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Letter from the publisher

Happy Holidays!

Time is a crazy thing. It seems like a few short years ago that I was a new mom with the tiniest human being I'd ever seen or held laying on my belly. I can recall it as clearly as if it were yesterday; how exhausted I was and yet how elated



and aware I was of the responsibility of being someone's parent.

Parenting is the most exciting thing I've ever done and the most rewarding. I have worked most of my life at one thing or another, and I have always enjoyed both my studies and my work, but being a Mom is the best. It also happily led me to this wonderful work.

Parenting also brought me to the great partners I have in this work ad-

venture. Sharon Noble, who has become more than a partner is definitely family. It was parenting her oldest son eight years ago that led her here to us, as she was reading *Queens Family* and called with a question. That question led to a much longer conversation, and here we are.

Cliff Luster, who as the head of our larger company and the father of little ones at the time, gave me the opportunity to put this thing in motion and so we began in 1999 to publish what would go on to become the first of the guides, *Brooklyn Family*.

We have a super staff of mostly Moms and some Dads, and I appreciate all of them. They are bright, dedicated and lots of fun to be around.

I want to thank them all and specifically mention the name of my personal assistant Tina Felicetti. She has a wonderful sense of humor and is fabulous to work with. I appreciate her more than I can say.

A few names I want to mention out loud are the sales team of Lori Falco (Brooklyn), Sharon Leverett (Brooklyn), Shanika Stewart (Riverdale) and Alexis Benson (Manhattan). They keep me on my toes and are a formidable group of sales professionals.

Vinny DiMiceli (Staten Island), Lisa, Courtney, Joanna, Jessecia and Shavana make up the editorial gang we rely on for great headlines, copyediting, social media, and more. Leah Mitch (the art director), On Man, Arthur, Earl, Charlotte, Mauro, Mariel, Raymond and Cheryl make up our design and production teams,

and Sylvan is our web guru, and I mean guru.

We have a great group of staff and contributing writers at New York Parenting and I thank them all as well. And thank you for the success you have given us. We now have guides in all five boroughs which makes perfect sense, because our team actually lives in all five boroughs!

It's been a great year and I have little doubt that 2014 will be the same. Wishing all of you a Happy Season and a good beginning to the New Year.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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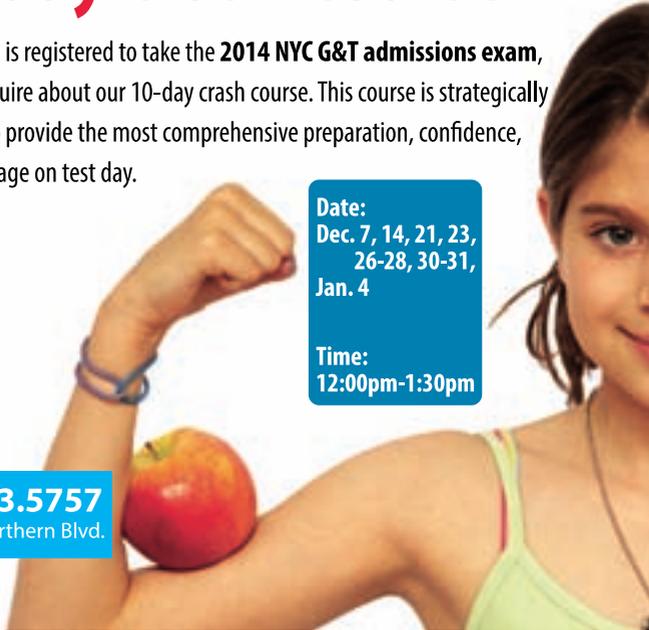
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Simplifying your gift giving with **APPS**

BY SUSAN FRENCH

With the holiday season in full swing, the pressure's on to find that perfect gift. Gift-giving is a skill, especially when finding presents for kids.

There are traditional gifts like toys and clothes, which can be costly, and not always what children are wishing for. Practical items like sweaters, gloves, and scarves are not fun for the youngest recipients to open. When children are the target audience, keep in mind a few essential gift-giving goals: find items that are entertaining, educational, interactive, and cost-effective.

This may sound like a tall order, but it's a cinch with apps!

Children's mobile apps fulfill all the key elements of perfect gift giving. Apps turn learning into a game. Apps turn learning into a game. Children's apps use fun, colorful graphics to engage short attention spans. Task- and level-based apps help young children develop important skills, such as vocabulary, math, reading, and organization. Great children's apps allow the child to interact not only with the app itself, but also with the parent or teacher.

For instance, if we want to teach children organizational and time-management skills, voice-activated calendar apps are great gifts (es-

pecially for a new calendar year). They allow kids to hone organizational skills through play with colorful sticker graphics as they learn the days of the week and schedule their activities. Look for interactive features that encourage self-awareness and build self-confidence, such as recording reminder audio memos and sharing activities through social networking.

Not sure how to find the perfect app? Lucky for you, there are entire websites devoted to reviewing educational apps that can help guide you through the process in just minutes.

For a quick review, check out fun-educationalapps.com and bestapps-for-kids.org. It is the goal of these sites to provide our kids with enticing, educational apps, and they provide a place for parents and caregivers to see the app in action.

And the great thing about apps is that you can give in bulk. They make great presents for teachers to give their students, and they are a one-stop shop for grandparents' gift-giving needs. To top it all off, apps only cost a few dollars, as compared to expensive toys and planners. They also cut-down on clutter and help the environment! Plus, app-giving allows you to shop from home and avoid the holiday season's long, stressful lines.

So do yourself and your little ones a favor this holiday season — give the gift of an app!

Susan French is a kindergarten teacher, mentor, and math coach, working for the city's Department of Education for more than 20 years. She is the co-creator of the 4KidCal brand of mobile calendar apps designed specifically for children. For more information on 4KidCal, visit 4KidCal.com or write to 4kidcal@gmail.com.



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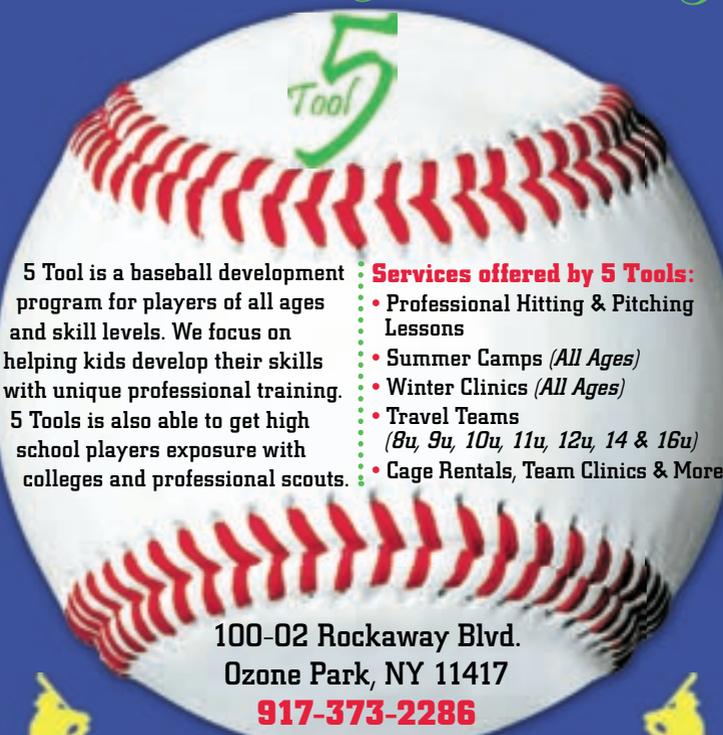
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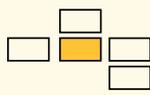
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12 ways to keep the meaning in your holiday season

BY DENISE YEARIAN

In the midst of holiday hooplas, children often lose sight of the significance of the season. Taking a spin off the “Twelve Days of Christmas” song, the following is a list of a dozen ways to create a more meaningful holiday celebration.

