be like, once we colonize the Red Planet. Science-minded kids might also like "Stuff You Need to Know!" by John Farndon and Rob Beattie. It's a richly-illustrated how-things-work-kind of book that's a lot of fun to read.

Kids this age love tales of superpowers, so why not wrap up "Treasure of Norse Mythology" by Donna Jo Napoli, illustrations by Christina Balit. It's a wonderfully illustrated anthology of mythology, folk tales, and ancient superpowers. Readers of fables might also like the books in the "Top Secret Files" series: "Gangsters and Bootleggers" and "The Cold War." Both by Stephanie Bearse, they will give kids a behind-the-scenes peek at life during those times.

Young adult

For the dog-loving romantic on your gift list, you'll get a lot of smiles when you wrap up "Whippoorwill" by Joseph Monninger. It's the story of a tender-hearted teen who falls in love with a throwaway dog at about the same time that she

falls for a throwaway boy. Another book your teen might like: **"Honey Girl"** by Lisa Freeman. It's the story of a surfer girl who tries hard to fit in with an established crowd in her new hometown. Her efforts are complicated by the year (1972) and the fact that she really likes girls.

Who doesn't love a good, juicy scandal? Your giftee does, so why not wrap up the novel **"Conacademy"** by Joe Schreiber? It's the story of a con-kid who goes away to boarding school, but that's not all he's running. (Think: scam!) Pair it with **"Denton Little's Deathdate"** by Lance Rubin, a funny story of a boy who knows when he's going to die. Yeah, and it just happens to be the same date as the senior prom.

The comic book lover on your list, if he likes history, too, will like owning **"Captive of Friendly Cove"** by Rebecca Goldfield and Mike Short. Based on the journals of a real-life British sailor, this is a tale of adventure and high seas, written in a graphic novel format he'll love.

Surely, there's a teen on your list who dreams of someday shaking up the world — and for him (or her), there's no better gift than **"Rockin' the Boat"** by Jeff Fleischer. It's an anthology of mini-biographies of 50 people throughout history who made the world a different place. Wrap it up with **"The Next Big Thing"** by Richard Faulk, a book about things that shaped the world and the way we look at it.

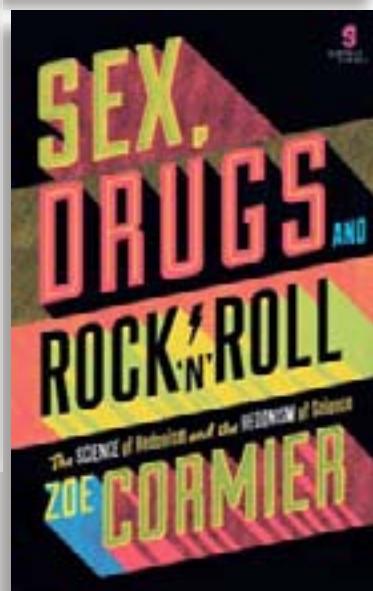
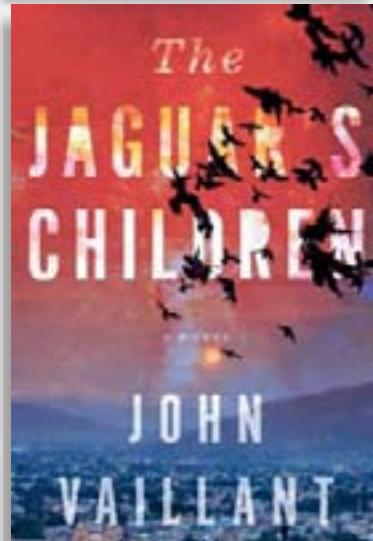
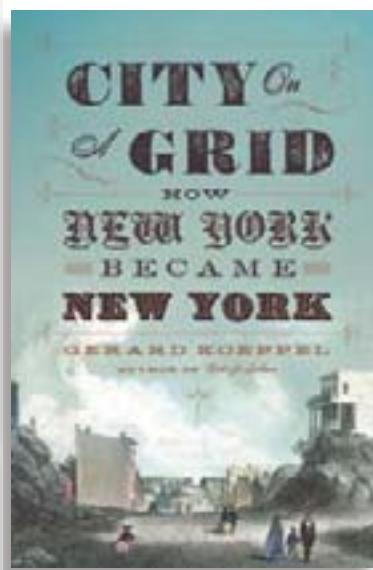
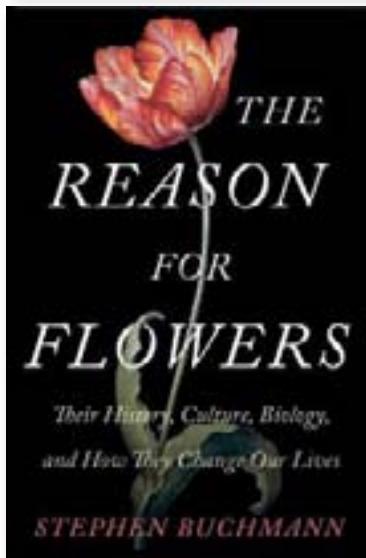
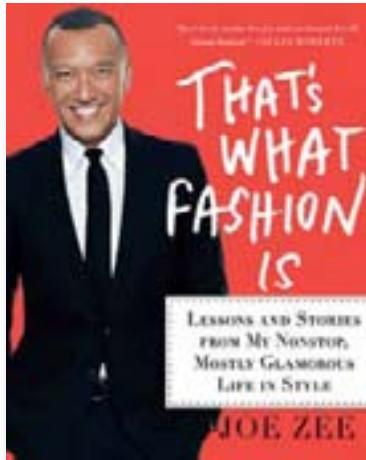
For the teen who's a born skeptic, **"Debunk It!"** by John Grant is a just-right gift. It's a book about misinformation: specifically, several topics are picked apart here, and teens who like to examine issues and current events will love that. The book to pair it with, naturally, is **"Speak Up"** by Halley Bondy, a book that will give your giftee tips on firmly speaking out on the issues he (or she!) has debunked.

Fiction

Who doesn't want a thriller for mid-winter reading? For sure, your giftee will, and **"The Jaguar's Children"** by John Vaillant is the one to wrap. It's the story of Hector, who's being smuggled into America from Mexico when the truck he's in breaks down. He's sealed inside and the smugglers have left, but he has a cellphone — and your giftee will have a page-turner. Wrap it up with **"A Free State"** by Tom Piazza, a thrilling novel of a former slave who, in conjunction with the leader of a minstrel troupe, concocts a dangerous ruse so that he can make music on stage with white performers. Oh, did I say that a slave hunter is on his trail?

