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QUEENS

Family July 2010

Letter from the publisher

Here's to health!

The debate goes on about good health and how to keep it. For me, the reality is clear. I believe that eating "real food" is an essential to building the foundation of good health for all members of our families. As a result, I have the utmost concern about the "processing of our food supply" and all the additives, hormones, antibiotics and other means of mass production of food that have made us not only unhealthy, but obese.



We must give credibility to the concept that "we are what we eat", and return to whole foods, leaving behind the manufactured non-foods that populate the aisles of our supermarkets. We have to train our youngsters to eat right and not give in to the mass marketing and past 50 years of the food industry that have fattened up America and shortsighted our good health. We have to read the labels and choose carefully what is real and what is manipulated. We have to stop buying the hype.

The result of new trends in thinking is that a lot of emphasis is being given these days to promoting healthy ways to eat, cook and obtain the right ingredients to make real health happen. Our local writer, Risa Doherty, has contributed an article to this issue focusing on the many greenmarkets and organic food choices becoming more prevalent in every community. The partnership between local farmers and the consumers of our metropolitan area is ongoing and growing.

Proudly we promote this in our magazines and more will be written about this as the months go by. This is a wonderful time of year when a great assortment of fresh fruits and vegetables are readily and deliciously available. Make sure your family gets to enjoy them. Happy cooking and happy eating!

Thanks for reading and have a Happy Fourth of July!

Susan Weiss-Voskidis, Publisher



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NEWBIE DAD

BRIAN KANTZ

The rocket boys

For my 37th birthday, my 5-year-old son picked out the exact present that he wanted to give me. Wait a second, let's be perfectly honest here. Those last three words are completely unnecessary. The first sentence of this column should read: For my 37th birthday, my 5-year-old son picked out the exact present that he wanted.

Which is A-OK by me.

Heck, I think the little guy caught on to my own present-buying schemes. Like the pair of primo baseball tickets I bought my wife for her birthday. Or the surround-sound speakers she received last Christmas.

So, what did my son buy him-

self? A rocket. An honest-to-goodness "Model Rocket!" with "Quick Assembly!," a "Real Rocket Engine — Sold Separately!" and, by the way, "!"WARNING: Product Contains Lead." (You know a product is super-cool when it can get away with placing an exclamation point after the words "sold separately" and before a warning about a poisonous metal).

brother began tearing at the box like a couple of Gollums going after the ring. They had faithfully kept the rocket under wraps for two whole weeks, and couldn't last one more second — they wanted to see what that bad boy really looked like.

What it looked like initially — to their disappointment — was a bunch of small plastic parts and a long list of instructions. Apparently, they thought a fully assembled Space Shuttle Atlantis was going to drop out of the box. Quickly, I tried to rally the troops.

"C'mon, guys, this is going to be great! What an awesome present! Building the rocket together will be half the fun," I said, only half-believing that myself.

Turns out, building the rocket was pretty fun. I waited until my 3-year-old went on a playdate (I was pretty sure that he would just run off with key parts and hide them behind the couch if allowed to help) and then sat down with the older boy to piece the rocket together. I read the instructions and he did the mechanical work. We talked about whether the rocket could make it past the clouds and all the way to the moon. We joked about strapping the 3-year-old to the rocket. Slowly but surely, we built that rocket and pride beamed from our faces.

As advised, we left the rocket's engine — an insert the size of a crayon that is filled with who-knows-what kind of propellant — inside its packaging until launch time — T-minus-21-hours.

The next morning, the boys, who became interested in rockets and space thanks to their Grandparent's proximity to Cape Canaveral (and the fact that Grandma always buys them space-themed toys) popped out of bed ready, in their words, to "light that candle."

On this special day, I figured you can never have too much of a good thing. So, I popped in my DVD of "October Sky," the real-life tale of a boy named Homer Hickam who grew up in a West Virginia mining town and built a rocket with the help of some friends (the self-proclaimed "Rocket Boys"), which eventually earned him

a scholarship to college, a job with NASA and the respect of his father. Not bad. I fast-forwarded to a thrilling scene late in the movie when the boys launch one of their rockets. My sons watched in awe, then asked excitedly, "Can we go launch our rocket now?"

With blue skies overhead and still, warm air, it was a perfect day for launch. We set up the pad in the middle of a local baseball field complex. I inserted the engine into the base of the rocket and connected the wiring. We were go for launch. My wife dutifully videotaped the proceedings for later review by mission control.

My 5-year-old counted, slow and steady, "TEN... NINE... EIGHT... SEVEN... SIX... FIVE... FOUR... THREE... TWO... ONE..." Pressing his finger on the black-and-white striped launch button, the rocket jumped from the pad with a THHHSSSTTT noise and climbed into the sky. We followed it with our eyes as it accelerated, went into its climb phase, reached its apogee... and failed to eject its parachute.

The rocket crashed back to earth and the recovery team — whooping with sheer joy despite the glitch — sprinted across the field to assess the flight.

After I loosened the parachute inside the body of the rocket, we tried again. This time, our 3-year-old sent the rocket on its way with the touch of a button and the vehicle performed its task — all systems nominal, in NASA-speak.

A thrilling lift-off turned into a majestic flight, which turned into a soft, parachute-aided descent.

That night, when the boys went to bed, they each rolled over on their back, whispered the countdown sequence, and knifed their hands up toward the ceiling, replaying the launch. Soon, they would close their eyes and dream about the day they became the Rocket Boys.

Brian Kantz's only previous experience launching model rockets came with those pump-and-shoot water rockets that went about 20 feet in the air, then broke. Remember those? Visit Brian online at www.briankantz.com or drop him a note at thenewbiedad@yahoo.com.



self? A rocket. An honest-to-goodness "Model Rocket!" with "Quick Assembly!," a "Real Rocket Engine — Sold Separately!" and, by the way, "!"WARNING: Product Contains Lead." (You know a product is super-cool when it can get away with placing an exclamation point after the words "sold separately" and before a warning about a poisonous metal).

As soon as I unwrapped the gift, my 5-year-old and his 3-year-old



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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Too tired to cook?

Finding time for parents to cook healthy meals

Too crazed to eat right? Face it. If you're a parent, you're busy. There may be days so jam-packed with everything you need to accomplish, that your well-intentioned healthy diet takes a hit. Big time. Those hoped-for nutritious meals are often replaced by meals you'd be embarrassed to show your in-laws. Or you're eating out — again.

"The challenge is great for most working parents to put a meal on the table, much less a healthy meal, even with the best of intentions," says Dallas-based registered dietitian and culinary expert Robin Plotkin. The number one reason she hears is "no time," which she says translates into "lack of planning."

Other excuses include:

- Too tired
- Overscheduled children
- Lack of cooking skills
- Don't enjoy cooking

Although health and nutrition may be important to you, convenience often wins. Surveys show even though fewer people are eating out during this recession, they're not necessarily cooking at home more. Instead, they're bringing in prepared food and warming it in their microwave ovens. What's the problem with this? Total strangers are preparing much of our food, and we lose

Q: How important are snacks in my child's diet?

A: Active children need to adequately fuel their bodies and a good way to supplement their meals is by supplying them with nutritious snacks. Try offering your child "good stuff" like fruit and veggies with dip, yogurt, smoothies, cheese, oatmeal cookies, as well as popcorn and nuts (if age-appropriate).

the control of the ingredients used and its nutritional value.

A Cornell University study last fall found that being employed can result in unhealthy eating habits. Lead researcher Carol Devine found that long hours and shift work were associated with mothers and fathers depending on mealtime coping strategies. Fathers tended to skip family meals, eat while working, or feed their families take-out meals. Mothers were more likely to skip breakfast and buy restaurant or prepared entrees instead of cooking. Overeating after a missed meal and eating in the car were two additional strategies.

Watching your weight? Late last year, a study found that well-educated women too busy to focus on food, as well as guilt-ridden dieters and impulsive eaters, are the most likely to show signs of obesity. Enough said.

Plotkin, who is a mother of one, provides some simple tips for busy parents to put a nourishing, yet inexpensive meal on the table for their families:

1. Take 15 minutes on a Sunday and plan at least three or four meals for the family. Make the shopping list and hit the store.

2. Stock up on proteins that can be frozen for use throughout the week. Pick simple veggies and starches to round out the meal.

3. Prepare fresh produce as soon as you bring it home. Wash, chop



and store properly for easy access.

4. Prepare in bulk. For example, if you are cooking chicken breasts on the grill tonight, throw on two, four, or eight more. Freeze and store for later in the week as the main ingredient for chicken salads, chicken pizza, and chicken and pasta. While the grill is on, grill extra veggies. Freeze and store. They're great for toppings on pizza, added to pastas, tossed into salads and veggie fajitas.

5. Dig out the slow cooker. It can be your best friend all year round.

Juggling work and family life can challenge even the most nutritionally-aware parents to provide healthful meals to their families and themselves. By investing a little time and effort, your family will eat better now and enjoy health benefits in the future.

Christine M. Palumbo, MBA, RD is a mother of three from Naperville, Illinois. She is an adjunct faculty member of Benedictine University. She swears by meal planning and keeping her pantry stocked with staples for those busier-than-normal days. She can be reached at 630-369-8495 or ChristinePalumbo.com.

Shredded Chicken and Avocado Pizza

INGREDIENTS

- 1 12-inch Boboli ready-made pizza crust
- 1/2 cup pizza sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon chipotle Tabasco
- 1 cup cooked shredded chicken
- 3/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 fully ripened avocado from Mexico, halved pitted, peeled and sliced

INSTRUCTIONS: Heat oven to 425°F. Place pizza crust on a baking sheet; bake crust 7 minutes.

In small bowl, combine pizza sauce and Tabasco.

Spread pizza with sauce; top with chicken, avocado and cheese.

Bake until crust is crisp on the bottom, 4 to 6 minutes longer.

Serves 4.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING: 247 calories, 13 grams protein, 26.5 grams fat, 10 grams carbohydrate

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LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Riding with a teen behind the wheel

The big day arrived this April. My son turned 16 and wanted to register for his learner's permit. Years ago, I remember joking with other parents about the future. Can you just imagine so-and-so driving? Then we'd all laugh. Now D-Day was here and it didn't seem quite as funny. The slip of paper with his name on it induced a flashback for me — my mom telling everyone who would listen that I used to go on red and stop on green.

I still took the leap. I drove him

Control and Prevention, "Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens. Per mile driven, teen drivers ages 16–19 are four times more likely than older drivers to crash."

Reports by the CDC also conclude that teens are more likely than older drivers to underestimate dangerous or potentially hazardous situations. The National Highway Traffic Safety Association provides yet another shocking analysis: "Among 15 to 20-year-old drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2008, 31 percent of the drivers who were killed in motor vehicle crashes had been drinking."

Then, there is the latest hazard: texting while driving.

State laws have changed in response to these statistics. There are new graduated driver licensing laws in New York that require teens to follow a more-strict protocol before a senior license is issued. These laws have a supervised learning period and an intermediate license period before teens can get their full-privilege license. There are also more restrictions for new drivers.

First time out

Some parents say that it is best to have a driving expert teach their teens. However, if you feel up to the challenge, you should keep the following in mind.

Your teen needs to get comfortable with the basics. Take him to a parking lot to practice using the accelerator, brake and steering wheel. Then, gradually take him to roads where he will encounter traffic lights, pedestrian walkways, and higher speed limits.

David Melton, Director of Trans-

portation Consulting Services at the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety in Hopkinton, Mass., says, "Our expectations of how our kids drive must be very clear. Put expectations in writing and remind your teens of them regularly." Melton encourages parents to be good role models. "Your teens will expect you to exhibit the same safe driving behaviors as you require of them."

Life-long safety behind the wheel

Melton explains, "Just because your teen has obtained his license, doesn't mean he has the experience he needs to cope with the driving situations he'll face. Talk to your teen about driving safety, and do it often. We know from years of research that teens who say they have regular conversations with their parents about driving safety are less likely to exhibit destructive behaviors, like speeding and driving under the influence."

Driving safety should be an ongoing discussion. It's good for everyone to be reminded of safe driving strategies. Defensive driving courses are for experienced drivers, too, and they lower insurance rates.

Tips and tales

"It's the braking that freaks us parents out. Once they get a handle on that, you will feel much better about going out on road."

Kathy Anderson, Poughkeepsie, NY

"I paid for individual driving lessons for my son because I think it is really difficult for a parent to do. I think one really good thing is to give them words of encouragement."

Linda Witherwax, Hyde Park, NY

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The latest hazard: texting while driving.

to a quiet neighborhood on the way home from the motor vehicle office so he could practice using the brake and accelerator. Except for the whiplash, he did pretty well. The hardest part came later when we ventured onto the main roads. The problem with main roads is that there are things in the way — other cars, confused squirrels, road crews, etc. It's enough to cause the calmest of parents to have a conniption!