1. Grassroots giving. One of the best ways to make your holiday more meaningful is to adopt a family from a local charity. When you call, ask for a family with children your own kids’ ages. Then, if you normally give your child five gifts, suggest giving three and let him pick out two for each needy child.

2. Aspiring ornaments. Have

each family member secretly write one non-monetary thing they want to work for, wish for, and pray for in the coming year. Then, put it in a decorative envelope or ornament and attach it to the tree. On Christmas morning share it with the other family members and discuss ways everyone can help that person fulfill his goal.

3. Go green. Reuse holiday wrapping paper to cover another gift, line a drawer, or draw on the reverse side. Christmas cards can be recycled, too. Cut them in half and use the blank side to jot down reminder notes or let your kids cut them up and make new cards for next year. Christmas trees can be

recycled as well. Take them to state parks rather than sending them to the curb for trash pick up.

4. Multicultural merriment. Every year, pick one country and find out how it celebrates the holiday season. Make mock passports that can be used year after year. Find out what the culture and traditions are like, learn a few words, and try their foods. If you have extended family members from other parts of the country, have them share insights and tell stories about their holiday celebrations.

5. Advent virtues. Make an advent calendar with character traits you want to instill in your family. Pick one virtue each day, discuss what it means, and talk about someone in history who displayed that character. Then, decide how you and your children can put that virtue into action. For example, extend kindness by raking an elderly neighbor’s leaves or shoveling snow from her driveway.

6. Family photo tree. Decorate your tree with individual photos of family members taken throughout the year. Mount images on construction paper, felt, or foam, write the date on the back, attach a ribbon, and hang it on the tree. Keep photos year after year and add more as you go to remind kids of how blessed they have been throughout their childhood. When your children are grown, pass along the pictures so they can carry on the tradition.

7. Inter-generational experiences. If grandparents have personal items they want to pass along to their grandchildren, the holidays are an opportune time. Suggest they give something that is special to them, along with the story behind it. It could be one of grandma’s old dolls, a piece of jewelry, a book, or even a photograph. If the kids are old enough, they can video record the story

More ways to a meaningful holiday

Looking for more ways to make the holiday season more meaningful?

- Befriend an elderly person at a nursing home and create a comfort care package with tissues, sox, stuffed animal, potpourri, etc.

- Visit a local children’s hospital and take balloons, gifts, or other goodwill cheer to the patients.

- Donate time and resources to a homeless shelter, soup kitchen, or food bank.

- Give staples to an animal shelter. Call and ask what they need first.

- Write a note of appreciation to someone who has helped you or your family this year.

- Give the gift of experience. Wrap up an i.o.u. or tickets to a live theater presentation, aquarium, zoo, or other venue, along with the date you plan go in the next few months.

- Make homemade gifts that cost little or nothing for family, friends, and pets.

- Create homemade ornaments using everyday household materials.

- Create a coupon book with certificates that can be redeemed at a later time — help with housework, an hour of quality time, etc.

- Discuss the meanings and symbols of the holiday season.

- Create a flag that represents what the holidays mean to you and your family.

- Interview grandparents about what Christmas was like when they were a child. Video record the session and make it a keepsake.

- Create your own family version of “’Twas the Night Before Christmas” or write your own holiday poem.

- Have a pajama holiday where everyone gets a new pair and stays in their pjs all day.

- Teach a new skill to someone, such as computers for the elderly or knitting for a child.

- Spend one-on-one time with each child creating a special holiday tradition.

- Create a time capsule to represent events that have happened throughout the year. Seal and bury it for 20 or more years.

- Create an annual paper quilt that links 12 pieces (3-by-4) of construction paper with scenes depicting each month of the year. Punch holes around the sides that connect and sew it together with yarn.

- Invent a new holiday recipe.

- Donate new children’s coats to an organization such as Operation Warm (www.operationwarm.org).

- Read one holiday classic (or a chapter of one) every night leading up to Christmas.

- Have a family Christmas program where each person presents a song, poem, reading or artistic presentation. Video record and view in years to come.

Top Tips



for keepsake.

8. Mindful of military. Have your child write a letter of appreciation to someone in the military. Include a picture of your child and an e-mail address, and ask the service person to send a reply e-mail along with pictures if he has them. There are several websites that provide officers' names and care package suggestions. If your children love animals, check out Operation Military Pride's Kindness for K9's link (www.operationmilitarypride.org), where you can send dog biscuits, chew toys, and other pet items to service dogs.

9. Warm fuzzies. Families so often forget to share positive and encouraging words with one another. Have your family sit in a circle and pass a fuzzy teddy bear around. As you do so, have the person holding the bear say something he appreciates about one sitting to his right or left. This will set the tone for an uplifting celebration and teach your kids how to give strokes of encouragement to others.

10. Critter Christmas. Decorate an outdoor tree with pinecones rolled in peanut butter and birdseed, popcorn and cranberry garland, and orange and apple slices that have been attached to pipe cleaners or opened paperclips and hung on the tree's boughs. This is a way to take care of neighboring wildlife and wish them a happy holiday.

11. Family fitness. Incorporate the "Twelve Days" theme into a family fitness routine. Decide on one activity you can do together each day to stay fit — walk around the neighborhood and look at lights, jump rope to a favorite holiday song, or play a round of basketball while the pie is baking. Then make it a family New Year's resolution.

12. Family video newsletter. Each child can take turns being the anchorperson while you record, but make it more than just reading off news. Take footage from the kids' bedrooms where they are showing a favorite stuffed animal or in the yard performing a newly acquired skill. Send copies of the DVD with your holiday cards, or attach it to a holiday greeting e-mail and donate the money you save on stamps to charity.

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

My son, the actor

A 7-year-old boy gets his first film role

BY ROBERT TROTTA

This year was definitely a year to remember for my Astoria, Queens, family.

It marked the 10-year wedding anniversary for my wife, Giovanna, and me. I began my 15th year as an English teacher at John Adams High School in Ozone Park. And our son, Matthew, not only started second grade in September, but also was cast in an independent film shot in our borough.

Matthew turned 7 in June and, like the past six years, he has been the best and brightest part of the year. Watching him learn and grow, break out of his “shy shell,” and hearing his excited voice shout “Papa’s home!” as I’m walking up the stairs, are gifts that I truly treasure.

During the summer, a new chapter and a unique adventure began when Matthew received a contract from a talent and modeling agency. As his parents, we have always felt that Matthew is a beautiful little boy with a heart of gold and a warm smile. Many friends have told us that he is very photogenic — and we have always agreed. My wife and I envisioned the possibility that Matthew might one day be able to land a gig posing in a print ad. But this October was surreal, magical, and unforgettable for our family.

PERSONAL ESSAY



Matthew gets advice from a castmate.



At Fort Totten in Bayside, Queens, a film crew, led by writer and director Michael Weinstein, was shooting an independent film set during the Holocaust, titled, “If the Trees Could Talk.” And on one beautiful, warm Friday afternoon in early October, Matthew was in one of the scenes, portraying a young Jewish boy who was being taken away from his onscreen mother (Anna Myrha) by a Nazi officer.