No doubt, there's a tender heart on your gift

list — someone who's always sunny and smiling. **"100 Days of Happiness"** by Fausto Brizzi is the book you want to give her (or him). It's the story of a down-and-out man who learns that he's going to die, so he spends his last 100 days on Earth doing good for the people around him. Wrap it up with **"The Best Advice in Six Words,"** edited by Larry Smith. What a



really great gift idea! (Count 'em — there's six!)

Mystery lovers who like a touch of the frontier will thank you profusely when you've wrapped up **"The Last Midwife"** by Sandra Dallas. It's 1880 and the midwife of a small mining town is accused of the murder of a baby — but though she's been privy to too many things, murder isn't one of them. Wrap it up with **"Mothers, Tell Your Daughters,"** a delightful book of stories by Bonnie Jo Campbell.

For the Western aficionado, there's no better gift than **"Buffalo Trail"** by Jeff Guinn. Set in the Arizona Territory, it is ... well, I shouldn't have to say more except "wrap it!"

General non-fiction

If Beatlemania has hit someone on your gift list, then the gift to give this year is **"The Complete Beatles Songs"** by Steve Turner. This book is full of lyrics from the Fab Four, as well as stories of how the songs came to be, and plenty of photos of John, Paul, George, and Ringo. It could be the "Ticket to Ride" this holiday. Wrap it up with **"Sex, Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll"** by Zoe Cormier. It's a scientific book about our impulses and what makes us par-tay!

Does your giftee (heart) New York? Then **"City On a Grid"** by Gerard Kneppel is a must-give this year. It's the story of how the City That Never Sleeps became what it is; specifically, how swampy, agricultural fields became the Big Apple in only a few centuries. Toss **"Life in New York"** by Laura Pedersen — a personal love story to the Big Apple — in the box and make it merrier.

The gardener on your list will plant her fanny down and read, once you've given her **"The Reason for Flowers"** by Stephen Buchmann. It's all about flowers, their history, the places they're grown — even the critters that help them bloom.

The giftee you know who loves things that go stomp in the night will also love opening **"The Bigfoot Book"** by Nick Redfern. It's a book about large, hairy creatures: Yeti, Bigfoot, Sasquatch, Little Red Men, and other critters you don't want to meet on a dark and stormy night.

No doubt, the fashionista on your list will be overjoyed to unwrap **"That's What Fashion Is"** by style-maker Joe Zee. It's a little memoir, a little how-to, and a whole lot of ideas and gossip. What's not to love, 'specially when you pair it with **"Polish Your Poise with Madame Chic"** by Jennifer L. Scott, a genteel book on looking, dressing, and acting elegant.

What's the best emergency care?

Deciding between pediatrician vs. urgent care vs. the emergency room

BY JAMIE LOBER

The decision of whether to take your child to the pediatrician, an urgent care clinic, or the emergency room when he does not feel well may seem like common sense, but for some parents, it raises some questions on what the right choice would be.

Parents should have a pediatrician that they like and trust for their child and who has a relationship with your family and knows the child well, including his past medical history and allergies. An urgent care center caters specifically to patients with ailments that can't wait for an appointment with a physician several days out, but that aren't severe enough to merit an emergency-room visit. The drawback to an urgent care center and emergency room is that the doctor will not know your child as well or have the same kind of follow-up as the pediatrician.

At this time of year, one of the most common complaints is the seasonal cold, which can be treated at home unless a child is having difficulty breathing, a high fever, or it goes on for more than three to five days.

"There is something called croup, which is when kids make a bark-like cough and have noisy breathing which, if it is mild, you can be put in a steamed shower or come to the pediatrician's office. But if your pediatrician's office is closed, it is a time you must go to either an urgent care center or to an emergency room," said Dr. Blair Hammond, assistant professor at Mt. Sinai Hospital. If your child is more extreme looking and working hard to breathe, he should be monitored more closely, making the emergency room a better option than the urgent care center, which is a quick in and out.

Other frequently seen issues at this time of year are strep throat,

with which your child could have a fever. The pediatrician can handle it, but after doctor's hours, it would be great to go to the urgent care center and have a strep test.

"One of my concerns about urgent care centers and emergency rooms is that they do not have pediatric-trained doctors. Medicines are dosed differently in children, and the common types of diseases children get can be different than an adult," said Hammond. For issues like ear infections, ear pains, or colds, many adults get antibiotics, whereas in kids, it is not always suggested.

"There is new data about not giving antibiotics for children with ear infections after age 2 unless there is moderate ear pain, it looks like it is bulging, and you have a fever with it," said Hammond.

The emergency room is for medical emergencies like if your child is turning blue, has a seizure, or has difficulty breathing. Doctors can do blood tests, take X-rays, and offer oxygen if needed. Kids can usually get admitted right away if necessary. The downside is that there is a large copayment.

"For most insurances, it is \$150, and there is often a long wait where you are exposed to other germs from sick people," said Hammond. When you are discharged from the emergency room, you cannot expect someone to check on you, whereas the pediatrician may ask you how things are going. Follow up is extremely important in children's healthcare.

"Many illnesses in children are caused by viruses and close observation is often the best management, but over several days is not possible in urgent care and emergency room settings," said Hammond.

If your child will stress out at the thought of the emergency room, it may be avoidable.

"We can handle 80 percent of the cases in the urgent care that we see

in the emergency room, but what we are not able to handle or handle well are people with life-threatening illnesses manifested by severe difficulty breathing, obvious injuries and conditions where it looks like a kid may need to be hospitalized," said Dr. Judah Fierstein of Mt. Sinai Hospital Urgent Care. Urgent care is a nice option for weekends and holidays as well as minor injuries or illnesses.

"We see cold, flu, earaches and a lot of gastrointestinal illnesses, respiratory illnesses, asthma, sore throats, and injuries like cuts, sprains, and fractures from the playground," said Fierstein. There are clear advantages to urgent care.

"Patients appreciate the speed, and how we run more quickly and efficiently than an emergency department, the lower cost, and that it is a safer and friendlier environment for kids," said Fierstein.

While it is often overlooked, do not ignore the existence of urgent care.

"It is a great and convenient place to get care that fills a really important gap when you have two choices, to wait until tomorrow or go to the emergency room — and there is not a good choice other than the urgent care," said Fierstein. Urgent care doctors are not replacements for their alternatives, but rather partners in good health.