Why worry?

The statistics are alarming. According to the Centers for Disease

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Remember: you are what you eat

In a confusing food culture, why bother 'going green'?

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

Will your child still be eating chicken nuggets, pizza and bagels by the time she gets to college? Are you concerned about your child's diet now and are looking to do something about it?

Childhood obesity is a serious problem in our country. Whether or not your child is currently obese, most parents would like to give their children the best and set them on the road to a healthy lifestyle. Parents can shape their children's palates for the rest of their lives.

The reason so many don't is simple — it seems so inconvenient and more expensive. And, if you are anything like me, you might think, "Why bother?"

That was my attitude; I was a "Doubting Thomas." When Melissa, my then pre-teen daughter, asked me to buy organic foods, I thought it was a waste of money, but I indulged her. To my surprise, the apples were meatier, the carrots tasted better, and so did the milk.

When I was growing up, I thought vegetables grew in the freezer, but I also knew that an assortment of fruit and vegetables came in cans. They were mostly tasteless, or in the case of fruit, covered in sweet, sugary syrup. We did have Red Delicious apples, carrots, melon, bananas and occasionally some other fresh vegetables or berries in the summer, but I was just not interested.

Kids growing up today in New York City have a disconnect as to where the food on their plates originates, according to Michael Hurwitz, Director of the Greenmarket Program at GrowNYC. GrowNYC offers programs to educate children with respect to nutrition, as well as growing practices, through

interactive experiences. Even adults are often unaware of the incredible diversity of products and the hundreds of varieties available at farmer's markets. Your child can taste many varieties of a fruit or a vegetable and will either find a new favorite, or learn to eat something that she did not think she'd ever like, as different varieties of the same item tend to have differing flavors. Given more choices, children can select the variety that most appeals to their palate.

When children visit a farmer's market for the first time, the rich colors and flavors of such a vast array of incredibly fresh produce astonish most kids and they really have fun. A knowledgeable staff teaches the children how the food is raised and how to make the best use of it.

These days we are all in a hurry and have gotten used to the convenience of pre-packaged and fast food that is so readily available. But these foods are laden with hidden calories and invariably higher in sugar, salt and fat, explains Ellen Walk, a registered dietician at Jacobi Medical Center. Even when we are trying "to be good" and eat healthy, we buy 100-calorie packages of snack food, pre-cut fruit in containers and pre-cut salad in bags. Of course, these are not the worst choices we can make, and yet, surprisingly, they are also not the healthiest. The pre-cut salad greens may have been washed with chemicals to keep them looking fresh. Even the fruit that may have been cut at your local market cannot be as fresh without its natural covering or rind, and often sits in the store for days. According to Walk, this is not the freshest or healthiest way to eat.

However, food purchased at the farmer's market is "nutritionally ma-

ture, sold within 18 to 20 hours of being harvested," explains Hurwitz. It's also better for you. Hurwitz says "there is no better value," referring not only to the reasonable prices, but to the longer shelf life associated with the produce from the farmer's market.

As consumers, we now have more information than ever before on food labels and even calorie and ingredient composition at some restaurants and fast food establishments. And yet, we gravitate to whatever seems quick and easy.

Walk reminds us that fast foods are fast in more than one way — they are readily available and they are eaten fast. Fast food requires very little chewing, unlike, for example, an apple. So, not only are fast foods unhealthy because of their content, but we are often guilty of mindlessly consuming them. Consequently, we eat more than we should.

Walk says that when children, like Melissa, ask to eat healthy, they are exhibiting a respect for food and pride in what they put in their body, and parents should be responsive.

Still, there is more to eating healthy than eating organic produce. According to Hurwitz, by purchasing produce at a farmer's market we are addressing three separate health concerns — personal, community and environmental. Personal health involves eating the freshest fruits and vegetables, as part of a balanced diet. Farmlands are often replaced by housing developments, and not vice versa, and by community health, we are demonstrating the virtue of building a local economy. For him, environmental health includes not only the smaller carbon footprint to which "locavores" (people who eat locally raised food and produce) as-





pire, but biodiversity in growing, to keep the land healthy and fertile. Produce from foreign markets is often treated with chemical preservatives, and, as Walk indicated, may come from countries which do not have the same standards and regulations with respect to pesticides. GrowNYC farmers work to preserve the water shed, evidencing a true sense of responsibility with the ecological community

and protecting NYC water, explains Hurwitz. He says that their farmers limit chemical use and do not “blanket spray” their fields. Part of the mission of GrowNYC is to educate “the next generation of stewards [environmental leaders].”

This month, check out the wide selection of apples, tomatoes, Kirby cucumbers, zucchini blossoms, squash, cherries, scallions, spinach,

kale, lettuce, peaches, sweet peppers, raspberries, blueberries, melons, cabbage and cauliflower.

Walk was eager to note that the healthier, local, organic foods taste better and can be prepared simply. It can be easier and healthier to cook with just a touch of seasoning to bring out the the fresh flavor, without adding heavy sauces or using complicated recipes. She recommends

roasting vegetables in the oven with a little bit of salt and olive oil. Finger foods can include fresh carrots, green beans, celery and sliced apple.

Today “going green” is more accessible than you think. To find a farmer’s market near you in the five boroughs, or on Long Island, go to www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/CommunityFarmersMarkets.asp. to learn about Greenmarkets, their locations, and even request one in your neighborhood.

In addition, more and more people are becoming more participatory in the going green movement and are joining “CSAs” (Community Supported Agriculture groups). There is The Garden of Eve in Carroll Gardens, the Chelsea CSA, Biophilia Organic Farm in Jamestown, NY, and the Long Island City CSA. Check out www.localharvest.org. for a more complete listing and information. When you buy shares for a season in a CSA, you have an opportunity to visit the farm it is affiliated with and can agree to work for a set number of hours on the farm. When kids go to the farm and put their hands in the dirt, they create a personal relationship with the earth. It becomes more than just a fun outing and they may have a more positive relationship with food as they grow up.

You may instead opt to join a food co-op, like the Park Slope Food Coop, which boasts 14,000 members. Queens will get its first food co-op in the Fall of 2011. Go to www.queensharvetscoop.com or visit them on Facebook. Core group members at food co-ops and CSAs often get discounts.

You can also check out the Greenfest in Mattituck, Long Island, on July 24 and 25 by going to www.eastendgreenfest.com or calling (631) 734-5894.

Don’t do it just because it is politically correct right now. Your job as a parent is to open doors for your child. If you don’t want to commit to a CSA or food co-op, start by just eating some organic, locally grown produce and make a few healthier meals each week. See how your family reacts. Fresh does taste better and you may be surprised when your children’s palates become accustomed to fresher, healthier food, and they scoff at frozen and canned produce.

Risa C. Doherty is an attorney and freelance writer.

When the diet hits a wall

New struggles as I get closer to my weight-loss goal

BY KATHY SENA

“Plateau” is a lovely word that dieters despise. After four months of following a weight-loss plan, I have to admit that I’ve hit the wall. My motivation isn’t as strong as it was when I started, and I need a boost.

The bad news? I lost only 1.2 pounds this month. The good news? I went on vacation and didn’t gain weight overall for the month. I’m sure I gained some the week I was gone, but I was able to stick to my plan the rest of the month for a net loss — but just by the skin of my teeth!

But, how could I not with all those restaurant meals? I wasn’t able to just do Raisin Bran, banana and skim milk every morning when there were ranchero omelets to be had. And not every dinner was fish and steamed veggies. (Does veggie pizza count? At least I skipped the pepperoni!)

And, isn’t it maddening how one over-the-top restaurant meal seems to be enough to set you on

your heels? I can be “good” for many meals in a row, but one night out with too much fat and salt and it really sets me back. (Just multiply that on vacation...)

Fortunately, a friend told me she liked this column because I took a share-the-warts-and-all approach to my weight-loss experience. “Other women can relate to your ups and downs,” she said, knowing that some weeks would be easier than others. “So you need to blog about your weight gains as well as losses.”

OK, enough of the pity party. Time to get back on the horse. I’m going to walk more this month, drink more water and pay more attention to registered dietitian and Food Network star Ellie Krieger’s “usually,” “sometimes” and “rarely” food lists. I know that one night’s garlic bread-and-pasta fest isn’t going to put me — permanently, at least — on the road to ruin. Also, I’m back to keeping my food diary.

Here’s my weight loss so far:

- Weigh-in number one: **147.0** (*my starting weight*)
- Weigh-in number two: **144.6** (*lost 2 pounds total*)
- Weigh-in number three: **139.0** (*lost 8 pounds total*)
- Weigh-in number four: **135.6** (*lost 11.4 pounds total*)
- Weigh-in number five: **134.4** (*lost 12.6 pounds total*)

Looking at the big picture, I’m really happy with how this is going. I’ve lost 12.6 pounds and I’ve gone from a size 12 to a size 10. Would I like to be a six? Sure! But I wasn’t even a size six in high school, so a number of years and a baby later, I’m guessing that’s not in the cards.

But, a size eight? Bring it on! That’s a goal I can reasonably work toward, and a size I can expect to maintain if I stay vigilant over the long haul. And, let’s get real: That’s the true challenge, as we all know, to keep up the healthy eating and workouts as time goes on — even through plateaus like the one I’m on now.

Fortunately, Krieger, author of “Small Changes, Big Results,” has worked with many clients who have felt the same pressure regarding maintenance as they started to get close to their goal weight. And they weren’t any more perfect at this than you and I are.

Here are Krieger’s suggestions for dealing with these fears — and com-



WEIGHING IN

Part 5 of a series

ing up with a plan to handle those inevitable relapses:

- Remember that you don’t need to be perfect. Did you indulge a bit too much on vacation? Get back on your plan again when you get home. Did work deadlines keep you from

exercising last week? Start again this week.

- Keep stress at bay. If you’re feeling whipped by stress (and if it’s sending you to the fridge a bit too often) do some yoga, meditation, stretching or deep-breathing exercises. Stress can make any of us overeat. Concentrate on slowing down and getting back to eating mindfully.

- Cut yourself some slack. Don’t beat yourself up when you fall off the wagon. What purpose does that serve? Just get back on track and move on.

- Look at your life. If you’re slipping back into old habits, ask yourself what’s going on in your life to derail your progress — is it work? Family? Try to figure out why you are struggling.

- Make a new plan — and stick with it. Deciding, “I’ll walk for 10 minutes tonight after work” beats doing nothing. Tomorrow, make it 20. Before you know it, you’ll be back on track.

PS: I recently found this photo of myself when I was a kid, happily messing around on the swing set in our backyard. It made me realize that I once viewed being active as something fun, not a chore on a to-do list. I’m going to put that photo on the fridge to remind myself that it still can be fun!

Kathy Sena is a freelance journalist specializing in family-health issues. Her writing has appeared in the Los Angeles Times, Newsweek, Woman’s Day and many other publications. Visit her parenting blog, Parent Talk Today, at www.parenttalktoday.com.



Kathy as an active kid.



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Dr. Milchman received his Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from the University of Pennsylvania where he graduated with Honors and received two additional awards in the specialty of Periodontics. He expanded on his training with a one year General Practice Residency at Montefiore Medical Center. Dr. Milchman went on to complete a dual degree Orthodontic Residency Program at Temple University. In addition to his certificate in Orthodontics, Dr. Milchman has also earned a Masters of Science in Dentistry. In pursuit of the highest standards in his specialty, Board Certification, Dr. Milchman has successfully passed the American Board of Orthodontics Written Board Exam and Clinical Case Exam.

Dr. Milchman serves the needs of the pediatric, adolescent, and adult community in his two private offices in Queens, New York. In addition, he is currently an Attending Orthodontist at St. Barnabas Hospital and Wyckoff Heights Medical Center.