Fort Totten used to be a U.S. military base, and it was an amazing site that worked remarkably well for the film. There were concrete structures containing small rooms with rusty bars in front of small windows, various tunnels and staircases, and plenty of greenery. We could not fathom how authentic and eerie things were in a place that was right in the borough we call home (Matthew and I even spent part of the morning playing hide and seek, and it was not easy for either of us to find the other).

Dressed in brown corduroy shorts, boots, a white, buttoned shirt with a beige sweater vest over it, and a grey wool cap, Matthew earned his first movie credit. Emotionally, it wasn’t an easy task for him. After all, the scene took place in a dark room. There were actors portraying

Nazi soldiers, equipped with rifles and yelling loudly in German. One of the soldiers, portrayed by actor Stephan Goldbach, was pulling Matthew away from his “mother,” whose role demanded that she scream for him to not be taken away from her.

Following the scene, one of the actors, Ben Heyman, said something very soothing to me: “If this scene would have been easy for Matthew, then, as a parent, you would have thought, ‘Why is he not upset during such a difficult and intense scene?’”

I thanked Stephan via e-mail for his support and compassion towards Matthew on the set. The same day, he replied, “This scene was one that got very real, thanks to Matthew. He was a great little trooper.”

I don’t know what will happen or possibly unfold in 2014, but my family is enjoying the ride so far. And no matter what, Matthew has made us incredibly proud, and he has given us something to remember for the rest of our lives — a spectacular day in Queens.

Robert Trotta is a New York City public high-school teacher and a freelance writer. He lives with his wife Giovanna, their son Matthew, and a family cat named Ralphie.



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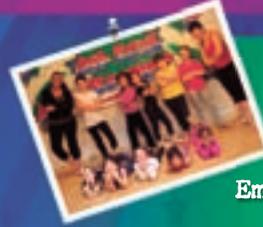
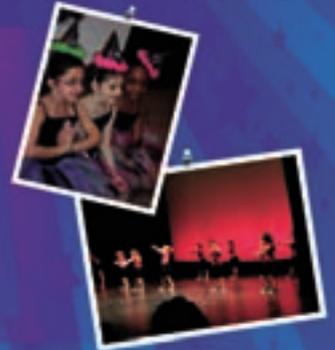
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JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

10 holiday refusals

Are you the kind of person who looks forward to the holidays all year long, but sometimes secretly wishes they were already over? I admit I have both opposing feelings swishing about inside of me every single holiday season. Most of the angst comes from doing a lot of things we don't want to do or worse, don't have any time to do. (Why is it still so hard for so many of us to simply say "no"?)

In an effort to retain my sanity, and actually enjoy the holiday as opposed to just get through it, I've compiled a list of a few things I just will not do this holiday season:

- Attend holiday parties that I don't want to attend. We all have obligations, but shouldn't our own happiness fall somewhere into our priorities? There are often too many parties and too little time. As parents, we have trouble just getting to all the holiday shows, Christmas tree lightings, and plays that our own kids star in. Adding in the many party invites and long shopping list might require pulling all nighters just to keep up, because the house, homework, kids, grocery shopping, cooking, work projects, etc. just do not go away in December — as much as we might wish they did.

- Go overboard on presents. More

does not equate with a better holiday, because material things never equal happiness — ever.

- Buy any overpriced piece of junk, because it's this year's biggest fad. When I've done this in the past, I have always regretted it.

- Do last-minute shopping. This makes the holiday annoying and stressful — the polar opposite of fun.

- Stress. In any capacity. I plan to start not stressing ASAP. "Whatever happens, happens, and I will find a way to go with the flow." That will be my mantra.

- Buy anything just because it's on sale. Deals can, unfortunately, be synonymous with junk. I will do my

homework way before I buy anything and know exactly what I want to buy and why.

- Rush. I want to take in each moment, because that is the only way to enjoy anything. (If I can accomplish this, then that will be a gift to myself this holiday season.)

- Spend more time in the kitchen, cooking, cleaning, or decorating, than time with my family.

- Miss watching "Charlie Brown's Christmas," "Frosty The Snowman," or "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." Homework be damned (or at least finished earlier). When those movies are on, we're watching them together as a family.

- NOT enjoy the season. Life's too short and the holidays are too precious to not savor. Kids grow up, family members pass on. The time to enjoy each other is right now!

Wishing you and yours a very healthy, happy, and memorable holiday season!

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





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Families who survived Hurricane Sandy

A year after the storm, three families share their firsthand accounts

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

“Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned” took on a whole new meaning on Oct. 29 last year — her wrath and “Don’t mess with me” fury sparking fear in the hearts of otherwise brave New Yorkers.

Many were bystanders and watched with utter disbelief images of homeless victims struggling to carry on, despite their horrible circumstances — thousands of them in our very own backyards. Parents across the city wondered how to protect and provide for their families and children — some of them without access to food, heat, transportation, or power.

Each survivor has his personal story to tell.

As they still struggle getting their lives back on track, three families from New York City share their firsthand accounts with NY Parenting readers.

Moore family

Many New Yorkers seem to forget that Manhattan is surrounded by water.

When the storm hit, the normally placid Hudson turned strangely dark and menacing, with high ocean-like waves. Nobody could have imagined that the river would breach its banks and overflow into Battery Park and beyond — flooding streets, buildings, and the tunnel — like something out of a doomsday scenario.

Battery Park City resident Ron Moore and his family lived in one of those posh riverfront buildings. The vibrant community and scenic views drew them to this area a couple of years ago, until a raging river and flood waters forced them to evacuate after the storm.

“When the water came into our lobby, I knew it was time to pack up the SUV and get the heck out of Dodge,” recalled the father of three. “Suddenly, nothing mattered — only that my fam-

ily was safe and warm, and out of harm’s way.”

Luckily, they had a place to go — their home in Connecticut. But once there, they were shocked to discover they’d have to make do with a similar situation. After a month or so they returned to their city dwelling, but never felt safe there again. Now they’re back in Connecticut for good.

Brookins family

Rockaway Beach is home to the city’s only legal surfing. Sandy ravaged the area, destroying its boardwalk and covering its streets with sand.

Film director and surfer Thomas Brookins, 41, was fighting another battle — the scariest one of his life — as the storm hit his community.

“We had just purchased our home in July, at the same time I was in an ongoing battle with cancer, so moving in was very hard. We had a 1-year-old son,” he recalled.

In his condition everything was a chore, and between his film work, raising the child, and working on the new house, life was tedious and exhausting for him and his wife Jess.

When he and his wife bought the house, Thomas said they were assured their block would never flood — neighbors told them they never had any problems. So, the couple turned down flood insurance, opting instead to invest their money in renovations.

Little did they know that the ocean they loved so much would suddenly turn on them, fueled by an angry superstorm — and that they’d lose everything.

“I saw water rushing in from the Bay and we decided, for [my son] Takoda’s safety, to leave and go live in Brooklyn,” Thomas recalled. So, they stayed in a tiny apartment with a friend, his wife, two babies, and two dogs.

Thomas said a guest had been staying with them in their Rockaway Beach house, and decided to remain in the home, since he had work in the morning.

“A few hours later, we got texts from him saying the street was rushing like

rapids over the tops of cars. He heard a noise downstairs in the extra bedroom and my office and editing bay. He observed what he called, ocean waves spewing out of the floor and hitting the ceiling. From there the basement flooded in three minutes to the top of the stairs. As it reached the front door, he texted, ‘I just saw what looked like someone’s house float down the street; your basement so far is a total loss.’”