"We have a specific role and are there when pediatricians are not and do things they cannot do. We do not try to take care of the emergencies, because they need to go where they belong, but when people come in who need real emergency care, we stabilize them and arrange the transportation to get them attended," said Fierstein.

An urgent care center is easy and great when you want a quick diagnosis like a urinary tract infection or strep throat. With bacterial infections like strep throat, a child will



usually start to feel better after being on an antibiotic for 24 hours and will no longer need to be seen. Sometimes parents go to an urgent care for reassurance when something can be managed at home.

"For vomiting and diarrheal illness, most are caused by viruses and the recommendation is to try to keep the child hydrated by giving small amounts of liquid and make sure he is peeing enough," said Hammond. If a child is not urinating for long periods of time, the urgent care or emergency room might be necessary for rehydration or getting IV fluids. While you may feel a rash should be seen right away, you can usually wait and follow up with the pediatrician. For complicated rashes, you

may be referred to a dermatologist.

Do not be scared of fever unless your child is younger than 2 months, in which case he should be seen.

"Fever is the body's way of fighting infection, and children, unlike adults, have not been exposed to as many viruses, so they have less immunity," said Hammond. Kids also tend to put more things in their mouth and touch everything.

"They may get eight to 10 infections a year, and when a child is done with one cough he may get a new cough, but that is classic and typical, especially between ages infancy to 3," said Hammond.

Obviously, broken bones should be evaluated in the emergency room and deep wounds should be cleaned

and seen as soon as possible to decrease risk of infection. Do not panic.

"There is good data that if children fall from a height of less than two feet and there is no loss of consciousness and they appear completely well, they can usually be observed at home for any signs of vomiting, severe headache, neurological changes, or balance problems," said Hammond.

Particularly if you go to an urgent care or emergency room, ask questions.

"You want to make sure the doctor explains exactly what medicine he is giving and why and get the results for any tests or cultures that were done," said Hammond.

Sometimes results are not available right away so you want to follow up and be sure the information is sent to your pediatrician's office, so he is aware of what was done. Be sure that you think through your decision on where to go and when. Remember that in little kids, the immune system is not that great, so you want to stay home and talk to your pediatrician when you can, so your child is not exposed to unnecessary viruses and bacteria at the urgent care center and emergency room.

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

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**DEAR
DR. KARYN
GORDON**

Help your teen find a dream career

It's that time! High school students are going to career conferences, checking out college and university campuses, and having stressful conversations with their parents about "what to do with their life." My sister just shared with me today that she's taking my niece on a college campus tour. Where did the last 18 years go?

Some parents know how to help their kids make these huge decisions. Most parents tell me they feel ill-equipped. There are too many choices today, and secretly, many parents say they are dissatisfied with their own career. (The Globe & Mail puts this number as high as 77 percent!) So how can they possibly give direction and provide hope to their kids?

But what would happen if you knew there was a proven, secret formula to discover your dream career? And once you knew your direction, what if there were concrete strategies you could follow to navigate and build your career? Well, I have some exciting news! The "secrets" of career success are going to be revealed as we launch my new television series this month "Success Stories With Dr. Karyn." Here is a link: <http://www.dkleadership.org/successstories/signup>.

This 10-week series features up-close and personal interviews with 10 top industry leaders (National Basketball Association, National Hockey League, chief executive officers) about their entire life — from childhood through to their successful careers today. The stories of what each person experienced are unique, as they share their individual opportunities, obstacles, and triumphs. But when they talk about how they kept moving forward, we see some powerful patterns emerging. The undercurrent for all of these leaders is that they developed their Emotional Intelligence as they navigated their career!

When you hear their stories, you realize it's less about luck and more



about taking risks, learning from failure, building exceptional relationships, delaying gratification, working extremely hard, and being wise decision makers. We often look at successful people once they have "arrived" at their destination, and we tend to focus on their achievements. This series will show you the back story — and how these leaders got to where they are now.

While we were filming in April 2015, I was in the middle of a speaking tour that took me to several elementary schools and high schools, and as I described what I was working on to the teachers and principals I was interacting with, I noticed there was a lot of interest in this topic. They explained that schools and individual teachers are desperately in need of current resources. One teacher sheepishly told me her textbook for teaching her 10th-grade career students was from 2003, while other teachers said they were randomly going to YouTube to try to find material that could fit the new curriculum. Yikes!

We need to properly equip our

young people for the workforce — and as I've worked and trained in hundreds of organizations in North America over the last decade, the message I am constantly hearing is that the next generation is not prepared. They are lacking the Emotional Intelligence they need to succeed in the workplace!

So we got to work! This summer, we put an incredible team of educational consultants together (directors of education, superintendents, guidance counselors, and teachers) to create a Turn-Key and Affordable Educational Resource Kit to accompany the television series. This kit turns each episode into a classroom teaching tool, and for every episode it includes discussion questions, classroom activities, and additional videos from myself highlighting the Emotional Intelligence skills being illustrated (risk-taking, goal-setting, resilience, confidence, taking initiative, passion, assertiveness, etc.).

For parents: if you want your kids to be learning these crucial skills, make sure you pass this info on to your school's guidance counselor or principal! For teachers: if you are interested in current, inspiring classroom content that will help your students connect to their IPP and make your careers and health education classes relevant, get in touch with us: karyn@dkleadership.org! The full program will be available starting in 2016.

So how can parents help their teens find their dream career? Here are my top three tips:

Know yourself

This may seem like a loaded question, but who are you? Are you an introvert or an extrovert? Dreamer or detail-oriented? Thinker or feeler? How do you manage your time? Do you perform better in structured environments or in more spontaneous environments while working under pressure?

According to the Myers-Briggs Personality Assessment Program,

there are 16 personality types (defined by different combinations of four distinct parts of our personality), and depending on your type, you will likely answer these questions in very different ways. But did you consider these questions before you applied for your last job? Before we can even begin to think about figuring out our dream career, we need to know who we are! When I interviewed industry leaders last year for our Strategic Career course, nearly 75 percent of them said the first step to finding your dream career is to know yourself! This is the foundational question!

The interesting thing is that while emotional intelligence is 100 percent learned, personality is more fixed. I did my first personality assessment when I was 21 years old and, to be honest, I was skeptical. How could answering 100 standardized questions tell me anything about myself? But I was wrong! When I read through the 20-page custom document, it nailed me! It explained how I get my energy, how I make decisions, how I manage my time, and even described how I respond to conflict. I love anything that saves time — so yes, we could spend our entire lifetime trying to get to know ourselves, or we could do high-quality assessments that do it for us! Once you know your personality and industry interests, you are much closer to finding your career path.