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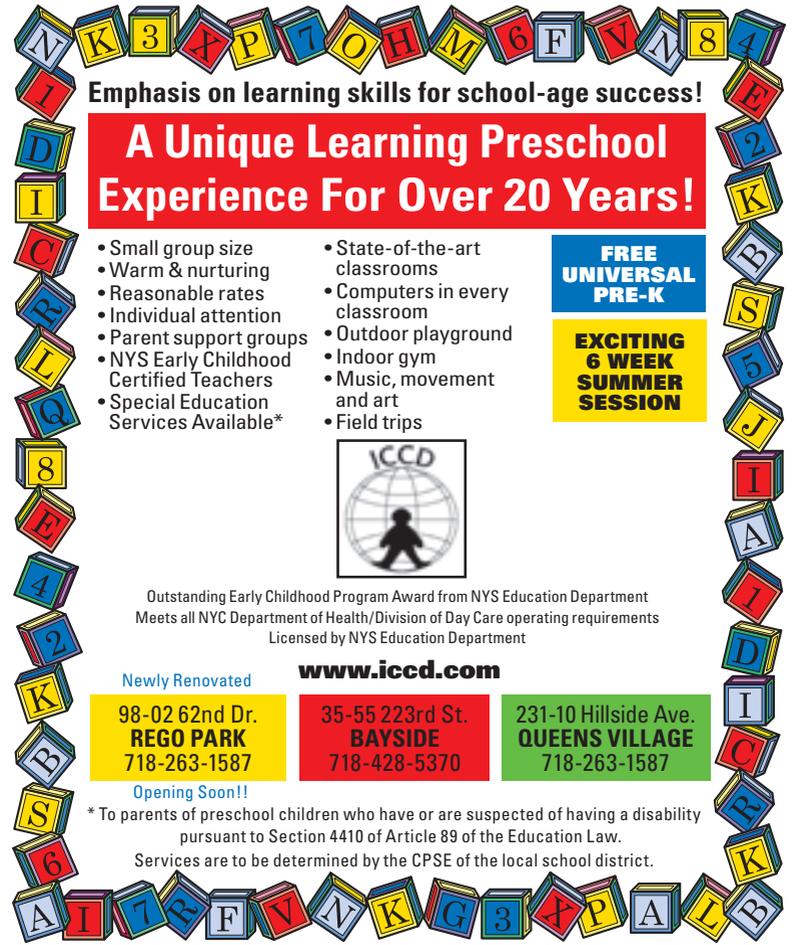
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When mom power plugs into the Web

Social media is creating a digital back fence for today's moms

BY KATHY SENA

When U.S. Air flight 1549 landed in the Hudson River, Gwen Poth wanted to be glued to the TV. “We live in Charlotte, North Carolina (where the plane was originally headed) and I knew there was a good chance we knew people on the plane — and it ended up that we did,” she says. “But I didn’t want to risk my 3- and 4-year olds seeing the plane on TV.”

So she did what many moms are doing these days: She turned to Twitter (www.twitter.com), where she could follow the story, find news links and see the amazing photo of the passengers on the plane’s wing. Through Twitter (as opposed to just going to an online news site), Poth was able to be in the virtual company of other moms as the whole country held its breath, waiting to learn the fate of the passengers — while she was also at home with her preschoolers.

“It’s something I’m surprised people don’t talk about more — the value of Twitter to moms who are very tied to the house because of their children, but who want to still keep up on current events without scaring their kids with newscasts,”

says Poth.

If you’re not already tweeting away, you’re probably wondering — what exactly is Twitter? It’s a free social-networking and micro-blogging service that allows users to send and read other users’ updates, known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters.

The digital back fence

Blogs, Facebook, Twitter — there are many ways for moms to connect these days that weren’t even around when today’s middle schoolers were born. (Boy, could I have used Twitter back then! Probably would have shared way too many adorable baby pics on Facebook, too.)

“Social media is raising the back fence for moms once again by giving them a place to commiserate, kvetch and compare notes — virtually,” says Jen Singer, creator of MommaSaid.net, and author of “Stop Second Guessing Yourself — The Toddler Years” (HCI, 2009). The two-way nature of social media “combines the camaraderie of the local playground with the practicality of the community parenting class — minus the carpool,” she adds.

Sometimes moms turn to social

media to help their children — and in the process they help a lot of other families, too. Boston-area mom Jennifer B., who has two kids ages 8 and 5, started her blogs, Free to Enjoy Baseball — Peanut-Free and More (www.peanutfreebaseball.com) and Food Allergy Buzz (www.foodallergybuzz.com), because her youngest child is allergic to peanuts. She also co-founded the Facebook group You Don’t Need Nuts to Fly with another food-allergy mom blogger.

On her blog, A Deaf Mom Shares Her World (deafmomworld.com), Karen Putz, a mom of three deaf and hard-of-hearing kids, has made friends all over the world, and has helped educate other parents about issues such as hearing-aid insurance coverage and coming out of what she calls the “deaf/hard-of-hearing closet.”

There’s a lot of trust that builds among moms on social media as the tweets fly, communities spring up around popular blogs and Facebook keeps us not only involved in favorite causes, but in touch with other moms at times when we may be struggling to work (or these days, perhaps, to find a job), keep hearth and home together and have some family time.

Kindred spirits — most of the time

Of course, it’s not all hearts, flowers and mom bloggers sitting around singing “Kumbaya” by a virtual campfire. Why, you may be wondering, does Jennifer B. keep mum about her last name, both

here and online? She has received nasty comments from some moms who say she’s raising her peanut-allergic child in a bubble and that she should just “give him peanuts and see what happens.”

“I’m just amazed at how emotional

Moms go green with social media

San Pedro, California mom Jennifer Taggart is passionate about green and non-toxic issues, particularly when they relate to kids. The mother of a 6-year-old son and a 4-year-old daughter blogs at The Smart Mama (www.thesmartmama.com).

“I’m a founding member of the Green Moms Carnival, a group of

amazing green-blogging women,” says Taggart. “Once a month, we have a topic-specific blogging day, where we unite our voices to focus on a particular subject,” she adds. “We are also active on Twitter as a group and won the Shorty Award for best green content.”

Among other things, Taggart

and her fellow mom bloggers have brought their voices together to demand BPA-free products and to get a children’s clothing manufacturer to respond to moms’ concerns about the issue of skin burns caused by tagless tags.

Want to learn more? Visit healthygreenmoms.com/blog.

people can get in a discussion with a total stranger on the internet," Jennifer says. If you've ever followed the sometimes-heated comments following a controversial blog post (on either side of the issue) on home schooling, breastfeeding or childhood vaccinations, you know what she means.

Moms on social media definitely will let you know when they disagree with you — sometimes in large numbers. When Facebook recently tried to ban the posting of breastfeeding photos, several moms from the U.S., England and Australia teamed up to create a Facebook group: Hey Facebook, Breastfeeding is Not Obscene! Apparently its more than 225,000 members agree.

Social-media moms demand change, find lost shoes — and even try wine tasting

It's amazing how social media has grown in so many unexpected directions. "TwitterMoms (www.twittermoms.com) are a powerful bunch," says Megan Calhoun, founder of this social-networking site where moms come together to connect on a wide range of topics and to share their expertise.

"TwitterMoms organized a petition (containing 12,853 signatures) to get Chris Brown removed from the Kid's Choice Awards and were successful," Calhoun adds. (Brown was charged with two felony counts of assault and making criminal threats following his alleged altercation with girlfriend Rihanna on the eve of this year's Grammy Awards.) After the petition was created, "Chris withdrew his name from the nominations," she says.

Wine Tasting on Twitter? Why not? (I will admit to a bit of confusion, at first, as to how this would actually work.) The Twitter Wine Moms (twittermoms.ning.com/group/twitterwinemoms) on TwitterMoms select a reasonably priced bottle of wine that everyone cracks open at the same time. Members' tasting notes — and lots of other fun comments — are then shared on Twitter. The group

has nearly 400 members so far. That's some virtual girls' night out! (And no babysitter required.)

Some of the best uses of social media are local, however. "I subscribe to a Yahoo! group called Hoboken Moms," says Rosemary Ostmann, the mom of a 20-month-old daughter from Hoboken, New Jersey. "While our town is just one square mile, there are 2,500 moms actively posting about everything from breastfeeding and potty training to a lost shoe and stroller-friendly restaurants," she adds. "There are usually about 2,000 messages posted each month."

Designed to fit your day

One of the best things about social media is that it works around a mom's crazy schedule. Up with the baby at 2 am? It might be too late to phone a friend, but there's always another mom to chat with on Twit-

ter. Home with a sick preschooler — and not feeling so hot yourself? Pop on over to Facebook for a little pity-party status update. Wondering if anyone else ever wanted to ship her 'tude-laden 'tween to Siberia? Come on over to my blog, Parent Talk Today (www.parenttalktoday.com), and you'll know you're not alone.

Jen Singer probably sums it up best for many of the Twittering, blogging, Facebook-loving moms out there: "Social media makes it easy to find and keep up with like-minded moms," she says. "Best of all, nobody sees the grape jelly on your sleeve!"

Kathy Sena is a mom, a blogger (www.parenttalktoday.com) and a freelance journalist who frequently covers parenting and social-media topics. Follow her on Twitter at @kathysena. She also covers consumer issues of interest to moms for Consumer Reports on Twitter at @CReporter.

Moms on social media definitely will let you know when they disagree with you — sometimes in large numbers.





PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

Explaining healthy eating to children



Dear Sharon,

I want my kids to be healthy and I am determined to beat the “peer and social pressure” of eating processed foods. Can you advise a parent, like me, how I can convince my children to follow our good eating program (not boring but fresh and real food)? A parent of my son’s friend told my son that we were “depriving” our kids of trips to McDonald’s, etc., which really annoyed me.

Dear Mom,

Confusing messages about food are everywhere. Many people, including Michelle Obama, are trying to change some of these messages, but change often comes more slowly than we would like.

Generally, I think it is important for parents to be as clear as possible about what they think should happen in their home. Since our environment is full of processed foods that many children like, our little ones often get upset with our requests for healthier choices.

Parents set guidelines and limits on many issues. When convincing a child to agree to something difficult to do (avoiding processed food is difficult for most children) it is useful for parents to be sympathetic to the difficulty, ready for the possible complaints that ensue and most im-

portantly, clear, calm and relatively brief in their explanation.

Getting input from your children about foods they might enjoy can also be helpful so that conversations don’t become power battles, which usually don’t end well, between adult and child. A child might want to make a list of things he particularly likes to eat, select some items at the grocery store or be given some leeway about food on special occasions. All of these things can help reduce tension.

It can also be good to have someone outside of the immediate family offer perspective if things at home get repeatedly argumentative. A trusted pediatrician, relative or babysitter can sometimes play a helpful role. As with many parental decisions, there will often be mothers or fathers who think differently. That, of course, is annoying, but to be expected, especially if your thoughts are different than those of the families around you. In your case, an adult’s personal reaction was shared with your child. That makes things

particularly complicated. Many parents I know who have been in similar situations have offered this simple but usually effective explanation: “Our family is different than others and that is OK.”

I think one key to having “limit setting” conversations go well, is the strength of a parent’s relationship with her child. If there is already a communicative and loving relationship between parent and child, then a conversation about diet is likely to go relatively smoothly.

If a parent and child argue often, then decisions about diet will be harder to put in place. I often tell parents to spend some time enjoying their children before tackling difficult topics such as food choices. It is usually much easier for parents to successfully help their children when they are feeling relaxed and pleased with them.

Setting healthy eating patterns in a family is usually not easy for children or adults, but I believe it can be done thoughtfully over time and can work well for everyone.

Sharon C. Peters is a mother and director of Parents Helping Parents, 669 President St., Brooklyn (718) 638-9444, www.PHPonline.org.

If you have a question about a challenge in your life (no issue is too big or too small) e-mail it to Dear Sharon at SWeiss@cnglocal.com.

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Healthy kids take all their vitamins

So says the conventional wisdom. But should they?

BY LAURA J. VAROSCAK

All parents want their children to eat a healthy, well-balanced diet. Nutritious food is vital to maintaining optimal growth and development.

Mothers who breastfeed ensure their baby receives enough at each feeding. When solid foods are introduced, parents read labels and choose products that are all natural or organic. Eventually, more variety is added as children experiment with selections from the five food groups. Children who enjoy trying new healthy foods, including whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, lean meats and fish benefit from the many vitamins and minerals they contain. Those who refuse to sample foreign cuisine and limit their diet to fistfuls of Cheerios or Mac-n-Cheese may not take in as many nutrients as the more daring, but are they in danger of becoming undernourished?

The vitamin industry would like parents to believe they are in danger. It knows how important vitamins and minerals are to satisfy the nutritional needs of children's growing bodies. It also understands that changes in eating patterns, including the rejection of wholesome foods, are common throughout childhood and adolescence. Companies that promote vitamins and minerals target worried parents looking for a magic pill to make up for the missing nutrients in their children's diets. According to a report in the October 2007 issue of "Archives of Pediatrics



Companies that promote vitamins and minerals target worried parents looking for a magic pill to make up for the missing nutrients in their children's diets.

and Adolescent Medicine," one-third of American children between the ages of 2 and 18 take a daily dietary supplement even though the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) does not recommend them for children, especially under 12 years old.