Thomas and his wife were horrified. He recalled rushing home the next morning to find something from a movie scene.

“I walked through debris and filth to the house, ran inside and stood at the top of the cold dark staircase looking at swirling water about head high, as everything was banging around. It finally went down to about a foot high that night. I stayed overnight, put on boots, and started shoveling almost three feet of sand out of the basement. Everything we had raised up off the floor was now gone — every memory, every keepsake; my office, gone. The walls were smashed and it smelled like raw sewage. It became an obsession to clean this mess.

“After that, the world slowed to a halt,” Thomas recalled.

There was no heat, and winter was destroying the house almost instantly.

Takoda and Jess stayed in Brooklyn, while for two weeks Thomas shoveled sand and carried belongings out of the house. He said their living room was soiled with dripping filth and boot prints.

Not one organization, including the Red Cross, came to his community’s aid, he says.

“No info ever came from the city, the government, or any media outlets. We kept Googling or using social media to find info on what to do.

“Gas shortages forced me to leave my wife and little guy in Brooklyn, so we could preserve gas. It was harder and harder and getting colder.”

Maybe a month or so later, food and cleaning products from church groups, the Red Cross, and citizens started flowing in, Thomas recalls.



Caroline Enz and her two sons’ basement apartment in her parents’ house was hit hard by Sandy.



(Above) Far Rockaway residents and surfers Thomas Brookins with wife Jessica and son Takoda. (Right) Thomas took this shot a day after Sandy, when his block was flooded.



“We had my good friends with the FDNY come and rewire my boiler and heater; we were excited to be warm while working, but it was a race against mold now.”

Then they learned about the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Thomas said the agency came in with six workers, looked at the heating, and told him he couldn’t keep the repaired heater because it was unsafe, since unlicensed work was done on it. So, workers yanked it out and said they’d replace it. It took months.

Thomas and his wife couldn’t stay with their friends any longer, so they headed to a local airport hotel.

“Takoda was sent away to my sister’s house in Maryland; it was so hard to be apart from him, but it was just too cold and unsafe.”

Eventually, with help from friends, neighbors, and folks from all over New York and beyond, Thomas and Jess finally cleaned out everything “to a raw shell.” Finally, clothing was being donated and they had heat, nearly four months later. “It’s passed the one-year anniversary of Sandy and we’re still rebuilding,” said Thomas. “All of my friends and neighbors had the exact same things happen. The neighborhood is still not rebuilt; roads are temporary blobs of black tar, curbs are still chunky, and there’s no sign of the boardwalk in site. I still don’t think people understand how bad it was.”

Looking back, Thomas said he found out how “humbling” Mother Nature’s power really was.

And he and his wife discovered something else: it turned out the traumatic circumstances, coupled with Sandy’s impact, had affected their son, a sweet, bright child. In fact, Thomas said he believes his

neighbors’ kids were impacted in similar ways.

Thomas says sometimes his son has nightmares and has some issues in school, since he was so isolated during the last couple of years. He tends to play independently rather than with groups.

“Takoda is now 3; he was a trooper through it all. We’re just now hearing him say things he couldn’t say before like, ‘The big storm came and trashed the street.’ Quite often we hear him playing and using the ‘big scary storm’ as the distress, which his ‘heroes’ have to remedy. His language skills are amazing; with a vocabulary that shocks us daily.”

“He’ll be fine, but we hope he pulls through it all, and the storm fades into a little corner somewhere in his memory,” Thomas adds.

Enz family

As Sandy continued its campaign of destruction — unleashing fierce winds and dislodging homes, shops, cars and boats as if they were toys — a single mom with two boys living in the basement of her parents’ home in Howard Beach was praying that the entire house wouldn’t be totaled.

Flood waters turned Caroline Enz’s backyard into a small lake and entered her apartment, rising to eight feet. She recalls how she and her sons, Justin and Matthew, scrambled to find their valuables and salvage whatever they could.

“On the night Sandy came, my oldest son Justin and I were in our rooms when we heard the water start coming in through the AC unit in his room, and then through the windows. We moved as fast as we could to get as much stuff out of the rooms, before

the water would consume the place we once called home.”

They went without heat, hot water, and electricity for more than three weeks.

The day after Sandy, Caroline said it looked like a bomb exploded in the neighborhood.

“There were boats and cars everywhere. People’s homes were gone and their stuff lined up on the street to be thrown away; whole lives gone in one night,” she remembered. “At that time neighbors became family and we all banded together to make sure no one went without a meal, or a warm blanket and coat, clothes and shoes, or just a simple hug to say, ‘Together, we are all gonna get through this!’ There wasn’t one person in my neighborhood that wasn’t affected by this storm. People drowned that night in basement apartments or trapped on rooftops — it was so unreal!”

But they helped each other get through.

Caroline said their lives were really tough that following year.

“Not easy when you’re used to having your own and have to impose, and live with other people.”

They received some money from FEMA, but not much.

“Enough to start to fix but not enough to finish, which makes building back harder,” she said, frustrated. “As for my neighbors, they’re no longer my neighbors — they’re now my family; adopted during a very hard time in all our lives. A family that bonded together.”

She added, “There are some who are still fixing and some that are not even back yet, but each day, more people are back and we get closer to

having a normal way of living.”

The family just recently moved back and has to start over, but Caroline says she’s grateful that at least they have their own beds, blankets, and pillows, and aren’t sleeping apart, on other people’s couches.

Local volunteers

The Howard Beach and Breezy Point communities struggled to make it after Sandy’s devastation, and a Middle Village, Queens, songwriter and filmmaker was sitting in front of her TV, like millions of fellow New Yorkers, watching the unbelievable images before her. Lori Martini felt lucky to have heat, power, and a bit of food in her fridge, but she also had an overwhelming sense of guilt: so many people were suddenly homeless, cold, and hungry. Compelled to give back and help those in need, she decided to get out there and take action.

As luck would have it, her friend, Forest Hills resident Frank Kenna — the chief deputy at the Queens County Clerk’s Office — reached out to Lori during the relief efforts, and they teamed up to volunteer.

“After Sandy struck, I noticed Lori kept posting about it on Facebook, and could tell that she wanted to help. So I informed her about one particular volunteer effort being headed up by the Woodhaven Residents’ Block Association, whose president is my friend, Ed Wendell. I picked her up in my minivan, along with items we both donated, and then drove to Woodhaven, where we packed the car as much as we could.

“We then drove to Howard Beach and delivered everything to state Sen. Joseph Addabbo’s office, where he had set up a distribution center,” Frank recalls.

• • •

Life will never be the same for these families, but thanks to the help of big-hearted volunteers and neighbors banding together, communities are coming back. They say every cloud has a silver lining. Well, a year after Sandy wreaked havoc on Thomas Brookins’s beloved Rockaway Beach community, it seems that new businesses, eateries, and shops have been popping up here and there. Thomas reports that surprisingly, the area has been gradually transforming into a popular vacation spot for city folk and even some celebs, who are buying waterfront homes.

Apparently they fell in love with it when they came to volunteer after Sandy.

Home alone

How to know if your child is ready

BY JAMIE LOBER

When it comes to staying home alone, parents are often unsure about how to judge whether their child is ready. It is important that you do not rush into things, even if your child appears confident in his ability to take care of himself while you are away.