Learn our 'secret' formula

Dream career = personality + industry + values.

I have learned personally — and through working with hundreds of leaders — that finding your career is a combination of knowing your personality (what naturally energizes you) plus knowing the industries that you are personally interested in plus knowing your values!

More than 90 percent of the adults that have taken our course say it was the values component that gave them their "aha moment." Suddenly, they realized that why they do not like their current job is because their values are not aligned (ex. they value family, but they are traveling two-to-four times per month). I have learned that the people who are the happiest and have discovered their true dream career understand these three components and stick

to them as closely as possible!

Four years ago, I was offered a very cool opportunity to do regular consulting in a well-known and respected large organization. Everything looked great on paper, and my friends and mentors were all encouraging me to go for it. But when I assessed my values, I realized it was not a good fit, and I declined the opportunity. (My friends were shocked!)

Know where the jobs are

Once you know your career direction, the next step is to do your research. Talk to industry experts in your field to hear their perspectives, insights, suggestions, and tips. What education would they recommend? What is a realistic pay expectation? Is college or university better? What should a person do to give herself a competitive edge in her industry? What schools would they recommend? If you are an adult, ask them specifically about your situation. Would they recommend you go back to school OR start working right away in your industry? What is the best way to break into your field? What part of this industry has more job opportunities? What will be the career trend in the next five years, from their perspective?

I've learned that no one can be an expert in all industries and yet each industry has their superstars. You need to track these people down and then take initiative, pick up the phone or send an e-mail, and ask for their input. I find the most outstanding industry leaders have such a sense of confidence and security that they are happy to share their insight. When I interviewed industry leaders for the podcast portion of our course, I was amazed at how many practical tips and suggestions these leaders shared — everything from how to get a job interview, to which country to do a Master of Business Administration in, to how to network if you are an introvert. Remember: information is powerful, and every piece you gather will bring you one step closer towards reaching your dream career.

Dr. Karyn Gordon is a regular contributor to "Good Morning America," founder of dk Leadership, best-selling author of "Dr. Karyn's Guide To The Teen Years" (Harper Collins), and motivational speaker to a quarter of a million people. Visit her at www.dkleadership.org and on Twitter: @DrKarynGordon.

MANHATTAN

Family

Where Every Child Matters

December 2015
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Holiday gifts
and activities

Rosie O'Donnell's
crusade for kids'
arts education

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knowledge
with the new
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info and support.*

Calendar

DECEMBER



Spreading Christmas cheer

Let the happy flow at Madison Square Garden from Dec. 9 through Dec. 27 with "Elf."

Santa accidentally picks up an orphaned baby boy and brings him to the North Pole. The little boy grows up and realizes he is really not like the other elves. What is an elf to do? Buddy goes on a search to find his real parents and winds up in New York City where he meets a host of characters, including his dad, step-brother, and true love. Along the way he saves

the Big Apple by bringing joy and the Christmas spirit.

"Elf" Dec. 9 through Dec. 27 on Wednesdays at 7 pm; Thursdays, 11 am, 3 pm, and 7 pm; Fridays, 11 am and 7 pm; Saturdays 2 pm and 7 pm; Sundays, 1 pm and 6 pm. Tickets begin at \$51.

The Theater at Madison Square Garden [4 Penn Plaza at Eighth Avenue in Midtown; (800) 901-4092; www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/theaters/madisonsquaregardentheater/elf.php]

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Calendar

Submit a listing

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

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

TUES, DEC. 1

IN MANHATTAN

"Christmas Spectacular" Santa hat day: Radio City Music Hall, 1260 Ave. of the Americas between 50th and 51st streets; (212) 247-4777; www.radiocity.com; 11 am; \$39.25 - \$212.00.

Enjoy a production of the "Christmas Spectacular" with the Rockettes, a visit with Santa, and receive a Santa hat.

Tree lighting: Zuccotti Park, 1 Liberty Plaza; 5 pm to 6 pm; Free.

Celebrate the holidays in the heart of Lower Manhattan! Join us for lively music from Metropolitan Klezmer and Cara Samantha, and enjoy sweet treats as we launch the festive season by illuminating the park with thousands of brilliant lights.

Tree Lighting: South Street Seaport, Pier 17; www.southstreetseaport.com; 6 pm; Free.

Singing, lighting the tree and holiday cheer.

WED, DEC. 2

IN MANHATTAN

"Christmas Spectacular" Santa hat day: 2 pm. Radio City Music Hall. See Tuesday, Dec. 1.

Story time: Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Pl. 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.

Tree Lighting: 6 pm. South Street Seaport. See Tuesday, Dec. 1.

FRI, DEC. 4

IN MANHATTAN

Open studio: Whitney Museum of Art, 99 Gansevoort St. and Washington Street; (212) 570-3600; www.whitney.org; 4 pm to 6 pm; Free with museum admission.



'Nutcracker' set in Manhattan

Holiday favorite "The Yorkville Nutcracker," comes to the Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College on Dec. 10, 11, 12, and 13.

Dances Patrelle presents the classic ballet, with lavish sets and costumes, and takes the audience on a tour through Olde New York's most beloved landmarks, including

a holiday party at Gracie Mansion, dancing at the Crystal Palace in the New York Botanical Garden, and skating in Central Park. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the production, and provides an opportunity for young dancers to dance alongside professional artists.

"The Yorkville Nutcracker," Dec.

10, and 11, 7 pm; Dec. 12 at 2 pm and 7 pm; and Dec. 13 at noon and 5 pm. Tickets range in price from \$45 to \$85.

The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College [E. 68th St. between Park and Lexington avenues on the Upper East Side, (212) 772-4448; www.dancespatrelle.org].

museum admission.

New York City teens are invited to get creative in the Whitney's new Hearst Artspace, make an artwork based on works on view. Each week will offer a different art-making project. All supplied provided, no experience necessary.

SUN, DEC. 6

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 time to celebrate the festival of light with a musical journey — "Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins."

Macy's story time: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

All ages are welcome to join this special story time with Richard Simon, Tanya Simon, and Mark Siegel, authors and illustrator of "Oskar and the Eight Blessings." After the reading the authors will hold a short discussion about the inspiration behind the book, and the illustrator will give a brief presentation about how he began sketching New York in 1938.

Victorian Christmas Magic

Lantern show: Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. at 103rd St.; www.mcny.org; 3 pm; \$12 (\$7 children; Free for members).