The Academy advocates a diet based on the Food Guide Pyramid as the best source of nutrition for healthy children, but also recognizes special situations where vitamins may be necessary. Children who are exclusively breastfed or suffer from eating disorders often need supplements. Dietary supplements are vital to support children with liver disease or other chronic medical problems. Parents with concerns about deficiencies should always consult a health care provider before selecting a vitamin for their child. Pediatricians can screen individual children and determine whether or not supplements are needed and in what dosage. Too many yummy-gummy vitamins that claim good health may not only prove ineffective but harmful. An accidental overdose of vitamin and mineral supplements can cause adverse effects in

children, including nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, liver abnormalities and nerve problems.

If a dietary supplement is recommended, parents must be careful of their selection. Many kid-friendly products are advertised without having been tested. Unlike medications, dietary supplements are not held to any set of federal standards to ensure purity and quality. Some companies claim their products help to treat specific childhood disorders like ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). A safe, natural alternative to prescription drugs appeals to parents who wish to avoid the side effects of medication. Replacing a proven effective drug like Ritalin with a natural dietary supplement may cause more damage than good. Natural does not necessarily mean safe. Parents must be cautious of any product claiming to be a scientific breakthrough or a miracle pill. Promoters may succeed in luring innocent parents to buy their fraudulent cure-alls by bombarding them with medical terms that cannot be supported by scientific evidence or undocumented success stories.

Dr. William Sears, a pediatric practitioner for over 30 years, recommends a multivitamin containing the following ingredients: omega-3



fats, calcium, iron, zinc, and vitamins C and E. Vitamin D is also important, especially for children who do not drink milk or have limited exposure to sunlight. Surprisingly, most over-the-counter multivitamin-mineral supplements do not contain this combination of essential vitamins and minerals!

Why are these vitamins important?

- Omega-3 fats are beneficial to brain development and nervous system function (tuna, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, canola and flax oils)

- Calcium is necessary for the development of strong, healthy bones (milk, cheese and yogurt)

- Iron contributes to the development of strong muscles and the production of blood (meats, poultry, fish, leafy greens, legumes, iron-enriched white bread, pasta, rice and

cereals)

- Zinc is an important mineral, especially for adolescents, because it helps with growth and sexual maturation (shellfish, wheat germ, wheat bran, All Bran cereal, pine and pecan nuts)

- Vitamin C can support a healthy immune system and connective tissue (fresh fruits and veggies, especially oranges, cantaloupe, strawberries, tomatoes, broccoli, cabbage and sweet red peppers)

- Vitamin D is crucial in building strong bones and maintaining the immune system (milk, salmon, tuna, cheese and egg yolks)

- Vitamin E assists with maintaining a healthy immune system (asparagus, avocado, egg, nuts and seeds, vegetable oils and whole grains)

In 2002, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey re-

vealed that children and adolescents who were more active, ate a healthier diet and had better access to health care were more likely to take multivitamins and minerals. Ironically, those who faced the greatest risk for vitamin and mineral deficiencies, those with less healthy nutrition and activity patterns, higher levels of obesity, lower income, poor health and less health care access, were those who took supplements less.

Despite the money parents spend to enhance their child's well being, no research exists which proves supplements can lead to improved health. While it is true that vitamins and minerals are essential, especially for growing children, a diet consisting of a variety of wholesome foods, not pills, is the safest and most effective way to maintain good health.



FAMILY HEALTH

BY IVAN HAND, MD, FAAP,
Director of Neonatology,
Queens Hospital Center

Fats and your child

Instilling healthy eating from the beginning

Pediatricians and parents are increasingly concerned over the current wave of childhood obesity. If you're concerned about your child becoming obese, you might be tempted to offer only low-fat foods to help keep weight at normal levels, but fats are a very important component of any infant's diet.

Fats are critical to the growth of your baby's brain and body, as well as immune function and wound healing. Fats should *not* be restricted in the first two years of a baby's life, so do not put your baby on a diet of skim milk. Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, with later addition of complementary foods, is the best way to give your infant a healthy diet and prevent childhood obesity.

After the age of 2 it is acceptable to reduce the number of fat calories in the diet. Many families can be transitioned from whole cow's milk to skim or fat-free milk by gradually changing from whole milk to two percent, then to one percent, and then to skim milk. Some mothers even mix these together to make the changes imperceptible to their children.

As your child reaches the ages of 4 to 5, you should reach a level where your child is getting fewer fat calories and your entire family can now be eating the same diet. At this time, most of your family's calories (about 55 to 60 percent) should come from carbohydrates, with more modest amounts of fat and protein. Consistently good nutrition, meal after meal, is a foundation for a healthy childhood.

You should focus on a wholesome lifestyle for everyone in your family, no matter what each member weighs.

Establish some structure to your family's eating — three well-thought-out meals and two snacks a day. If you take steps to minimize the junk food in your family's diet, eliminate sugared beverages like soft drinks, pay attention to portion sizes, and add some physical activity to the



mix, your child will grow up to have a healthy weight.

What kind of fat-reducing changes can you be making?

- Switch your preschooler from whole milk to skim or two percent milk (which the rest of the family may already be consuming). She should be drinking two cups a day of fat-free or low-fat milk (or equivalent milk products).

- Select grilled or broiled fish or lean meats.

- Serve cheese only in modest portions.

- Give your child whole fruit to meet her recommended fruit intake, limiting fruit juice consumption to no more than four to six ounces per day

(from ages one to six). Remember, this is 100 percent juice, not juice drinks.

- For snacks, rely on low-fat choices like pretzels, fresh fruit, air-popped popcorn, or fat-free yogurt.

- When preparing food, use cooking methods like steaming, broiling, and roasting that don't require fat during cooking, or use only a small amount of olive oil or nonstick spray.

- Limit the amounts of fast foods your family eats. Make healthy choices with low fat salads and grilled, not fried foods.

Source: A Parent's Guide to Childhood Obesity: A Road Map to Health

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Continued from page 23

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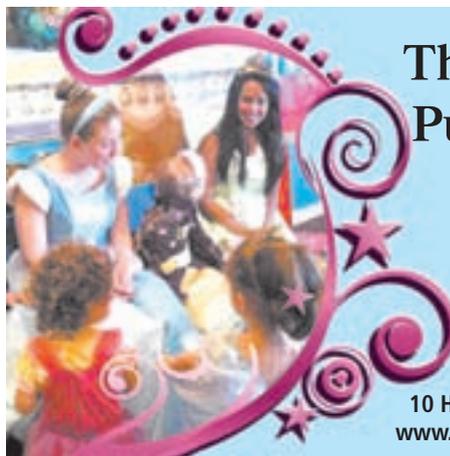
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GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

Bully-proofing your child this summer

The end of the past school year was marred by several high profile suicides that seem to have been caused by online bullying. At the time, school officials were criticized because they hadn't taken action to stop the harassment. During the summer, when school is out, kids will have more time for social networking, and parents become the ones responsible for intervening to stop the mean behavior that has become epidemic online.

Obviously, most parents worry most about how to keep their own

ations. Music and movies often revolve around violence or the threat of violence. In this context, it's not surprising that young people are confused about how to create rewarding relationships.

Summer is a good time to regroup. Think about the friendships that have been meaningful in your own life. How can you help your child develop the same kind of warm, supportive network both online and off?

Here are some suggestions:

- **Look in the mirror.** You, of course, are the most important role model for your child, so a little self-examination is in order. How do you behave towards other people? How do you talk to your child when you're angry? How do you argue with your spouse? What do you say about neighbors, politicians or opinions you don't like? If your children sees you behaving respectfully towards others — even under trying circumstances — they will have a repertoire of strategies to use in on and offline relationships.

- **Brush up on the basics.** Comcast and McAfee have teamed up to produce two succinct and up-to-date family Internet contracts that cover basic rules for safe and responsible online fun. Even the most Web savvy parents and kids will benefit from reviewing these rules. One contract is for teens and one for younger children. Each includes pledges for both parents and kids. Find them at www.alturl.com/okdk.

- **Strengthen offline networks.** Summer is an ideal time to help kids develop face-to-face friendships. Look for settings in which kids have fun that doesn't involve belittling other people. In particular, pay attention to the tone set by adult leaders including coaches, camp counselors and even church youth group leaders. Be sure they model the kind of fairness, decency and respect you want from your kids.

- **Diversify online networks.** Facebook still dominates but some teens are migrating to other social networks. Unfortunately, some of

these networks bring out the worst in kids. Formspring, for example, has garnered a lot of attention because it lets people post anonymous answers to questions, a practice that seems designed to encourage viciousness. Fortunately, there are also social networks that are specifically designed to encourage creativity or community service. Encourage your teen to investigate sites like www.crowdrise.com, a site that encourages teens to network for good causes.

- **Monitor as needed.** The best monitoring technique is a conversation with your child about what he or she is doing online. If you're worried that your child isn't being candid about online activities, consider subscribing to www.Safetyweb.com, a new service that monitors every crevice of the social Web and alerts to what's being said about your child as well as what your child says about others.

- **Reiterate old rules.** Don't worry about sounding like your own parents. The Golden Rule definitely applies online. It's also worth repeating another old-fashioned chestnut — if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all. Simply following this rule would eliminate most of the hurtful remarks about everything from bad hair days to weight and sexuality.

It would be nice to think that summer could be a vacation from problems like cyber bullying. Since that's not a realistic option, parents should take advantage of the extra time with their kids to find out what's actually happening in their online lives. Then they can help kids enjoy the latest social networking trends without abandoning the old-fashioned family values of respect, fair play and kindness.

Carolyn Jabs, MA, has been writing about families and the Internet for over 15 years. She is the mother of three computer-savvy kids. Other Growing Up Online columns appear on her Web site www.growing-up-online.com.

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kids from becoming victims of online harassment. That's a very legitimate concern, given a recent study from the Cyber bullying Research Center showing that victims of cyber bullying are more likely to contemplate suicide. Still, protecting victims is only part of the equation. Parents need to expand their vision to help kids create and participate in online networks that reinforce what's best about young people—and not what's worst.

Unfortunately, online communities take their cue from offline culture which is awash with meanness. Political talk show hosts regularly demean those who disagree with them. Reality TV shows thrive on putting people in humiliating situ-

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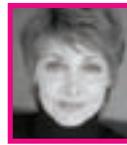
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Social Darwinism and the city park

How crowded playgrounds shape your child

BY ALLISON PLITT

I grew up in suburbia, where everyone had a grassy backyard to play in, and I always worried about raising my daughter in the city. I used to think that, later in life, she would resent me for depriving her of the opportunity to run barefoot on our lawn through a sprinkler on a hot summer day. My feelings changed, however, when I went to visit my family in Florida.

Now, I know better.

As a parent living in Queens, I take my daughter to a local park almost every day. I admit one of the main reasons I bring her is because I'm hoping she'll get enough exercise to collapse in bed every night, but I also take her so she has a chance to socialize with other kids her age. Nevertheless, the more we frequent these local parks, the more I see how growing up in an urban environment is shaping her behavior for the better.

Growing up in suburban New Jer-

sey, I got a taste of city life by watching "Sesame Street." There were episodes with kids in New York City parks climbing on jungle gyms, or running on the cement under water sprinklers. The kids were white, Hispanic, black and a whole bunch of different ethnicities that I had never seen before. Watching "Sesame Street" transported me into another world so unlike mine, where everyone spoke English and was a second- or third-generation American.

What "Sesame Street" had failed to show was another side of city life that was being overshadowed by the friendly faces of Big Bird and Snuffleupagus.

During my outings to city parks, I've observed all sorts of Darwinian behavior. In one instance, when I pulled out a bubble maker for my daughter, 10 kids came rushing towards me, yelling and trying to grab the toy. I explained to my daughter that she was going to have to share the bubble maker with her new

friends. In her instant city kid reflex, she immediately grabbed the toy and made sure she had the first turn. After spending half an hour ensuring 10 kids shared a toy, I felt so exhausted that I began to understand why my daughter's teachers look so tired when I pick her up after school.

The playground slide is another sink-or-swim experiment for city kids. If a slide is popular, a line naturally forms at the top and each child gets a certain amount of time to go down. If a child is holding up the line, he starts to get what I call "encouragement" from the other kids. Queens kids like to "encourage" these slowpokes with a frank reminder and an effective push. Sometimes parents are around to make sure their toddlers can survive this peer pressure, but the older kids are usually on their own.

City kids aren't in the clear even once they've gone down the slide. They have to make sure no one is climbing up the slide that they are



trying to go down. They also have to look out for unwitting victims — the stray child innocently standing at the bottom of the slide, or the child leisurely walking by, about to be a cushion for whomever is on his way down.

The last event on the city park obstacle course is the swings. Parents are always there pushing their kids, yet they are constantly on the lookout for the wandering child running by, about to be hit by their kids' swinging feet. No matter how many times parents tell their children to run circles around the swing set to avoid getting hit, kids always seem to be crossing that fine line between safety and head injury.