"A lot of states do not have a legal age limit or cut-off point for when children can stay home alone, so it is about making sure that you know if your child is comfortable," said Dr. Kirsten Cullen Sharma, clinical assistant professor in the department of child and adolescent psychiatry, child study center at New York University Langone.

According to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services website, "Some children are responsible, intelligent, and independent enough to be left alone at 12 or 13 years of age. Likewise, there are some teenagers who are too irresponsible or have special needs that limit their ability to be safe if they are left alone.

Parents and guardians need to make intelligent, reasoned decisions regarding these matters, asking, "What has the child done in the past to show you he is able to take on this kind of responsibility?"

Sharma says that one of the ways to help your child feel com-

fortable is by "progressively letting him stay home for longer and longer periods of time."

Each child has different emotions regarding the potential responsibility.

"I work with a mom who is going through this with her 13-year-old daughter who is nervous to stay home, and the mom is working a plan with her where the first day she went to the gym in her apartment building for 15 minutes, the next day to the store across the street for 20 minutes," said Sharma.

Every couple of days, you can attempt to do something and let your child stay home alone to build up his belief that he can do it. Knowing how to respond in various situations can help get him to that point.

"A big part is planning ahead, so you need to have a safety or emergency plan and make sure you know a neighbor who is home next door," said Sharma. Be sure your child knows how to contact you, even if it just sending a text message every half hour, so they have a check-in plan.

Practice can make all the difference. Your child may feel better prepared if he has a chance to role-play an emergency situation or plan before he is allowed to stay home for a short period of time.

"Practice calling an emergency contact person if the child gets injured or a fire starts in the house," said Sharma. You should also practice the scenario of someone knocking at the door.

"Let your child know to never open the door to strangers and always check before opening the door to anyone by looking through a peephole or window first," said Melanie Pipkin Kozel, media relations lead at the American Red



Practice can make all the difference. Your child may feel better prepared if he has a chance to role-play an emergency situation or plan before he is allowed to stay home for a short period of time.



Cross. He should inform you or an emergency contact person if someone comes to the door.

"Make sure he knows not to go outside to check an unusual noise," said Kozel. Knowing how to turn the security alarm on and off can be helpful as well.

Some kids are able to cope with situations easier than others.

"Talk about whether your child is mature enough and whether he is nervous or scared, since that is a huge part of the picture — even if he is mature," said Sharma. Discussing fear and anxieties is beneficial.

"Have your child keep a journal of thoughts or feelings that he had while you were away and then at night, sit down and review what came up," said Sharma.

Some kids are more expressive than others.

"Some write down nothing and they are fine, and others say they were scared, because it was starting to get dark outside," said Sharma.

Depending on age, your child may be reassured knowing that you have a first aid kit that is accessible should he need it.

"He should know where to find working flashlights, a battery-operated radio, and extra batteries," said Kozel.

Set expectations. Some children are excited to stay home alone, because it builds confidence and self-esteem while others take advantage and have parties at their house or call people that they are not supposed to call.

"Your child should know exactly what he is allowed to do and that if he does something he is not supposed to do, that there is a consequence," said Sharma. "Most kids are okay, but some will push the limits, so parents have to be ready for that and have a plan in place in case that happens."

Keep safety in mind and consider child-proofing your home

before you leave.

"Knives, hand tools, power tools, razor blades, scissors, guns, ammunition and other objects that can cause injury should be stored in locked cabinets or locked storage areas," said Kozel. Potential poisons like detergents, pesticides, car-care fluids and polishes should also be out of reach. The same applies to medicines.

Give your child a run-down of what you will be doing. Let him know if he can have friends over or watch certain movies.

"He wants to know where you will be, how long you will be gone, and what time you are coming home," said Sharma.

It is hard to give a recommended age of when a child is ready to stay home alone, and mental health professionals set some loose boundaries.

"Most guidelines say that you should not leave a child who is younger than 12 home alone, but there are a couple of states that allow a child to stay home alone even at the age of 8," said Sharma. For kids who are babysitting or staying home with a younger sibling, the recommended age tends to be higher, around 15.

Offer feedback.

"Parents can review the night with their child, not just by asking how it went and saying the child did a great job, but actually sitting down and talking about what went really well, when they felt uncomfortable, and giving the child an opportunity to express any worries they have," said Sharma.

Try not to compare your child to his friends or neighbors' children. Accept him for who he is, and he will let you know when he is ready to stay home unsupervised.

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

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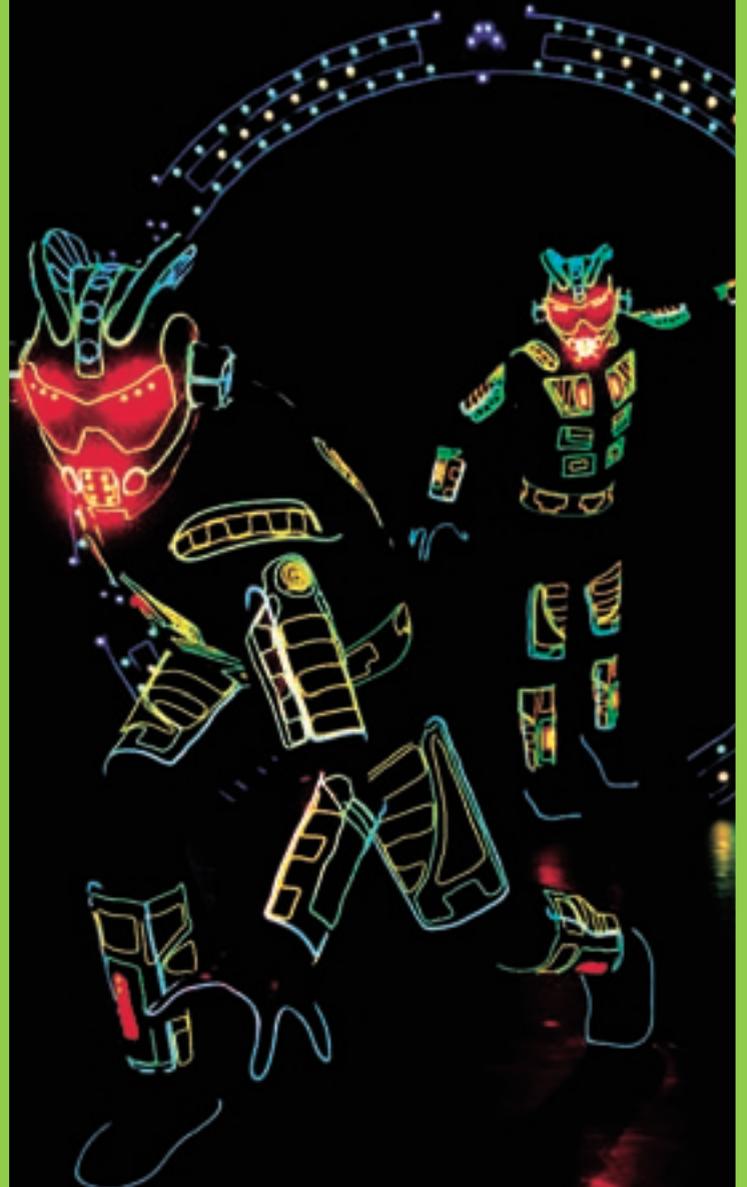
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Outwit your appetite

You *can* control the urge to overeat with these simple methods

BY SANDRA GORDON

To control the urge to eat — and eat and eat — during the holidays and beyond, try these simple mealtime tricks, and see how easy it really is to lose the weight for good.