Travel back to the time of Jacob Riis with an authentic 1890s magic-lantern show! Before the movies, magic lantern shows entertained audiences with projected color images, stories, live music, and audience participation. For kids and adults ages 6 and up.

TUES, DEC. 8

IN MANHATTAN

Tree Lighting: Madison Square Park, Madison Ave. between E. 23rd and E. 26th streets; 3:30 pm; Free.

Hosted by the Madison Square Park Conservancy Madison Square Park, the event features seasonal activities including a candy cane reindeer craft activity, a winter tree identification activity with the park's Gardener Steph, and plenty of performances including Sing for Hope Youth Chorus, "Finding Neverland the Musical," The New York Life Singers, and kindie performer Audra Rox. Holiday treats will be provided by neighborhood restaurants Hill Country Chicken and Almond.

THURS, DEC. 10

IN MANHATTAN

"The Yorkville Nutcracker": The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College, E. *Continued on page 36*

Calendar

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Continued from page 35

68th Street between Park and Lexington avenues.; (212) 772-4448; www.dancespatrelle.org; 7 pm; \$45 to \$85.

Dances Patrelle presents the classic holiday ballet, with lavish sets and costumes and takes the audience on a tour through Olde New York's most beloved landmarks, including a holiday party at Gracie Mansion, dancing at the Crystal Palace in the New York Botanical Garden, and skating in Central Park. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the production, and provides an opportunity for young dancers to dance alongside professional artists.

FRI, DEC. 11

IN MANHATTAN

"The Nutcracker": Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. between Park and Madison avenues; (800) 982-2787; www.nytb.org; Noon; \$34 (\$24 children under 12).

New York Theatre Ballet company will perform Keith Michael's version of the holiday classic featuring the Tchaikovsky score and his most famous compositions.

Open studio: 4 pm to 6 pm. Whitney Museum of Art. See Friday, Dec. 4.

"The Yorkville Nutcracker": 7 pm. The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College. See Thursday, Dec. 10.

Soul Nativity: Harlem School of the Arts, 645 St. Nicholas Ave.; (212) 926-4100; www.hsany.org/soul-nativity; 7 pm; \$25 (\$15 students).

This gospel extravaganza featuring song, dance, and comedy explores the story of the nativity through a modern interpretation. The score is infused with gospel, R&B, pop, and rock in an altogether original conception of a timeless story, appropriate for all ages!

SAT, DEC. 12

IN MANHATTAN

"The Nutcracker": 11 am, 1 pm and 3:30 pm. Florence Gould Hall. See Friday, Dec. 11.

Cornelia's Holiday Kitchen: New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at W. 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 2 pm to 4 pm; \$16 (\$10 members).

Children ages 8 and older enjoy At the Kids' Table with Sarah Lohman. By the early 1600s, Dutch colonists' tasty confections had become a New Amsterdam holiday tradition. Even when the city was renamed New York, these recipes lived on.



Small but fabulous

Hey, we shrunk the house! The Astolat Castle Dollhouse will be on display at the Shops at Columbus Circle now through Dec. 8.

Appraised at \$8.5 million dollars, and the most valuable dollhouse ever made — the Astolat Castle — houses the finest miniatures in the world, with more than 30,000 items including beds, pianos, oil paintings, mirrors, fireplaces, gold miniature jewelry, rare-mini books more than 100 years old, fine rugs, fabrics, and pieces made of silver and gold. It has seven levels, stairways, hallways, a basement, a wine cellar, a

kitchen, and an armory. There are formal rooms, a library, a music room, a grand ballroom and a bar, and that's before you get to the Wizard's tower on the top level.

The house was designed and built by miniaturist Elaine Diehl and took more than two years to create. It weighs 800 pounds and features 29 rooms.

Astolat Castle Dollhouse on display now through Dec. 8, daily from 10 am to 9 pm; free.

[The Shops at Columbus Circle / 10 Columbus Circle at W. 59th Street in Midtown, (212) 823-6300; www.theshopsatcolumbuscircle.com]

Come learn how an 18th-century Dutch girl named Cornelia van Varick cooked classic New Year dishes. Using tools and ingredients common to her kitchen, including sugar cones and nippers, Dutch ovens, as well as mortars and pestles, we'll make two delicious desserts. Participants will prepare orange caraway cookies and fried doughnuts. Don't worry — there will be plenty to take home and share!

"The Yorkville Nutcracker": 2 pm and 7 pm. The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College. See Thursday, Dec. 10.

Soul Nativity: 3 pm and 7 pm. Harlem School of the Arts. See Friday, Dec. 11.

SUN, DEC. 13

IN MANHATTAN

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

Join the musical group Yellow Sneaker and puppet pals.

Poppy Seed Players "Judy & the Maccabees": Kaufman Music Center, 129 W. 67th St.; (212) 501-3330; www.kaufmanmusiccenter.org; 11 am; \$20.

Musical adventures with the Poppy Seed Players celebrates Hanukkah with joyful original musicals for families that re-imagine the familiar Biblical stories. In "Judy & the Macca-bees," a feisty young girl runs away to join a fight for religious freedom. The Kaufman Kids, a troupe of young performers from Kaufman Center's Lucy Moses School, and Special Music School join with the group. For ages 4 to 11 years old.

"The Nutcracker": 11 am, 1 pm and 3:30 pm. Florence Gould Hall. See Friday, Dec. 11.

"The Yorkville Nutcracker": Noon and 5 pm. The Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College. See Thursday, Dec. 10.

Soul Nativity: 3 pm. Harlem School of the Arts. See Friday, Dec. 11.

MON, DEC. 14

IN MANHATTAN

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

What will you celebrate? Those funny teens take on Christmakwan-zukah with a dose of humor. 'Tis the

Calendar

season, right?

WED, DEC. 16

IN MANHATTAN

Story time: 3:30 pm. Museum of Jewish Heritage. See Wednesday, Dec. 2.

FRI, DEC. 18

IN MANHATTAN

Soul Nativity: 7 pm. Harlem School of the Arts. See Friday, Dec. 11.

SAT, DEC. 19

IN MANHATTAN

"Lollipops for Breakfast": Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am and 2 pm; \$15-\$18 (\$13-\$15 members).

A Puppet musical. As everyone knows, you can't have lollipops for breakfast! But today, Sylvie decides she's going to break that rule, even if it means she has to make her own amazingly perfect lollipop from scratch. The audience comes along on Sylvie's adventure, as Sylvie and her trusty pet bird search for missing ingredients, wrestle with giant candy machines, and get lost in a magical pop-up cookbook. It's a marvelous confection of friendship, invention and discovery.

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.