Despite all my fears for my daughter's safety, the only injuries I've ever seen in these parks have been children's self-inflicted wounds. If blood ever appears, it's because a child got excited, ran very fast, tripped over his own feet and skinned his knee. Kids trip over themselves quite a bit, yet you rarely see a Queens parent rushing to the rescue with a Band-Aid. Not that city folks are cold and heartless, but these parents usually wait to see how their kids react — if they can pick themselves up before getting their bumps and bruises kissed.

I've never seen blood shed in a battle for playground equipment. There is always the natural New York City reflex for a child to grab something immediately before someone else gets it, but parents are always around to intervene and impart their wisdom about sharing. The kids usually sit listening silently, and secretly wonder-

ing if they will ever get to try out their friend's new scooter.

Suburban parks

When we go to visit friends and family outside of the city, the community parks are sometimes empty as kids opt to play in their yards. And even when kids in the suburbs or in the country play and hang out at each other's homes, there isn't the competition for space and attention that children need to have to survive in a city park. When I visited my brother in Florida, he noticed that my daughter speaks about 20 decibels louder than his own kids. My brother also remarked that when all the family's children stand in line to get something, my daughter often pushes her way to the front of the line, leaving her older cousins with astonished looks on their faces. Granted, my daughter is an only child and is used to having her way, but I believe a lot of this behavior has been nurtured in the survival-of-the-fittest mentality of the New York City parks.

In Florida, we did find a park that was full of kids. My daughter was running down the walkway of a jungle gym when a girl, five-inches taller and three-years older, ran towards my daughter, about to push her down. In a way I could have never imagined myself behaving at 4 years old, my daughter didn't move and looked at the older girl head on. Slowly, the girl started walking backwards until she stepped aside and let my daughter continue on her way.

At that moment, my doubts about raising a child in the city dissipated and I became an even prouder parent.

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Yoga works

An alternative therapy for special-needs children

BY TERRI LEONARD

Yoga is an age-old discipline developed and practiced in India and more recently introduced and popularized throughout the United States. Yoga, as it was originally practiced, included the physical discipline of breathing and body postures designed to strengthen and cleanse the body as part of a spiritual philosophy. Some still associate yoga with “religion”. However, here in the United States, most students of yoga practice only the physical forms of yoga. Some of the original Indian language of Sanskrit is still used to name the postures and breathing exercises.

If you are looking for something therapeutic for your child that can be fun, economical, and done in a group, consider yoga. Adaptive yoga for children with special needs is a way to incorporate the benefits of traditional yoga with the particular needs of your child or teen, regardless of their disability.

What is adaptive yoga?

Yoga uses breathing practices and body postures to strengthen muscles, improve balance, increase body awareness, allow greater range of joint motion, promote relaxation and emotional regulation. Adaptive yoga, like other adaptive sports or forms of recreation, uses props and modified practices to allow people with disabilities to experience the same benefits.

For example, a yoga prop such as a foam block, a soft cushion, or even a folded blanket can support the torso or other parts of the body during a stretch. Using a cloth bag filled with sand in a breathing exercise can provide both deep pressure for sensory calming as well as resistance for slack stomach muscles. A yoga strap or belt wrapped can

be looped around the feet to help a child extend or hold a stretch. The list of props is endless and many household items such as a bathrobe belt or a rolled up towel or blanket can be used in place of expensive accessories.

Other modifications include allowing a child to work in a chair, wheelchair, or on a therapy table. Adaptive teachers can also teach partial postures or incorporate yoga movements into a game or song. Adaptations are endless and creativity is key to presenting yoga concepts and practices to children with less attention span, low muscle tone and body awareness, poor ability to communicate or comprehend language, or limited physical ability.

Also, working in a group enables students more opportunity to experience something therapeutic in a social setting. In an adaptive yoga class, students practice social skills and follow the discipline of a formatted yoga practice. Also, in a yoga class, students are encouraged to work at their own level, even while working as a class on the same posture or sequence.

Combining therapies

Other types of therapies can be incorporated into the framework of yoga to benefit a variety of special needs. For example, the child with poor muscle tone, due to a neurological disorder, could benefit from strengthening core muscles of the trunk and building stamina. This can be achieved through a series of yoga postures in the same way as a physical therapist or exercise physiologist might prescribe. An adaptive yoga teacher might work as a trainer with a teen or a class of teenagers, building up to a number of “yoga push-ups”, “yoga lunges”, or breaths during a balance.

Spasticity, tightened or shortened muscles can be addressed through

simple joint movements such as pointing and flexing the toes and ankles. In therapeutic yoga, these movements would be practiced slowly and incorporated with alternating in-hales and ex-hales. For students with limited movement, a yoga teacher can use a more hands-on approach to help the student achieve greater range of motion. Similar to physical therapy, the yoga difference is in the combination of breathing and movement. Many standing postures incorporate ankle flexion combined with weight-bearing for more intense stretching. Coordinated breathing combined with these movements help students hold stretches for longer periods of time, and develop new patterns of sitting and standing.

Traditional yoga practice incorporates all parts of the physical body including the eyes. Vision exercises such as those used by developmental optometrists are a natural part of an adaptive yoga class. Brain Gym, a discipline of therapeutic movement designed to help with learning difficulties, also incorporates many eye exercises into practice. Again, in yoga, these physical movements, even those done with the eyes, are coordinated with breath.

Bilateral motor integration refers to the effective use of both sides of the body to complete a task. Many children with developmental disabilities lack coordination in this area. This affects balance as well as left-right spatial awareness. Bilateral practice is a natural part of many yoga postures. For example, lifting the right arm then the left and coordinating this pattern with the feet to the beat of a yoga chant can become a fun and challenging game of balance. Students can then be encouraged to hold the postures, gradually learning to balance independently on one foot or the other. These exercises can also be done in a chair or close to a wall or other support



for students who are unable to stand or balance.

Balance is an important goal in any yoga practice. Many yoga postures and practices focus on balancing practice. Even if a child is unable to balance well, practice can help improve compensation for a poorly functioning vestibular system, that part of the inner ear from which we get our sense of balance.

To help with proprioceptive ability, the neurological relay of information from the body to the brain, yoga postures promote weight-bearing for the arms, legs and works on improving joint mobility. In more advanced postures, even the shoulders and the head bear some weight. A core component of all yoga postures and exercises is strengthening the muscles of the trunk, especially the abdominals. This helps children with poor posture due to low muscle tone. It can also help prevent fatigue, increase stamina, and promote calming in children with attentional problems. Other sensory and core-building activities may include the use of sandbags, hula hoops, therapy balls, and lavender-scented eye pillows for deep relaxation.

Vocalization is also incorporated as a form of yoga therapy. Children learn to modulate their voices and their tolerance of noise. They learn to notice how a loud or vigorous group activity can affect their own level of arousal. Vocalizing in a group also gives students with sensory issues an opportunity to appropriately address when noise is too much. We use recorded music (loud and soft), singing (when appropriate), screeching, growling, buzzing, as well as being very, very quiet.

Breathing

Most of us seldom pay attention to the way we breathe. In fact, most people are “shallow breathers”. This means we are not aware of the tendency to breathe into our chest, filling only the upper portion of the lungs. These short shallow breaths result in respiration which is inefficient because you breathe many more shallow breaths to get adequate oxygen into the circulatory system. Shallow breathing actually creates the “fight or flight” stress response in the body. Breathing shallowly and rapidly signals your body to react as if it is constantly responding to a crisis, fatiguing not only the

If you are looking for something therapeutic for your child that can be fun, economical, and done in a group, consider yoga.



muscles of respiration, but the organs and glands that help regulate the body.

Breathing, unlike blood pressure or digestion, is one of the few autonomic body systems over which we have control. For example, we can take a pill or change our diet to affect digestion. But, we can immediately and directly slow down and deepen the breath. Deepening the breath encourages greater intake of oxygen, nourishing for all body organs including the brain.

Most children are unaware of their breathing. Children with disabilities may be even less aware of their breath, especially since the muscles and the effects of respiration are not as obvious or rewarding as moving an arm or a leg on command. Some children even habitually and unconsciously hold their breath. Awareness of the breath can be difficult and sometimes confusing for children, especially those with cognitive or processing issues. This can make breathing one of the most challenging practices to teach, yet it is the most important.

For children who struggle with symptoms of emotional regulation, mood swings, anxiety, or lethargy, breathing techniques can help to modulate the body. The rhythm of breath is a constant companion, a tool that can be used for focus of a busy mind and a racing heart. The sound of the breath, too, can be used to calm and center a child with anxiety. In the beginning of a class or individual yoga session, we might practice an energizing or invigorating breath.

Beginning students might practice simple breathing exercises like taking a deep breath, holding the breath, and breathing only through the nose. Teachers can use belly sandbags to provide sensory input

to the muscles surrounding the diaphragm. Different breathing techniques can be modified for children such as “bee breath” where the child makes a buzzing sound on the exhale. This is both soothing for the sensory system and helps focus the attention on lengthening the exhale in a fun way. When the room is filled with the sound of buzzing exhalers, children can have fun, make noise, and practice breathing. Bunny breath is done by rapidly breathing out and in through the nose and helps children become aware of and practice breathing control. A simple practice like counting the breaths can serve as a tool for students who have difficulty sustaining attention.

Body awareness

One of the greatest benefits of yoga for children with special needs is increased body awareness. Coordinating breathing and movement together becomes the first level of work. For example, lifting an arm on the inhale and lowering on the exhale not only helps with motor control and planning, and provides an inner sense of rhythm.

Identifying muscles and parts of the body as they are being used gives students a sense of power and self-esteem. For example, being able to correctly identify the thigh, ankle, wrist or chin helps kids embody the words they hear used so often. More complex tasks include learning to flex or tighten a muscle. They can learn, in a real body sense, what it means to relax. They practice noticing and being able to point to or even name where they feel a stretch, a tension, or other sensation. Students can learn the anatomical names of muscles, bones, and the locations of joints in their own bodies as they

practice. More advanced students can even learn which postures and exercises stretch or strengthen a particular muscle group.

Finding a yoga teacher

Yoga is often not thought of as therapy. Yet, there is a growing body of practitioners who use the methods and techniques of yoga as a therapeutic tool in various populations, settings, and disabilities. Some are licensed in other medical fields such as physical, occupational, or recreational therapy. Others may be yoga teachers who adapt traditional yoga practices to meet the needs of the specialized population they are teaching. Some have specialized training and certification from a yoga therapy program. These programs are growing to meet the needs of certified yoga teachers who want to specialize in the therapeutic application of yoga.

Clearly, people are recognizing that yoga as a stand-alone therapeutic tool or combined with another discipline can be of great benefit for those with disabilities and in need of physical rehabilitation. Yoga is especially suited for use in school systems for both students with and without disabilities.

Teachers can work with individual students in a medical setting or private studio. Insurance reimbursement is rare unless the teacher is also a licensed medical practitioner or the session is performed under supervision of a licensed person.

Unfortunately, there are few who specialize in the disabilities of children. However, this is a field in which we will likely see future growth. If you cannot find a person who is practiced at teaching yoga to children and who understands disabilities, consider creating a class of your children's peers. Consult with an occupational therapist to help modify and adapt postures to meet the needs of the class, or consider taking some yoga training yourself. Some of the best adaptive teachers are parents of children with disabilities. As you know, we are the most experienced at understanding our children's special needs.

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cinematters



LAURA GRAY

Spy hiding behind suburban screen

The Spy Next Door

Rated PG

Your beach vacation gets cut short when your daughter plops down on a broken bottle hidden in the sand. Almost worse than the wound itself is its location on her body; it's a little more information than she wants to share. So when her friends ask what happened, she begins to "embellish" the story.

Soon, she's forgetting what she told whom, and mass confusion ensues! Rumors fly, feelings get hurt and your daughter has some fences to mend. She finds that telling the truth is sometimes more painful — but it's all worth it in the end.

Being truthful is always the best choice, as the characters in "The Spy Next Door" learn at the conclusion of their harrowing adventure. Watch it with your family and discuss it with our Talk Together points. Then, play "Truth Detectives" to reinforce this valuable lesson.

Now available on DVD, "The Spy Next Door" features a Chinese spy, Bob, who is on loan to the U.S. government. As part of his cover, he lives in a suburban neighborhood where he has fallen for Gillian, the single mom who lives next door with her three kids. Bob keeps his real job a secret, so Gillian thinks he's just a nice, geeky guy. Bob wants to move to the next step in their relationship as soon as he completes one last



Bob tracks down his young charge, Nora, when she gets lost in the mall.

mission; then he is retiring from the spy business.