If you've ever polished off an entire bowl of potato chips while chitchatting at a party, or ploughed through a basket of tortilla chips before your entrée arrives, you might think you have little control over your appetite. Yet, research shows that the drive to eat often doesn't have much to do with actual hunger.

"Your appetite can be influenced by the mere sight of food, the portion sizes, and what the people around you are eating or ordering," says Dr. Gerard J. Musante, author of "The Structure House Weight Loss Plan." Those are just a few of the factors that cue you to eat when you didn't plan to, or overindulge when you only wanted a taste. Awareness is key to controlling your appetite.

Lighten up, literally

Studies show that dimmed lights at meals can also make you eat more. In restaurants with soft lighting, for example, consumers tend to stay longer and maybe enjoy an unplanned dessert or an extra drink.

Low lighting can also make



you feel less inhibited and self-conscious; you're more apt to eat more, especially when you're with others.

You can't control a restaurant's lighting level, but you can have a skim latte as dessert. At home, keep the lights bright at meals and reserve candlelight dinners for special occasions.

And our temptation-taming tactics can help.

Temptation trigger: Generous plates and serving spoons; wide drinking glasses.

The bigger the plate and serving utensil, the more you'll dish out. One study had people eat at an ice cream social, and those who were given a large bowl and a three-ounce scooper ate 53 percent more ice cream than those given a smaller bowl and a two-ounce scooper. With beverages, research shows that people pour 28 percent more in short, wide glasses than into tall, skinny ones, says Dr. Brian Wansink, director of the food and brand lab at Cornell University.

Slimming solution: Downsize plates and utensils. If your dinner dishes are larger than the standard 10.5 inches, use a salad plate for your main dish. Try a tip from Asian cultures and artfully arrange what's on your plate. A small serving of sirloin, for example, will be less likely to leave you hungering for more when sliced and fanned on a pretty plate. Also, use smaller serving utensils, such as soup spoons for doling out portions. Replace any squat tumblers with tall, slender drinking glasses.

Temptation trigger: Too many choices.

If you always try to have something new for lunch and dinner, your meals are probably more of a calorie splurge than you realize.

"A varied diet stimulates your appetite," says Dr. Hollie A. Raynor, a registered nurse and adjunct assistant professor of psychiatry and human behavior research at Brown

Medical School in Providence, Rhode Island. The more flavors, textures, and color a particular meal offers and the less often you eat something, the more you'll be tempted to load up your plate, because the food looks good or you're curious about how it will taste.

Slimming solution: Downplay diversity. Come up with a standard repertoire of meals. It's easy to get into the habit of having the same healthy breakfast (whole-grain cereal, skim milk, and fruit) five days a week, so why not do the same with dinner? Raynor suggests rotating among five or six of your favorite healthy core entrees. You can branch out one night a week, if you feel you need to. To beat boredom and boost your diet's overall nutrient content, vary the fruit and veggies you use in the repeat meals. Dessert can be the same small dish of low-fat yogurt every night, jazzed up with almonds, walnuts, strawberries, kiwi, fresh pineapple, or whatever's in season.

At holiday parties and other events with an appetizer or buffet spread, "Follow the rule of two," suggests Wansink. That is, don't put more than two foods on your plate at any given time. By doing so, "you intuitively limit your choices, while focusing on your favorite foods, so you don't feel deprived," he says. In one study, Wansink conducted, participants who followed that guideline ended up eating 36 percent less than those who didn't over the course of an evening.

Another trick: When buying food that comes in flavors, such as yogurt and salad dressing, buy only one flavor at a time. One study found that



At holiday parties with a buffet spread, follow the “rule of two.” That is, don’t put more than two foods on your plate at any given time.

those who were offered three yogurt flavors ate 23 percent more than those who were offered only one.

Temptation trigger: Eating while doing anything else.

Most people are guilty of driving, watching TV, or reading while noshing on something.

“When we multitask with food, we consume more without realizing it and sacrifice a feeling of satisfaction,” says Dr. Susan Albers, a psychologist at the Cleveland Clinic Family Health Center in Wooster, Ohio, and author of “Eat Q: Unlock the Weight-loss Power of Emotional Intelligence.”

It’s an easy way to consume more without even realizing it and sacrificing a feeling of satisfaction. Albers relates the story of a client who had a habit of eating lunch while driving from one job to another.

“One day, she was so distracted

with driving and thinking about her job that she actually had to open her lunch bag at a stoplight to see if her sandwich was gone,” Albers says. (It was.) Sound familiar?

Slimming solution: Make meals important.

“No matter how busy you are, find a distraction-free spot to sit and eat,” suggests Albers. Make a habit of taking one mindful bite at the beginning of each meal and then putting your utensil down. This serves as a speed bump and slows the pace of the entire meal. For a similar effect, ditch your fork and knife for chopsticks, no matter what type of cuisine you’re having. And if you can’t avoid eating while doing something else, pre-portion your food and tell yourself, “No seconds.”

Temptation trigger: The food on the counter.

If you frequently cross paths with

the office candy bowl, you probably realize that the mere sight of food can cause unplanned eating. In a study in which office workers kept Hershey kisses in either see-through dishes or in opaque, lidded jars, those with the see-through dishes ate two more chocolates daily. That translates to 50 calories a day, which adds up to an extra five pounds per year.

Slimming solution: Stash food out of sight. At home, keep cereal, crackers, and holiday treats hidden in a top cabinet, and store extras in the basement or pantry. Research shows that people tend to store their inventory in visible areas consume it quickly until it’s depleted to manageable levels. Also, “wrap leftovers in aluminum foil, not plastic wrap,” adds Musante, so you won’t constantly be tempted when opening the refrigerator.

At work, place treats in dark con-

tainers, preferably in a distant office refrigerator, not in your desk drawer. You’ll eat even less if it takes effort, such as having to reach or take a walk to access food. If the communal goodie jar resides on the desk of someone who sits nearby, offer to fill it — and then do so with treats you don’t like.

Temptation trigger: Entrée envy.

“Research shows that you can be influenced by other people’s food decisions,” says Musante. When out to eat, if everyone orders cocktails, appetizers and dessert, you’re apt to go with the flow.

Slimming solution: Be the first to order. Speak up quickly and order a salad and grilled salmon.

“You’ll have a positive effect on what others choose — and will be less likely to see lots of tempting foods,” says Musante. If everyone wants dessert, order one and split it.



DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

You pick your lawyer

I received a call from a man interested in mediation. Ultimately, his wife did not want to pursue it, and since mediation requires that both spouses agree to the process, we never met for a session. That's as it should be. Mediation is a voluntary process. The parties have freedom to reach their own agreements — or not to agree, and not even to attend a first session.

The man, who also has kids, called me sometime later. He thanked me for informing him about how mediation works, even though he was unable to participate himself. He said he liked mediation's forward-looking approach that encourages parties to examine and understand their current situations, and to consider their respective needs (and their children's). With that foundation, spouses are helped to develop options to meet those needs, which often include money and a place to live, returning to school, or changing careers.

The past is not ignored in mediation, but it is de-emphasized. Unlike the courts, which weigh and assess blame for past actions, mediators help the parties to deal with the here and now, and with how to plan for and create the most positive future for each family member.