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 character 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. For children 8 to 12 years old.

Soul Nativity: 3 pm and 7 pm.



Celebrate Hanukkah

Celebrate the holidays with a performance by the Poppy Seed Players on Dec. 13 at the Kaufman Music Center.

Musical Adventures with the Poppy Seed Players celebrates Hanukkah with joyful original music for families that re-imagine the familiar Biblical stories. In "Judy & The Maccabees," a feisty young girl runs away to join a fight for religious freedom.

Harlem School of the Arts. See Friday, Dec. 11.

SUN, DEC. 20

IN MANHATTAN

"A Charlie Brown Christmas": Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave. at W. 57th Street; (212) 247-7800; www.carnegiehall.org; 3 pm; \$10, \$18, and \$25.

New York Theatre Ballet joins Steven Reineke, The New York Pops and John Bolton in bringing holiday spirit to Manhattan with classic tunes from Charles M. Schulz's hit franchise. The event, which celebrates the 50th anniversary of the iconic TV special, will include a sing-along and exciting surprises.

Soul Nativity: 3 pm. Harlem School of the Arts. See Friday, Dec. 11.

The Kaufman Kids, a troupe of young performers from Kaufman Center's Lucy Moses School, and Special Music School join with the group. For ages 4 to 11 years old.

Hanukkah performance on Dec. 13 at 11 am; tickets are \$20.

Kaufman Music Center [129 W. 67th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 501-3330; www.kaufmanmusiccenter.org].

TUES, DEC. 22

IN MANHATTAN

"Elf": The Theater at Madison Square Garden, 4 Penn Plaza at Eighth Avenue; (800) 901-4092; www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/theaters/madisonsquaregardentheater/elf.php; 7 pm; Starting at \$51.

Santa accidentally picks up an orphaned baby boy and brings him to the North Pole. The little boy grows up and realizes he is really not like the other elves. What is an elf to do? Buddy goes on search to find his real parents and winds up in New York City, where he meets a host of characters, including his dad, step-brother, and true love. Along the way he saves the Big Apple by bringing joy and the Christmas spirit. Special showing.

THURS, DEC. 31

FURTHER AFIELD

Fireworks & concert: Grand Army Plaza, Union Street between Flatbush Avenue and Prospect Park West, Brooklyn; 11 pm to 12 am; Free.

Come and celebrate the old year and the new year with this annual tradition hosted by the Beep. Entertainment, refreshments, and, of course, fireworks. Come early and get your spot.

LONG-RUNNING

IN MANHATTAN

Christmas Spectacular: Radio City Music Hall, 1260 Ave. of the Americas between 50th and 51st streets; (212) 247-4777; www.radiocity.com; Tickets start at 47.

Come and enjoy the annual tradition of music, Rockettes, and more.

Annual train show: Grand Central Terminal, 42nd Street and Park Avenue; web.mta.info/nta/museum/#general; Weekdays, 8 am to 8 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Now – Sun, Feb. 21, 2016; Free with standard admission.

Zip through tunnels, see familiar skyscrapers, and visit subway stops by viewing model trains. The layout Lionel Metro-North, New York Central, and subway trains along with a miniature replica of Grand Central Terminal is a great way to spend the holidays.

NYC Marathon exhibit: Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets; (212) 534-1672; www.mcny.org; Daily, 10 am to 6 pm, Now – Tues, March 8, 2016; 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. The exhibit features works by both amateur and professional photographers.

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

Children ages 1 to 5 do fun activity to keep moving and interested with

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Calendar

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

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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.

Astolat Castle Dollhouse: The Shops at Columbus Circle (second floor), 10 Columbus Circle at W. 59th Street; (212) 823-6300; www.theshopsatcolumbuscircle.com; Daily, 10 am–9 pm, Now – Tues, Dec. 8; Free.

The most valuable dollhouse ever and the finest miniature in the world will be on display this holiday season. Come and visit the house that contains more than 30,000 miniatures including beds, pianos, and even champagne buckets. The house was designed and built by miniaturist Elaine Diehl and took more than two years to create.

"The Three Bears Holiday Bash":

Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre in Central Park, 81st Street and Central Park West; (212) 988-9093; www.cityparksfoundation.org/arts/swedish-cottage-marionette-theatre/; Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10:30 am and noon, Wednesdays, 10:30 am, noon and 2:30 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, Now – Wed, Dec. 30; \$10 (\$7 for children under 12).

The puppet show celebrates the holiday season in song, dance and puppetry. It is a comedy of errors when Baby Bear invites Santa to star in Mama and Papa Bear's annual holiday show. The audience also gets to join in on the fun with a "12 days of Christmas" sing-a-long during the performance! Dates are subject to change, call ahead to confirm.

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 en-



Fairy tale with a twist

It's a seasonal twist in this new show, "The Commedia Rapunzel: Holiday Extravaganza Pumpkin Spice Latte Edition," now through Dec. 31 at the SoHo Playhouse.

Back by popular demand, this version adds a seasonal twist to the perennial classic. It is the holiday season in Hoboken, and Rapunzel desperately wants to venture outside of her tower's walls — but first, she has to escape her witch mother.

This ain't your average Rapun-

zel. This production is performed by the Spaghetti and Meatball Players in the style of Commedia del' Arte! Suitable for children 6 to 12 years old.

"The Commedia Rapunzel: Holiday Extravaganza Pumpkin Spice Latte Edition," on Dec. 5, 12, 19, 26, 28, 30, and 31 at 11 am; tickets are \$39, \$25 for children under 13.

The SoHo Playhouse [15 Vandam St. at Spring Street in SoHo, (212) 691-1555; www.sohoplayhouse.com]

able any child with a disability and her 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 children, including those with special needs. 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.

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.

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; their leap from print to radio, to television, and ultimately to film; the role of fandom, including the yearly mega-event known as New York Comic Con; and explore how superheroes continue to inspire the work of contemporary comic book artists, cartoonists, and painters in New York City.

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, Now – Sun, Feb. 28, 2016; Free with museum admission.

Enjoy the holiday season with Holiday Express. 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. Featuring several treasures exhibited

Christmastime with Charlie Brown

Everyone's favorite cartoon, "Peanuts," is coming to the stage on Dec. 20, at Carnegie Hall for a special Christmas concert.

"A Charlie Brown Christmas Concert" celebrates the 50th anniversary of the iconic Charles Schulz hit franchise TV show.

The New York Theatre Ballet joins with Steven Reineke, the New York Pops, and John Bolton in bringing a little Christmas spirit to Carnegie Hall with classic tunes. The performance features a special sing-along and surprise visits.