When Gillian must leave home to help her ailing father, Bob offers to watch the children. There's only one problem: they hate him! The kids — rebellious teen Farren, awkward 'tween Ian and cutie-pie Nora — plot to get rid of Bob once and for all. And Bob, who has no experience dealing with children, quickly finds himself in over his head.

At Bob's house, Ian downloads a file off Bob's computer. He thinks it's a concert that will impress the bullies at school. Actually, it's a formula created by a Russian terrorist to help him take over the world's oil supply. When the terrorists discover their file has been intercepted, they trace it to Bob and set out to get it back, at all costs. Using his impressive spy

moves, Bob rescues the children from the terrorists' clutches.

To protect Gillian's children, Bob thinks he must keep his true identity — and the threat of the Russian terrorists — to himself. But Gillian is so angry and upset that he has endangered her kids she ends their relationship. By now, the children have seen a different side of Bob, one that inspires love and respect. So much so that they join forces to help Bob when the terrorists trap him in an abandoned building. The bad guys are caught, the formula is recovered and Bob and Gillian — with her kids' encouragement — form a new family. Their relationship is now based on honesty, not deceitfulness.

Talk together

Farren, Ian and Nora seem to dislike Bob right from the start. Why? What do they hate about him? Is there anything Bob could have done to change their opinion before their adventure?

Bob sees his babysitting job as a chance to "make" Gillian's kids like him. Can you really make someone like you? Why not?

Take a break from the summer heat with a family movie night! Check out our archives at www.Cinematters.com and get some great ideas for fun with your favorite films!

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Play together: Truth detectives

Become a super snooper to discover the truth!

You will need:

- Stone, block or other small object
- Marker
- Blindfold

Write the word "truth" on the stone and set it aside. (You may

also write it on a strip of tape and put it on the object.) Choose one person to be the snooper and one person to be the snoop-ee. Blindfold the snooper while the snoop-ee hides the truth stone in the room. When the object is hidden, remove the snooper's blindfold. The snooper may then ask up to 25

yes-or-no questions of the snoop-ee to discover the whereabouts of the truth stone. For example, "Is the truth in this room?" Take turns looking for and hiding "the truth." Your family will get a not-so-subtle reminder that it's much easier to find "the truth" when it is right out in the open!

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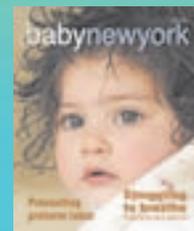
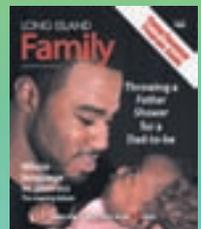


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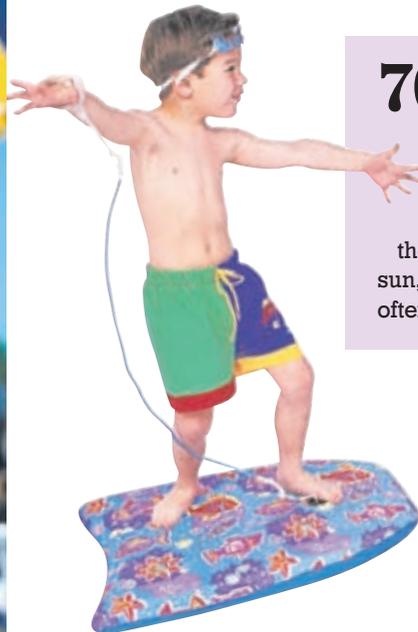
**Education, Activities, Party, Camp, Special Needs,
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It figures

BY CYNTHIA WASHAM

SUMMER SNIPPETS



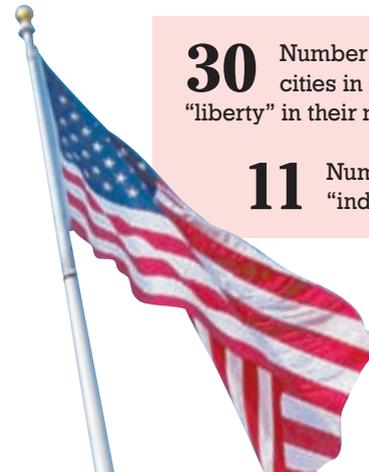
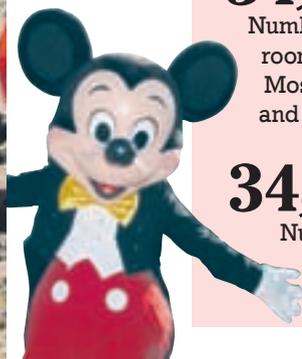
70 Percent of people who apply sun-screen only after they're in the sun, when it's often too late.

20,000 Record-breaking number of camping reservations Reserve America took for the 4,000 nationwide campgrounds it represents during one 24-hour period in February 2009.

21 Percent of KOA campers last year who were first timers, the highest rate in 18 years.

34,000 Number of hotel rooms in the cities of Moscow, Stockholm and Toronto.

34,000 Number of hotel rooms in Walt Disney World.



30 Number of towns and cities in the U.S. with "liberty" in their name.

11 Number with "independence."

More than 6 million Number of children who go to camp every summer in the U.S.

95 Percent of children away at camp who experience some homesickness.

20 Percent who experience moderate to severe homesickness.



36 Gallons of liquid a 100-pound human would have to drink in one sitting to mimic a single blood meal of a hungry female mosquito.

1,120,000 Approximate number of mosquito bites needed to drain all the blood from an average adult.

1,104,120,000,000 Estimated number of bug zappers needed to kill every bug in the world.



Sources: Census.gov, Prevention, Time, Four-H, Harper's Magazine, Marketing Week, Summercamp.org, Scouting

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Coming Back from Cancer provides cancer patients a therapeutic exercise program including stretching to address range of movement limitation issues, core strengthening, resistance training and aerobic activity and is open to those who are currently in treatment or in any stage of recovery. For an interview or additional information about days, times and fees call Robin Budnetz.

Lizards and Snakes - Alive: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org. \$24 adults; (\$14 children; \$18 for seniors/ students).

See a diversity of legged and legless lizards representing more than 20 species from all over the world.

Amazon Exhibit: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. 718-699-0005; www.nysci.org; Daily, call for times; Now - Sun, Aug. 22; \$11 adults (\$8 children 2-17; college students with valid ID and seniors 62 plus).

Learn about the world's most biologically diverse river in Amazon Voyage - Vicious Fishes and Other Riches in this hands-on, bilingual exhibit on view.

Race to the End of the Earth:

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5100; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am-5:45 pm; Donations suggested.

The exhibit recounts the most stirring tales of Antarctic exploration: the contest to reach the South Pole in 1911-1912. Highlights include photographs, paintings, and rare historical artifacts as well as actual items of clothing and tools; life-sized models of portions of Amundsen's and Scott's base camps; and a diorama featuring the largest of all penguin species alive today, the emperor penguin. There are also interactive and hands-on activities for all ages.

Friendship Group: Friedberg JCC, 15 Neil Court; (516) 766-4341; www.friedberg.org; Daily, 2-3 pm.

Friendship Group of Middle School meets daily for students with Disabilities and provides an opportunity for Disabled Middle School children in



Go get your 'Gun'

It's the rootin' tootiest musical around.

The Bellmore Theatre puts on the sharpshooting show "Annie Get Your Gun" this month, in a fully stage production of the Broadway favorite.

In case you've forgotten, the story presents a fictionalized version of the life of Annie Oakley, a sharpshooter from Ohio during the late 19th century, and her husband, Frank Butler.

Even if you haven't seen the show, you probably know some of the classic songs that came from it, including "There's No Business Like Show Business" and "Anything You Can Do." You know the rest.

"Annie Get Your Gun" at the East Rockaway Memorial Park [Atlantic and Woods avenues in East Rockaway, (516) 599-6870], July 11 at 7 pm. Free. For info, visit www.plazatheatrical.com.

Submit a listing

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

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the community meet and enjoy events at the JCC. Come swim in the indoor pool, hang out in the renovated teen lounge and participate in exciting art projects.

Children's Storytime: Barnes & Noble, 176-60 Union Turnpike; (718) 380-7077; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am & 7 pm, Free.

Storytime fosters the love of reading with weekly children's storytimes and a cookie break.

Children's Garden Session -

Summer: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main Street; (718) 886-3800 X 230; rwolf@queensbotanical.org; www.queensbotanical.org; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 am - Noon, Now - Thurs, Aug. 19; Call for fees.

The "Green" program offers kids, ages 5 to 12 the opportunity to practice different sustainable gardening techniques, such as composting and mulching and learn about the reuse and recycling of materials. Tuesdays or Thursdays.

Support Group: Mid-Island Y JCC, 45 Manetto Hill Road; 516-822-3535 X 326; www.miycc.org; Wednesdays and Fridays, 10 am - 2 pm.

Shabbat Respite program provides a supportive and nurturing environment for your loved one who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease or early onset dementia including socialization, cognitive stimulation activities, art therapy and more. Led by licensed social workers, coffee tea and a nutritious kosher lunch provided. To schedule an appointment or additional information call Doreen.

Word Play - Imaginative Storytelling: Ruben Museum of Art, 150 West 17 Street, between 6th and 7th

Going Places

avenues; (212) 620-5000 X 344. www.rmanyc.org; Wednesdays, 4–5 pm, \$10 (\$5 for museum members children; Accompanying adult free).

Children ages four to six can travel to the Himalayas with their imagination through a series of fun and interactive stories perfect for the whole family.

La Leche League: Call for location (718) 626-4833)

Meets each month providing free information and support for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers and their babies

Jewish Mysticism: Central Queens YM & YWHA, 67-09 108th Street; (718) 268-5011; www.cqyjcc.org; Wednesdays, 11:20 am, Now – Mon, Oct. 25; \$54 (non-members).

The course takes a closer look at traditional and modern interpretations of Jewish mysticism and is taught by Rabbi Irwin Goldenberg.

Support Group: Parkway Community Church, 95 Stewart Ave; (516)-395-8303; Wednesdays, 7:30 pm, \$7.

A dynamic discussion and support group for 40 plus individuals, who are widowed, divorced or single.

Sandcastle contest: Hither Hills State Park-Beachhouse, Old Montauk Highway; (631) 668-2554; www.nys-parks.com; Thursdays, 9:30–10:30 am, Now – Thurs, Aug. 26; Free.

Sand sculptors may use sand, water, and any other natural materials native to the beach. Each week's prizes will be awarded for the best sculptors and castles in several categories. Registration is held each Thursday from 9:30am–10:30am at the Hither Hills State Park Beachhouse.

"Illuscination": Coney Island Boardwalk, Surf Avenue at West 21st Street; (800) 745-3000; www.ringling.com/coneyisland; Now through September 6; call for times. \$10-\$50.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's new summer circus.

Astronomy Discovery Lab: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. 718-699-0005; www.nysci.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 and 4 pm, Now – Sun, Aug. 29; Free with General Admission.

View the night sky and learn more about constellations.

Cinderella: Galli's Theater, 38 West 38th Street; (212) 352-3101; www.gallitheaterny.com/Cinderella.html or www.gallitheaterny.com; Saturday, July 3, 3 pm; Saturday, July 10, 3 pm; Sunday, July 11, 3 pm; Saturday, July 17, 3 pm; Sunday, July 18, 3 pm; Saturday, July 24, 3 pm; Sunday, July 25, 3 pm; \$20 (\$15 2-17 years) Workshop \$20, \$15 for siblings.

The play, for kids from 3 and up is followed by a one-hour after-show workshop.

Giraffe sticks his neck out

Jack is wack — and Jack is back.

The Long Island Game Farm welcomes Jack the Giraffe just in time for the summer season.

Joining Jack are black-and-white-ruffed lemurs, gibbons and violet Turaco birds.

Jack's a friendly dude and according to owner Melinda Novak "...is very beautiful."

"Jack will enjoy spending the summer here because of the Long Island weather." Who wouldn't?

The black-and-white ruffed lemurs, the gibbons and the turaco birds will all welcome new and returning visitors.

Jack and his friends can be visited throughout the summer season, now through September 6, seven days a week. Mondays through Fridays, 10 am to 4:30 pm, (gates close at 5 pm) and Saturdays and Sundays from 10 am to 5:30 pm (gates close at 6pm)

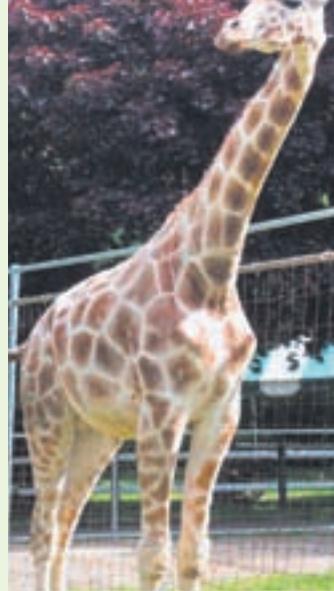
Training Group: The Animal Medical Center, 510 East 62nd St. (854)-230-6406; rsilverman@guidingeyes.org; www.volunteer.guidingeyes.org; Free.