The man shared with me that he had hired an attorney, as his wife had done earlier. Further, he said that he liked my approach (really the approach of many mediators) much

better than his lawyer's. His lawyer was being antagonistic towards his spouse and looking for what his client could get, seemingly without any regard for the effects his aggressive tactics might have on the future parenting relationship and the impact on the children — which were very much at the forefront of the client's mind.

The client seemed to believe that his divorce case would have a better outcome, for his wife and children as well as for himself, if his lawyer were open to working cooperatively with opposing counsel (while of course safeguarding his client's rights) rather than behaving like a steamroller.

Yet, the man was apparently reluctant to openly question his attorney — and this reluctance, to my mind, is a great problem that many clients have.

I did not advise the caller, and do not know who was representing him. But I did share the thought that, "your attorney works for you."

In mediation, the lawyers are acknowledged to be experts — in the law, that is. But they are not the experts when it comes to their clients' lives. The clients themselves are the experts in that realm.

Think about it — who knows better about your wants and needs, you or your lawyer? Who knows your children better, you and your spouse, or your attorney who has

probably never met your kids?

Your legal eagle can help you get where you want to go, but shouldn't you be the pilot, or perhaps more appropriately, the co-pilot in your own case?

It is not uncommon (but it is most unfortunate), that clients allow or even look to their lawyers to make all of the important decisions about the clients' lives. Whereas, in my view, the more preferable relationship for both client and attorney is a partnership between them, where clients can easily ask questions, and their expertise in their own lives is fully respected.

Your lawyer is there to advise and advocate for you, and you should carefully consider everything he has to say. But you are the one writing the check, and ultimately many decisions come down to you, including whether the attorney you have interviewed or hired is the right one for you.

New York City and Long Island-based family and divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin, Esq., helps clients resolve their disputes respectfully and without going to court. He is also the director of Training and Court Program Development at Community Mediation Services, Inc. in Queens. Contact him at lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com or (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Like him on Facebook.

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ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
ESQ.

Till death do us part

Safeguard your children's future with a will

All of my assets are held in joint accounts with my spouse. Do I still need a will? Also, my spouse refuses to go to an estate-planning attorney or to even discuss doing his will. I am really concerned about naming a guardian for my kids and don't want to leave them unprotected. Do I have to wait for him or can I do my documents on my own?

There are two types of assets when it comes to administering an estate, in other words, transferring title to assets. There are “probate” and “non-probate” assets.

Probate assets are transferred by a person appointed by the court as the representative of the estate, who then marshals the assets and distributes them either pursuant to a Last Will and Testament, or, if there is no will, by the law of descent.

Non-probate assets are those that are transferred by operation of law, by presentation of a death certificate. Joint bank accounts, most retirement accounts, and life insurance are non-probate assets if a beneficiary is properly named.

A will is still recommended even if you think that all of your assets are non-probate. First, for parents of children under the age of 18, a will is necessary to nominate a guardian for your children and a trustee to oversee funds left to a child. Absent a will, any assets left to a minor child must be held jointly by any guardian (appointed by the court) and the Clerk of the Court, requiring permission to take any money out. The child also has legal title to the property when he becomes 18, which is not always advisable or desired.

Second, there is almost always an asset that materializes that requires some form of proceeding, either a Social Security check or paycheck issued just prior to death, a car, or just personal property. Third, your



joint or non-probate assets might not be distributed as you intended. Say you have three joint or “In Trust For” accounts, one for each of your children. You fund them with equal amounts, but as time goes on, you draw on those accounts for your living expenses, not always proportionately. At your death, one child might have a balance that is higher than the other. The inequality can spur disputes that can cost more than the proceeds in the accounts.

Clients often avoid executing a will, because it forces them to make difficult decisions they would rather not, while considering their own mortality. However, the failure to make a decision is in itself a decision to defer to the state laws dictating who gets your assets when you die. You might not want your spouse to inherit 50 percent of your assets outright, with your minor children getting the other half.

A will allows you to put certain protections in place, like a testamentary trust, that would protect your assets if your spouse remarries and

ensure that the assets pass to your children. This is especially critical in a second marriage. A will allows you to specify who will inherit and in what proportion.

As for the second question, you are not obligated to wait for your spouse to make a will. There are certain laws about a minimum amount you must leave to a spouse — called a “right of election” — but you can make a will without your spouse's consent or knowledge. If you have a pre-nuptial agreement that gives certain parameters about what you are promising to leave in a will, you should be mindful of that, but it still does not impact your ability to execute a will on your own.

Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of Arden Besunder P.C., where she assists new and not-so-new parents with their estate-planning needs. Her firm assists clients in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties. You can find Besunder on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at www.besunder-law.com.

Disclaimer: This column is provided by the Law Offices of Alison Arden Besunder P.C. and New York Parenting Media as a public service to inform readers of legal issues. It is not intended to advise. Since legal issues vary with an individual's situation and needs, one should consult with an attorney. It is impossible to cover all aspects of the law in an article. Please be advised that the laws are constantly changing. The content in this article reflects the current law. Nothing contained in this article is intended as advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship between the reader and the firm. Individual consultation with an attorney is required to determine the specific facts and circumstances of any particular situation. A written retainer agreement between you and the firm is required before any attorney-client relationship may be created. Circular 230 Disclosure Notice: To ensure compliance with Treasury Department rules governing tax practice, we inform you that any advice contained herein (including in any attachment) (1) was not written and is not intended to be used, and cannot be used, for the purpose of avoiding any federal tax penalty that may be imposed on the taxpayer, and (2) may not be used in connection with promoting, marketing or recommending to another person any transaction or matter addressed herein.



THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Take a bite out of ‘Carnivores’

Is your son getting picked on by other kids? Does he need a little reminder that differences are what make us special, and even the toughest people were once teased?

In the new book “Carnivores” by Aaron Reynolds, illustrated by Dan Santat, you’ll see that even the biggest, most ferocious animals can get their feelings hurt.

Very few things in the world are scarier than lions, sharks, and wolves. The lion is king of the jungle, right? Everybody’s terrified of seeing a shark underwater. And the howl of a wolf? Your spine tingles when you hear it.

So imagine how terrible those fierce beasts felt when the other animals gave them nasty looks, talked behind their backs, made up mean rumors about them, or sneered at them. It didn’t feel good because they just couldn’t help having sharp claws, big fangs, or “scary eyes.” That’s just the way they were.

Because nobody else would make friends with the lion, the wolf, or the shark, the three carnivores befriended one another. Pretty soon, they started discussing their prob-

lem and the wolf suggested that they become vegetarians. Maybe, if they didn’t eat the other animals, the other animals might like them better.

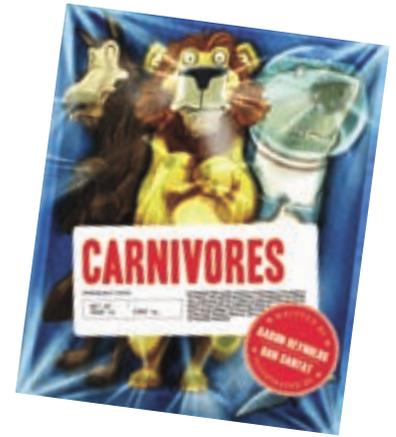
But salad has a way of getting lodged in teeth. Seaweed tastes really yucky. And it’s simply impossible to avoid bunnies when you’re hunting for berries. Being vegetarians was absolutely not going to work.

Then the shark thought maybe camouflage was a great idea. But the lion got caught because he had “zebra breath,” and the wolf drooled. That made it hard to hide in plain sight, so camo wouldn’t work, either.