Recommended for children 5 to 10 years old.

"A Charlie Brown Christmas Concert" on Dec. 20 at 3 pm; tickets are \$10, \$18, and \$25.

Carnegie Hall [881 Seventh Ave. at W. 57th Street in Midtown, (212) 247-7800; www.carnegiehall.org].



Calendar

for the first time since New-York Historical acquired the collection, Holiday Express will unfold over a broad swath of the first floor and continue throughout the lower-level DiMenna Children's History Museum.

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.; 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. Featuring more than 180 artifacts from the late-1800s through the 1980s, Silicon City will include early computers and telecommunications hardware, archival materials, photographs, digital artworks, and interactive experiences that immerse visitors in the decades-long evolution of technology.

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 3.5 years.

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.

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

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.



Classic holiday ballet

The New York Theatre Ballet company presents Keith Michael's "The Nutcracker" for the fifth year at Florence Gould Hall on Dec. 11, 12, and 13.

The enchanting holiday ballet features Clara, the Nutcracker Prince, the Mouse King and the timeless beloved score by Tchaikovsky. Suitable for families with

children 3 years and older.

"The Nutcracker" Dec. 11, at noon; Dec. 12 and 13, 11 am, 1 pm and 3:30 pm. Tickets are \$34 for adults and \$24 for children under 12.

Florence Gould Hall [55 E. 59th St between Park and Madison avenues in Midtown, (800) 982–2787; www.nytb.org].

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.

"The Commedia Rapunzel": The SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. at Spring St.; (212) 691–1555; www.sohoplayhouse.com; Saturday, Nov. 28, 11 am; Saturday, Dec. 5, 11 am; Saturday, Dec. 12, 11 am; Saturday, Dec. 19, 11 am; Saturday, Dec. 26, 11 am; Monday, Dec. 28, 11 am; Wednesday, Dec. 30, 11 am; Thursday, Dec. 31, 11 am; \$39 (\$25 children under 13).

Back by popular demand, this version adds a seasonal twist to the perennial classic. Fun for the entire family.

"Fancy Nancy Splendiferous Christmas": The Theater at St. Jean, 184 E. 76th St. at Lexington Avenue; (212) 579–0528; <https://iseats.net/reserve/vtselectproduction.ph>

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

"Elf": The Theater at Madison Square Garden, 4 Penn Plaza at Eighth Avenue; (800) 901–4092; [www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/theaters/madison square garden theater/elf.php](http://www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/theaters/madisonsquaregardentheater/elf.php); Wednesdays, 7 pm, Thursdays, 11 am, 3 pm and 7 pm, Fridays, 11 am and 7 pm, Saturdays, 2 pm and 7 pm, Sundays, 1 and 6 pm, Wed, Dec. 9 – Sun, Dec. 27; Starting at \$51.

Santa accidentally picks up an orphaned baby boy and brings him to the North Pole. The little boy grows up and realizes he is really not like the other elves. What is an elf to do? Buddy goes on search to find his real parents and winds up in NYC where he meets a host of characters, including his dad, stepbrother, and true love. Along the way he saves the Big Apple by bringing joy and the Christmas spirit.

"Maesta": 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, Fri, Dec. 11 – Sun, March 20, 2016; Free with museum admission.

After conservation and exhibition at the J. Paul Getty Museum and at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the New-York Historical Society's Madonna and Child Enthroned with Ten Saints: Maestà is back on Central Park West.

FURTHER AFIELD

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, Now – 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.

Heart and Seoul – Korea: 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.



TEETH TIPS

**DR. LAVANYA
VENKATESWARAN
Pediatric Dentist**



Bottle weaning and your baby's teeth

Baby bottles are great. They allow your baby to drink milk or formula in a manner that mimics natural feeding. They are easy to take on the go, and easy for your baby to use. However, as your baby approaches her first birthday, it's no longer the best option for your soon-to-be toddler. By age 1, she usually has at least one or two teeth, and it's a good idea to wean her off of the bottle.

There are many reasons why it's important to transition your baby off of the bottle. First, continued use of the bottle once your baby starts getting her first teeth can lead to dental decay, depending on how and when she uses the bottle.

Secondly, prolonged use of the bottle can lead to malposition of the teeth, leading to an open bite. It can also lead to certain speech issues, such as a lisp.

Finally, as your baby grows, you want her to get more of her daily calories from solids versus milk. Prolonged use of the bottle can sometimes lead to a toddler being a picky

eater or refusing solids in favor of milk.

So, let's go over some healthy dental habits to begin as your baby turns 1, including some strategies to wean her off of the bottle.

Once your baby's teeth start to erupt, start brushing them with a soft, infant toothbrush. You can find one at any local pharmacy or drug-store, and you can use a very minimal amount of fluoride toothpaste. Since your baby likely won't be able to rinse and spit at this point, I suggest lying your baby down in your lap to brush her teeth. You can brush one or two teeth at a time, and then wipe the paste off with a wet gauze or washcloth as you go. This prevents her from swallowing the toothpaste.

If your baby drinks milk at bedtime, make sure to brush her teeth after she finishes her milk. When a baby goes to sleep drinking milk, it puts her at high risk for dental decay due to the posture she uses while drinking from the bottle — it causes a continuous pooling of milk over her front teeth. When your baby falls asleep without brushing her teeth, the milk residue left behind breaks down into carbohydrates that bacteria thrive on, leading to dental decay. This phenomenon is commonly known as "baby bottle tooth decay." For many babies, it's a comforting practice to go to sleep while drinking milk, so it can be difficult to break the habit. That's why transitioning her away from the bottle before her teeth erupt — or soon after — is helpful. An ideal age to start is around 8 months.

Introduce a straw with her cup of water or milk a few times a day. Demonstrate to your baby how to drink from the straw and keep your baby practicing. She will keep watching you and trying on her own, and soon learn how to use the straw.

I usually don't recommend trying a sippy cup spout, because it's another thing that you have to wean your baby off of later. Sippy cups can have adverse effects on your baby's teeth and speech very similar to the

bottle, because of the way the tongue gets positioned while sucking on the tip. My suggestion is to go straight to the straw.

Some bottle companies also provide an adapter kit that allows you to keep using the same bottle but with a straw tip. This way, your baby still feels as though she has her bottle, but it has an age-appropriate tip. Using a straw keeps your baby upright as she drinks, making it harder to fall asleep drinking her milk. It's easier to enact a routine of brushing after drinking milk. Once she becomes comfortable with the straw, you can even move onto a regular cup with a free-standing straw, or just a plain cup.