Guiding Eyes for the Blind seeks volunteers to foster future guide dog puppies. All training, support and veterinary expenses are provided free of charge. Pre-placement classes are held at the Dog Spa in Chelsea at 32 West 25th Street. Required weekly raiser classes are held on Sunday evenings at the Center. Call for specific location & time.

"Captain Marbles and his Acting Squad": Theatres at 45 Bleeker - Green Room Theater, 45 Bleeker Street; (212) 260-8250; www.iseats.net; Sundays, 11 am, Now – Sun, Aug. 29; \$20.

Dancing, singing, acting and audience participation. For children three and up. (no show July 4).

Chase 2010 Latino Cultural Festival: Queens Theatre in the Park, Flushing Meadows Corona Park; (718) 760-0064; www.queentheatre.org;



Admission to the zoo for children (3-11) \$15.45 + tax, adults \$17.45 + tax, handicapped persons \$9.95 plus tax, senior citizens \$15.45 plus tax. Children under 3 are free. Tickets include rides, shows and attractions. Antique carousel and pony rides are extra.

Long Island Game Farm, [638 Chapman Boulevard in Manorville, (631) 878-6644]. For more information visit their Web site at www.LongIslandGameFarm.com.

Daily, check for times, Now – Sun, Aug. 8; Call for fees.

The festival features 13 events including music, dance, comedy, spoken word, film, and family-friendly performances.

TUES, JULY 6

Concert: Rufus King Park, 89th Avenue and 150th Street; (212) 360-8376; 10:30–11:15 am.

The teen group BombaYo performs.

Book reading: Barnes & Noble, 176-60 Union Turnpike; (718) 380-7077; 10:30 am; Free.

"Diary of A..." by Doreen Cronin's introduces the reader to the diaries of three friends, Fly, Spider and Worm.

WED, JULY 7

"Sleeping Beauty": Forest Park, Myrtle Avenue and Woodhaven Avenue; (718) 235-0815; www.plazatheatrical.com; 7 pm; Free.

The Big Quiz Thing: 92YTribea, 200

Hudson Street at Canal Street; www.bigquizthing.com; 7:30 pm; \$10 pp. Live game show with cash prizes.

THURS, JULY 8

Book reading: Barnes & Noble, 176-60 Union Turnpike; (718) 380-7077; 7 pm; Free.

For teens, Stephanie Meyer's, *The Short Second Life of Bree Tanner: An Eclipse Novella*.

FRI, JULY 9

Canoeing: Fort Totten Park, Enter park - North of Intersection 212 Street and Cross Island Parkway; (718) 352-1769; www.gov/parks/rangers; 11am; free.

Basics of canoeing, space is limited for children 8 and up.

SAT, JULY 10

Canoeing: Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Meadow Lake, (Van Wyck Expressway); 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 9–11 am; free.

Basics of canoeing, space is limited for children 8 and up.

Camping: Cunningham Park, Union Turnpike and 197 Street; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 6 pm; free.

Families enjoy BBQ and a night hike.

SUN, JULY 11

Bugging Out: Kissena Park, 164th Street and Oak Street; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; free.

Learn about insects.

Storytime and craft: Barnes & Noble, 176-60 Union Turnpike; (718) 380-7077; 2 pm; Free.

Children read from Leo Lionni's "Little Blue and Little Yellow."

Scavenger Hunt: Fort Totten Park, North of Intersection 212 Street and Cross Island Parkway; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 2 pm; free.

Find birds, insects and trees - Mother Nature's treasures.

"Annie Get Your Gun": East Rockaway Memorial Park, Atlantic Avenue; (718) 887-6304; www.plazatheatrical.com; 7 pm; Free.

MON, JULY 12

Open Mic Poetry: Barnes & Noble, 176-60 Union Turnpike; (718) 380-7077; 7:30 pm; Free.

Susan Yang leads a night of poetry for teens.

WED, JULY 14

Book discussion: Barnes & Noble, 176-60 Union Turnpike; (718) 380-7077;

Continued on page 38

Going Places

Continued from page 37

7 pm; Free.

Beverly Cleary's Ramona series is on tap.

FRI, JULY 16

Canoeing: 11am. See Friday, July 9.

SAT, JULY 17

Camping: Alley Pond Park, Winchester Boulevard under the Grand Central Parkway; (718) 217-6034 or (718) 217-4685; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 6 pm; free.

Families enjoy a BBQ, nighttime hike and a sleepover with the stars. Bring your own sleeping bag.

SUN, JULY 18

Wildlife workshop: Kissena Park, 164th Street and Oak Street; 311; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 3 pm; free.

Kids discover the skills to find nature clues. For 8 and under.

MON, JULY 19

Poetry writing workshop: Barnes & Noble, 176-60 Union Turnpike; (718) 380-7077; 7:30 pm; Free.

Bob Trabold and Amanda Konstantine Perlmutter offer poetry tips.

TUES, JULY 20

Storytime: Barnes & Noble, 176-60 Union Turnpike; (718) 380-7077; 10:30 am; Free.

Little ones hear the story of Llama Llama.



Swim lessons for kids

Whether you're a tot or a teen — Parks and Recreation and the City Parks Foundation want you to learn how to swim.

In partnership with the American Red Cross, the annual Learn to Swim program teaches tots (ages 1 to 5) and children (6 to 14) to back stroke, breast stroke and stay afloat. The three course session is offered free at city pools throughout the five boroughs.

Registration for session one, July 7 through July 23, is July 6

from 9 to 11 am.

Registration for Session two, July 27 through August 11, is July 26 from 9 to 11 am.

Registration for session three, August 13 through August 27, is August 12 from 9 to 11 a.m.

Astoria Pool — 19th Street and 23rd Drive, (718) 626-8620;

Liberty Pool — 173rd Street and 106th Avenue, (718) 657-4995;

Fisher Pool — 99th Street and 32nd Avenue, (718) 779-8356.

For additional information visit www.nyc.gov/parks or call 311.

FRI, JULY 23

Canoeing: 11 am. See Friday, July 9.

SAT, JULY 24

Bike tour: Fort Totten Park, North of Intersection, Totten Road and Cross Island Parkway; 311; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; free.

Pedal your way through the park. Bring your own park.

Fishing: Baisley Pond Park, Baisley Boulevard and 155th Street; 311; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 3 pm; free.

First-come first served. Equipment limited.

SUN, JULY 25

Sand Castle contest: Rockaway

Beach, Beach 117th Street and the Boardwalk; 311; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 12-2 pm; free.

15th annual contest - bring your own tools.

FRI, JULY 30

Canoeing: 11 am. See Friday, July 9.

SAT, JULY 31

Wildflower workshop: Kissena Park, 164th Street and Oak Street; 311; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 1 pm; free.

Learn to identify Kissena Park's native flora and fauna.

Camping: 6 pm. See Saturday, July 10.

SUN, AUG. 1

Birding for kids: Kissena Park, 164th Street and Oak Street; 311; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; free.

Kids learn to identify robins, blue jays and starlings. Binoculars recommended. Learn to identify Kissena Park's native flora and fauna.

Fishing: Brookville Park, Brookville Boulevard and 144th Avenue; 311; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 2 pm; free.

Equipment limited. First come-first served.

Street fair: Austin Steak Ale House, 82-72 Austin Street; 4-7 pm; Free.

Out-door fun for all ages.

FRI, AUG. 6

Canoeing: 11 am. See Friday, July 9.

July events at Queens Libraries

Tots and teens can enjoy exciting and educational events all month long at the Queens Library, and — best

of all — it's all free.

For additional information visit a branch near you or online at www.queenslibrary.org.

LONG-RUNNING

Teen Night: Queens Public Library at Arverne, 312 Beach 54th Street; (718) 634-4784; Tuesdays, 3 pm, Now – Mon, Sep. 27; Free.

Crafts, video games, cooking classes, and other surprises.

Game Day: Queens Public Library at Howard Beach, 92-06 156 Avenue; (718) 641-7086; Wednesdays, 3:30 pm, Now – Wed, Sep. 29; free.

Nintendo Wii, checkers and other

board games. Snacks are provided.

Crocheting for Teens: Queens Public Library at Baisley Park, 117-11 Sutphin Blvd; (718) 529-1590; Thursdays, 4 pm, Now – Thurs, Sep. 30; free.

Teens learn how to crochet with Yvette Jackson and take home their own creations. Yarn and needles will be supplied.

Teen Zine: Queens Public Library at Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd; (718) 990-0767; Thursdays, 4 pm, Now

– Thurs, Sep. 30; free.

If you enjoy writing or drawing, or if you like the idea of publishing a magazine, we would love to publish you in our zine.

Teen tutoring: Queens Public Library at Bayside, 214-20 Northern Boulevard; (718) 229-1834; Saturdays, 10 am, Sat, July 3 – Sat, Aug. 28; Free.

Children eight and older tutored by teens in math, English, science and social studies with homework and special projects.

Guitar hero: Queens Public Library at Bellerose, 250-06 Hillside Avenue; (718) 831-8644; Friday, July 9, 4 pm; Friday, July 16, 4 pm; Friday, July 23, 4 pm; Friday, July 30, 4 pm; Friday, Aug. 6, 4 pm; Tuesday, Aug. 10, 4 pm; Friday,

Aug. 13, 4 pm; Tuesday, Aug. 17, 4 pm; Friday, Aug. 20, 4 pm; Tuesday, Aug. 24, 4 pm; Free.

Make your own band, write songs and rock on.

Garden Club: Queens Public Library at Baisley Park, 117-11 Sutphin Boulevard; (718) 529-1590; Mondays, 2 pm, Mon, July 12 – Mon, Aug. 30; Free.

Children 9 and up plant flowers in the courtyard.

Twilight Tales: Queens Public Library at Douglaston/Little Neck, 249-01 Northern Boulevard; (718) 225-8414; Thursdays, 6:30 pm, Thurs, July 15 – Thurs, Aug. 26; Free.

Snuggle up with classic children's

Continued on page 40



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Going Places

Continued from page 38

stories. Feel free to wear your slippers and pajamas For ages 18 months to 5 years of age and their parent/caregiver.

THURS, JULY 1

Arts and crafts: Queens Public Library at Queensboro Hill, 60-05 Main Street; (718) 359-8332; 2:30 pm; Free.

Children ages 5-12 make Fourth of July crafts.

TUES, JULY 6

Summer reading club: Queens Public Library at Bayside, 214-20 Northern Boulevard; (718) 229-1834; 1:30 pm; Free.

Create a Tie-Dye T-Shirts. Bring a T and your imagination - they supply the rest.

Newspaper workshop: Queens Public Library at North Hills, 57-04 Marathon Parkway; (718) 225-3550; www.queenspubliclibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Children in the fifth grade and up, write, edit and layout a newspaper. Preregistration required.

Storytime: Queens Public Library at Forest Hills, 108-19 71 Avenue; (718) 268-7934; 4 pm; Free.

Children ages 5 to 36 months.

WED, JULY 7

Science workshop: Queens Public Library at Hollis, 202-05 Hillside Avenue; (718) 465-7355; 1:30 pm; Free.

Children experiment with vinegar and baking soda. Registration required.

Graffiti and Anime Competition: Queens Public Library at Steinway, 21-45 31 Street; (718) 728-1965; 4 pm; Free.

Teens share ideas and skills.

Computer workshop: Queens Public Library at Long Island City, 37-44 21st Street; (718) 752-3700; 4 pm; Free.

Computer Kreations is for kids 10 to 18 years old.

THURS, JULY 8

Reading Block Party: Queens Public Library at Flushing, 41-17 Main Street; (718) 661-1212; 1 pm; Free.

Teens and tweens - ages 10-18.

Arts and crafts: Queens Public Library at Ozone Park, 92-24 Rockaway Boulevard; (718) 845-3127; 6 pm; Free.

Teens ages 12-17 make lanyard bracelets.

FRI, JULY 9

Storytime in the park: Queens Public Library - Broad Channel, 16-26 Cross Bay Boulevard; (718) 318-4943; 10 am; Free.

Dept. of Parks supplies arts and crafts and snacks.

SAT, JULY 10

Poetry workshop: Queens Public Library at Langston Hughes, 100-01 Northern Boulevard; (718) 651-1100; noon; Free.

Zelda Lockhart provides helpful critique.