If your baby has teeth and has been falling asleep drinking milk from a bottle, it's a good idea to have her seen by a pediatric dentist to rule out dental decay. (In general, for all babies, it's recommended by the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry that the first dental checkup is completed by age 1 or soon after the eruption of the first tooth.)

When you decide to wean your baby off of the bottle, remember to stay consistent. As soon as your baby gets the hang of using a straw, stop using bottles completely. Otherwise, some babies tend to continue using a bottle when they know it's available to them, and it gets harder to give up as they get older.

And if you need another reason to wean baby off the bottle — transitioning to a straw means no more bottle washing and sterilizing for you, and more time playing with your beautiful little one!

Dr. Lavanya Venkateswaran is a board-certified pediatric dentist. She practices downtown at Tribeca Smiles as well as uptown at Park Ave Smile. She is an assistant professor of Clinical Dentistry at Columbia University Medical Center and is an attending dentist in the department of Pediatric Dentistry. She spends her time enjoying New York City with her husband and baby boy, and she is an avid runner and a student of Indian classical dance and music.

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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

Stocking up

If Santa is looking for a useful item or two to fill the children's — and Dad's — stockings, he should check out Pair of Thieves's whimsical collection of father-and-child sock sets.

The Pair of Thieves team (Alan Stuart, David Ehrenberg, and Cash Warren) offers a wide range of colors and patterns including the particularly festive Pa Paul (a Scandinavian-style design of navy blue, white, and hot pink that's named for Ehrenberg's dad).

Pair of Thieves men's socks fit shoe sizes 8–12, and the kids' socks come in small (18 months–3 years), medium (4–7 years), and large (8–10 years). To maximize moisture-wicking and comfort, the kids and dads' socks are a blend of cotton, polyester, and nylon, and



the dads' socks also have natural latex rubber and spandex.

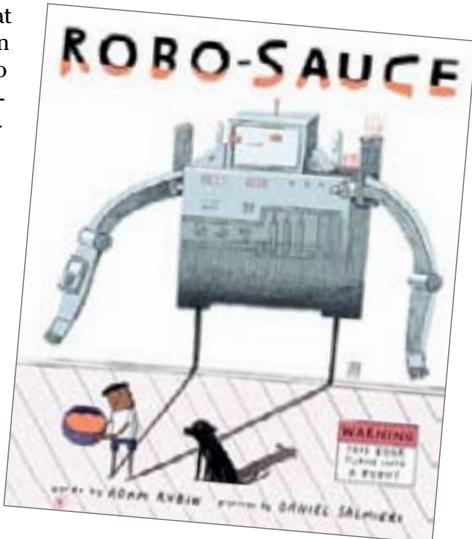
With these socks, Santa will help your family put their best feet forward.

Father-and-son sock set by Pair of Thieves, \$16, www.pairofthieves.com.

Domo arigato Mr. Rubin-to

"Robo-Sauce" is a book that children have to hold and turn its physical pages in order to be amazed by the Mad-magazine-esque gatefold that culminates in the ultimate surprise ending.

"Robo-Sauce" (Dial Books for Young Readers) is the brainchild of the dynamic duo behind "Dragons Love Tacos" — author Adam Rubin and Brooklyn illustrator Daniel Salmieri — and centers on a child who's sporting a cardboard robot costume and is failing in his attempts to garner the attention of his father reading a book, his mother at work on her laptop, or his sister playing with her cars and trucks. Luckily, the narrator has the recipe for "Robo-Sauce," a top-secret, fluorescent orange formula that transforms people, places, pets — and even this book — into robots, which, by the way, is ideal, because everyone loves robots, and 'bots don't need



to eat their veggies, take baths, or go to sleep.

The imaginative, humorous plot twist makes "Robo-Sauce" an utterly original experience, and a great holiday gift idea for a 4–8-year-old child.

"Robo-Sauce" book by Adam Rubin, \$18.99, www.penguin.com.

Score with 'The Nutcracker'

For those who think "The Nutcracker" ballet can only be appreciated by little girls taking dance classes, a new audio recording from Maestro Classics will be a wonderful surprise.

ETA Hoffmann's story is narrated by Jim Weiss. Act I is positively thrilling as Clara receives her gift on Christmas Eve — the Nutcracker — which comes to life as a Prince and battles the Mouse King. In Act II, the Prince takes Clara to the Land of Sweets to watch dancers from around the world perform,



and marvel at Mother Ginger and the Sugar Plum Fairy.

Excerpts from Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's beloved ballet score, performed by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Stephen Simon, are played to suspenseful effect.

The CD comes with a booklet listing the scenes (tracks), word puzzles, and child-friendly essays about the history of ballet, the harp, and Tchaikovsky.

Listening to this CD — recommended for kids ages 5 and older — and completing the activities will certainly serve to make the time magically fly by during your holiday travels.

"The Nutcracker" CD from Maestro Classics, \$16.98 (\$9.98 digital download), www.MaestroClassics.com.

Three great shakes

The do-it-yourself trend has finally come to snow globes! In the new kit from Creativity for Kids, families can create three of their own snow globe scenes using clay and adorable, tiny resin figurines:



Santa, a snowman, and a reindeer. The kit includes three plastic snow globes, clay, clay-sculpting tools, the figurines, a funnel, and glitter! (Parents supply the distilled water.)

The kit also includes wonderfully detailed instructions to encourage success (such as illustrated ideas for those stymied about what

to do when presented with a lump of clay), and how to prevent water-related mishaps. These globes also look sweet without water.

The kit makes a great gift for children ages 6 and older, and when the three handcrafted snow globes are complete, they'll make three precious gifts for a few special recipients. This engrossing activity that will keep hands and minds occupied while they wait with breathless anticipation for a visit from Saint Nicholas!

Make Your Own Holiday Snow Globes, \$20, www.barnesandnoble.com.



AMAZING IS HAVING A BRAIN TUMOR REMOVED THROUGH YOUR NOSE.

What if the only way to save your three-year-old child from blindness was a surgery that could rob him of his memory? Nile Mitchell's parents faced that agonizing dilemma. Doctors at NewYork-Presbyterian/Komansky Center for Children's Health told them waiting wasn't an option—Nile had a tumor at the base of his brain with two cysts that were ballooning in size. In a procedure lasting seven hours, the surgical team removed the tumor through his nasal cavities. When he woke up, Nile had his vision, his memory and two very happy parents at his bedside.

 **NewYork-Presbyterian**

nyp.org/kids

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