Puppet show: Queens Public Library at Woodside, 54-22 Skillman Avenue; (718) 429-4700; 1:30 pm; Free.

Hao Bang Ha, Tigers, Taiwanese Hand Puppetry, with English explanations.

Writing workshop: Queens Public Library at Poppenhusen, 121-23 14th Avenue; (718) 359-1102; 1:30 pm; Free.

Teens and children perfect their writing craft with prizes awarded at the end of the session in August.

MON, JULY 12

Trivia night: Queens Public Library at Steinway, 21-45 31st Street; (718) 728-1965; 6 pm; Free.

Teens keep their gray matter in the pink.

TUES, JULY 13

Specialized High School Admissions prep: Queens Public Library at Bay Terrace, 18-36 Bell Boulevard; (718) 423-7004; 2 pm; Free.

Teens take a practice test and receive a detailed score with pointers on how to improve their grade. Scores are for students and parents' informational purposes only and are NOT reported to any schools. Preregistration is required with The Princeton Review. Register by calling 1-800-2REVIEW (273-8439) or visit www.PrincetonReview.com/SHSAT.

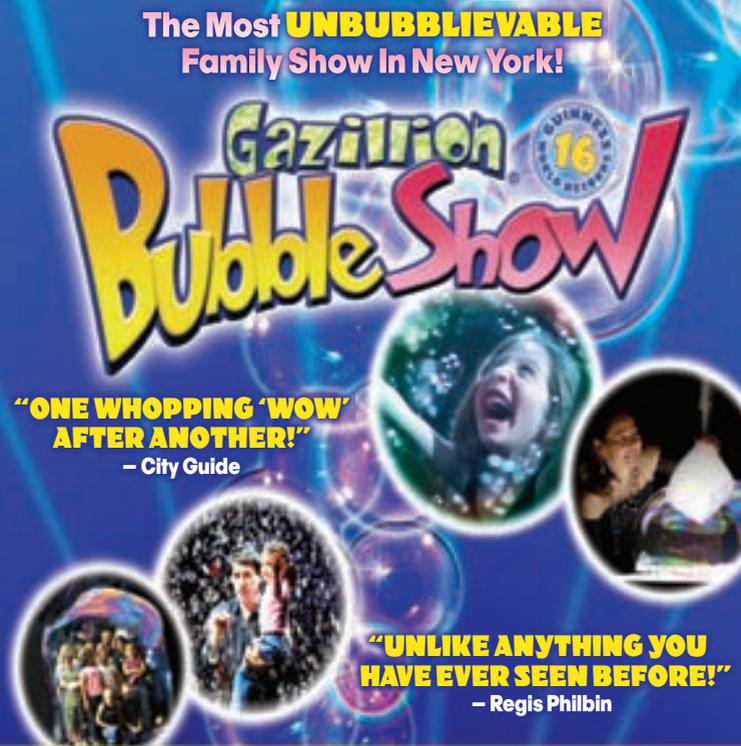
Newspaper workshop: 2 pm. See Tuesday, July 6.

Reading challenge: Queens Public Library at Douglaston/Little Neck, 249-01 Northern Boulevard; (718) - 225-8414; 3:15 pm.

Fourth and fifth graders enter a read-a-loud and game tournament.

Continued on page 42

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Se Habla Español

Going Places

Continued from page 40
Preregistration required.

WED, JULY 14

Arts and crafts: Queens Public Library at Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Boulevard; (718) 997-0767; 3 pm; Free. Create your own snow globe.

Computer workshop: 4 pm. See Wednesday, July 7.

THURS, JULY 15

Poetry slam: Queens Public Library at Flushing, 41-17 Main Street; (718) 661-1212; 1 pm; Free.

Children 10 to 18 vote on the worst poem read.

Doll-making workshop: Queens Public Library at Arverne, 312 Beach 54th Street; (718) 634-4784; 3 pm; Free.

Children and tweens make dolls.

Book Talk: Queens Public Library at Bay Terrace, 18-36 Bell Boulevard; (718) 423-7004; 3 pm; Free.

Children in grades 1-3 bring in your best story and read aloud for one or two minutes.

Arts and crafts: Queens Public Library at Queens Village, 94-11 217 Street; (718) 776-6800; 3:30 pm; Free. Teens make bracelets, bags, necklaces, Chinese lanterns using recyclable materials.

SAT, JULY 17

Writing workshop: 1:30 pm. See Saturday, July 10.

Puppet show: Queens Public Library at Flushing, 41-17 Main Street; (718) 661-1212; 2:30 pm; Free.

Hao Bang Ha, Tigers -- Taiwanese Hand Puppetry with English explanations.

Arts and crafts: Queens Public Library at Long Island City, 37-44 21st Street; (718) 752-3700; 4 pm; Free.

Two-day workshop. Teens make project using their own books, photos, and mixed media.

TUES, JULY 20

Newspaper workshop: 2 pm. See Tuesday, July 6.

Arts and crafts: 4 pm. See Saturday, July 17.

WED, JULY 21

Interactive storytelling: Queens Public Library at Flushing, 41-17 Main Street; (718) 661-1212; 1 and 3 pm; Free.

Mighty Action Racket's Magical Castle of Now interactive storytelling performance. For children in first, second, third and fourth grades (different times, check with library) must be registered in the Summer Reading Club.

Art workshop: Queens Public Library at Central, 89-11 Merrick Boulevard; (718) 990-0767; 3 pm; Free.

Transform old packaging into new works of art.

Computer workshop: 4 pm. See Wednesday, July 7.

T-shirt art: Queens Public Library at Woodhaven, 85-41 Forest Avenue; (718) 849-1010; 4:30 pm; Free.

Children 7-15 paint designs on a t-shirt. Preregistration required.

THURS, JULY 22

Book Talk: Queens Public Library at Bay Terrace, 18-36 Bell Boulevard; (718) 423-7004; 3 pm; Free.

Children in grades four through six, bring in your best story and read for one to two minutes out loud.

Duct tape challenge: Queens Public Library at Douglaston/Little Neck, 249-01 Northern Boulevard; (718) 225-8414; 4:15 pm; Free.

Make a wallet. Preregistration is required. Space is limited.

Basket Weaving: Queens Public Library at Ozone Park, 92-24 Rockaway Boulevard; (718) 845-3127; 6 pm; Free.

Teens learn how to weave and make Oragami boxes.

FRI, JULY 23

Design Squad: Queens Public Library at Bayside, 214-20 Northern Boulevard; (718) 229-1834; 2 pm; Free.

Keesha Sterling from Girl Scouts of America introduces children and tweens to a hands on workshop.

SAT, JULY 24

Writing workshop: 1:30 pm. See Saturday, July 10.

MON, JULY 26

Juggling show: Queens Public Library at Hollis, 202-05 Hillside Avenue; (718) 465-7355; 4 pm; Free.

Will Shaw entertains with juggling and jokes.

TUES, JULY 27

Math workshop: Queens Public Library at Central, 89-11 Merrick Boulevard; (718) 990-0767; 2 pm; Free.

Fun-filled bingo and math afternoon. Session 1 Grades 1 through 3; Session 2 Grades 4 through 6. Space is limited. Seating will be first come, first served.

Newspaper workshop: 2 pm. See Tuesday, July 6.

WED, JULY 28

Poker competition: Queens Public Library at Steinway, 21-45 31st Street; (718) 728-1965; 4 pm; Free.

Teens have a card game showdown competition, with a chance to win prizes.

Computer workshop: 4 pm. See Wednesday, July 7.

FRI, JULY 30

Design Squad: 2 pm. See Friday, July 23.

SAT, JULY 31

Writing workshop: 1:30 pm. See Saturday, July 10.

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New & Noteworthy

Toys that snap!



They're turtles by design!

"Reptangles" are geometric-shaped tortoises that snap together to form different shapes. Connectable building blocks, they can give children a colorful toy to play with, while also helping them explore geometry and design.

With the help of an activity book, or just by using their own imaginations, children can snap and slide

their Reptangles in over 80 different ways, from circles to squares to rectangles to truncated octahedrons. Light enough to travel, pack them along on the next car ride for hours of stimulating entertainment.

Reptangles are for children ages 6 and up. For more info, visit www.fatbraintoy.com.

An egg-cellent new toy

They're egg-dorable!

These plump, egg-shaped toys by Asher Jasper are made from pure merino and mohair needle-felted

wool, so they're super soft, sturdy and fun. With a variety of different wool people to choose from, a favorite is the Alice in Wonderland set, featuring characters from the beloved story, including Alice and the Cheshire Cat.

Other themes include fairy tales, animals and holidays like Halloween. For little ones not yet ready for imaginative play, there's also a monkey rattle ball.

These little toys are so precious, you just might want one for yourself.

For more info, go to www.asherjasper.com.



Bee-autiful party favors

Jazz up that next birthday party with these adorable paper goodies.

The Art Of Joy specializes in original illustrations for party favors, stickers and invitations.

For your little one's big day, go with customized favors that have all the guests' names on them, with designs ranging from sweet bumblebees



to toy-like robots.

When expecting, choose from among stork-adorned invitations and favor tags with a baby theme.

If you're planning at the last minute, even better: upon purchase, the designs are e-mailed to you, so you can print as many as you need.

For more information, go to www.etsy.com/TheArtOfJoy.

Easy fun with EZ Fort

Rather than let the kids make a mess of your living room building a fort this summer, have them do it outside.

With EZ Fort, your children can build their own fort or playhouse that's more permanent than one constructed from sheets and pillows — and there's no cleanup.

Part of the fun is making it, and the EZ Fort kit comes with 54 pieces that can be used for a number of creations. All you then need to supply is the sheet.

Construction isn't that compli-



cated, so your child can be at play in no time.

EZ Fort is geared towards children ages 3-7. For more, visit www.ezfort.com.

For little drummer kids

Does your little one like to make a lot of noise? Then trade the pots and wooden spatula for a miniature drum set, courtesy of PlanToys.

With the Musical Band toys, kids can show their musical appreciation from an early age, with instruments including a drum, as well as tambourine, clatter and oval xylophone.



These simple toys are a great way to introduce children to playing music, as well as develop sensory perception, fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination and cognitive development. Plus, it'll help keep your pots and pans in the kitchen, where they belong.

For more information, visit www.plantoy.com.



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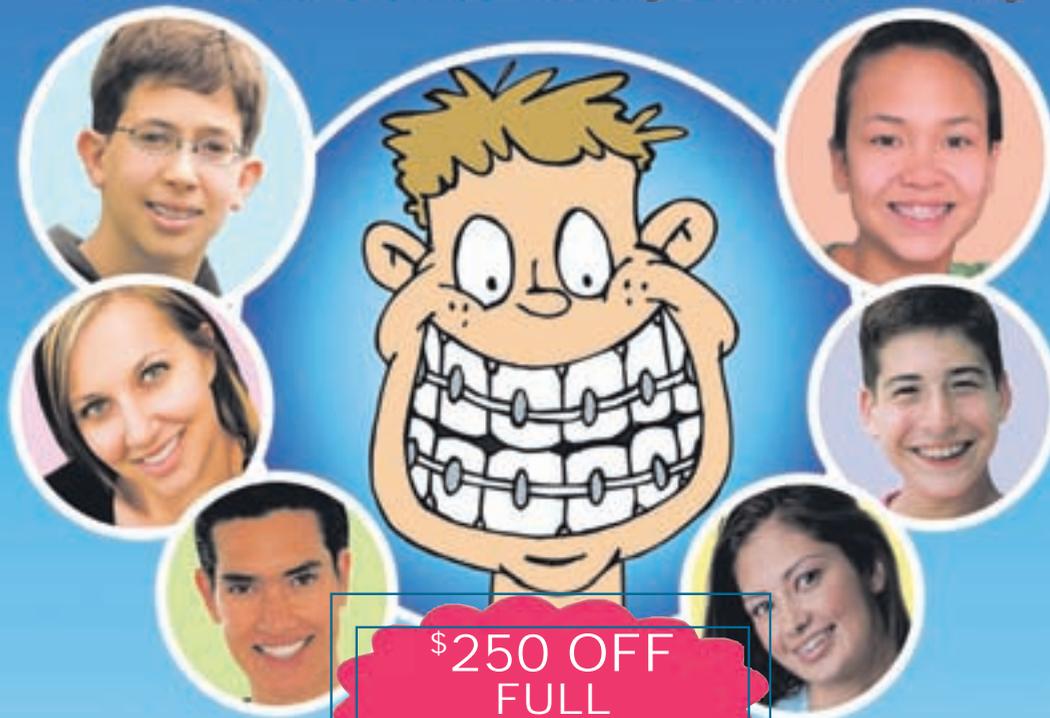
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