Then the lion thought of an idea: the owl was a predator. Had been for years, and lots of animals liked him. Maybe they could ask the owl how he coped with rumors, nasty looks, and whispers. He’d know how to turn a bad reputation around. The wise old owl would surely have a few delicious ideas.

No doubt about it: kids love sharks, lions, wolves, gators — anything fierce and with teeth. That makes “Carnivores” perfect to bite into.

I absolutely loved the silliness in-

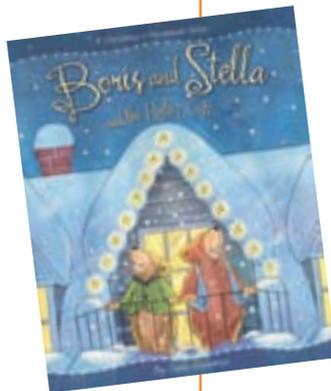


side this story. Author Aaron Reynolds lets the predators be the victims here, which puts a sort of Woody-Allen spin on the poor, beleaguered meat-eaters. It’s hilarious to see each carnivore as he tries not to hurt the feelings of the animals he’s about to invite to dinner, so to speak.

This story itself is perfectly pulled together by the illustrations from Dan Santat. Your child will probably point them out to you, but be sure to pay close attention to the details in this book. They are ferociously cute.

Kids ages 5-to-8 are going to howl at this book and grown-ups who get to read it aloud will enjoy it, too. If your child loves things that fight and bite, “Carnivores” will be a big hit.

“Carnivores,” by Aaron Reynolds [40 pages, 2013, \$16.99].



Teach your child about the gift of giving

Your child loves getting presents.

You’re happy she always says, “Thank you,” but you’d like her to see how good it feels to give as well.

In the new book “Boris and Stella and the Perfect Gift” by Dara Goldman, your child will learn that giving is

sometimes better than receiving.

The city was a perfect place to live for Boris and Stella. Every day, Stella baked desserts at the bakery next door, and every night Boris went downstairs and played the piano, filling the air with the songs he learned growing up in Russia.

They didn’t have a lot of money, but they had each other, and that was enough.

Nearing Hanukkah, Stella shook her savings jar — and there wasn’t much in there. So she took her little pine tree, the one that came from her family’s farm in Italy, and she sold it to

the owner of a local flower shop. That would give her enough coins to buy a dreidel for Boris.

Back home, Boris was thinking. Christmas was coming, and he wanted to give Stella something beautiful. But there wasn’t much in his savings jar, so he got an idea. He would sell his dreidel collection, the one that his parents gave him for Hanukkah when he was little. That would give him just enough to buy something “dazzling” for Stella’s little pine tree.

On the last night of Hanukkah, after lighting the candles of the menorah, Stella had a wonderful gift to give Boris. But before she could hand him the box Boris exclaimed — “Bozhe Moi!” — as he noticed something missing. And just after he opened her gift — “Mamma Mia!” — Stella noticed something missing, too.

So your Christmas tree is decorated with dreidels and gelt. Or your Hanukkah celebration includes candy canes and wreaths. Whatever holiday your family holds dear, “Boris and Stella and the Perfect

Gift” lives up to its perfect title.

Savvy adults may quickly notice something here, though: author-illustrator Dara Goldman drew from classic literature to convert this “Gift of the Magi”-like tale of love and sacrifice into something easier for smaller children to understand. Indeed, the adorable illustrations here are very kid-friendly, so if your child is too young to know the O. Henry story (or if you’re unfamiliar), that’s perfectly okay.

If the “it’s better to give than receive” message is something your 4-to-8-year-old needs this holiday season, here’s a good start for teaching that lesson. For her, “Boris and Stella and the Perfect Gift” is a book she’ll rrrrrrrrrrr into.

“Boris and Stella and the Perfect Gift,” by Dara Goldman [32 pages, 2013, \$15.99].

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

Calendar

DECEMBER



Walk on the wild side

Alley Pond Environmental Center needs help caring for its animals!

Children ages 8-12 can participate in a fun workshop where they will brush, clean, and feed some of the furry and four-legged residents.

Snacks for the children will be provided. They'll even get an animal care trainee certificate to take home.

Dec. 7 at 10 am. \$21.

*Alley Pond Environmental Center
[228-06 Northern Blvd. in Douglaston,
(718) 229-4000, www.alleypond.com]*

Calendar

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

Submit a listing

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

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

SAT, NOV. 30

FURTHER AFIELD

Bari Koral Family Rock Band:

Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road, Long Island; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; 11:30 am and 2 pm; \$5 with museum admission.

Children enjoy a rocking concert.

SUN, DEC. 1

IN QUEENS

Hanukkah Oh Hanukkah: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 and 3 pm; \$10 (\$5 members and children).

Celebrate the festival of lights with storyteller Robin Bady and violinist Deni Bonet.

Singing in the Christmas Season: St. Raphael Church, 35-20 Greenpoint Ave., at Borden Avenue; (718) 729-8957; 3 pm; Free.

The program will offer spoken lessons, a sing-along of familiar Christmas hymns, choir and organ solos.

Caribbean Splash: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Caribbean Splash is a unique and eclectic band that combines the sounds of the steelpan and soulful singing with tropical rhythms.

MON, DEC. 2

IN QUEENS

Flamenco Christmas: Far Rockaway Public Library, 1637 Central Ave. at Mott Avenue; (718) 327-2549; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens will be introduced to the rhythms and emotions of flamenco, its origins in Southern Spain and its multicultural influences.

Hanukkah Story and Craft: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.



Step back in time

The 26th Annual Historic Holiday House Tour offers a rare opportunity to visit several historic houses and learn their stories in just one day on Dec. 8.

A trolley will set the mood and take you to the Kingsland Homestead, Voelker Orth House, Lewis. H. Latimer House, the Louis Armstrong House Museum, Friends Meeting House,

and Flushing Town Hall. Delicious treats and fun activities round out this trip into yesterday.

Dec. 8 from 1-5 pm. \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. Children 12 and under are free.

Kingsland Homestead [143-35 37th Ave., between 37th Avenue and Northern Boulevard in Flushing, (718) 939-0647, www.queenshistoricalsociety.org]

Children ages 5-12 learn about Hanukkah, make a craft to take home, and play games.

Winter Wonderland Art: Seaside Public Library, 116-15 Rockaway Blvd.; (718) 634-1876; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Teaching artist Sophia Skeans explores a variety of seasonal art projects with children ages 4-12.

Korean Music: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 6:30 pm; Free.

The Queens Library International Resource Center presents a journey of world music based on traditional sounds of Korea and extending to New York, Israel, India, Malaysia and the Philippines.

TUES, DEC. 3

IN QUEENS

Long Island City Walk: Long Island City Public Library, 37-44 21 St. at 43rd Avenue; www.queenslibrary.org; 9 am; Free.

Queens Library is sponsoring a walking competition. At the end of the competition, participants will be invited to a final party and awarded certificates of participation.

Celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa: East Elmhurst Public Library, 95-06 Astoria Blvd. at 95th Street; (718) 424-2619; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Local artist Geraldine Benfante will lead children and teens in grades kindergarten through 12th in a discussion about the meaning of Hanukkah,

Christmas, and Kwanzaa, and guide them in creating art to celebrate the holiday of their choice.

Magic Show with Seth Dale: Seaside Public Library, 116-15 Rockaway Blvd.; (718) 634-1876; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Internationally acclaimed magician Seth Dale will shock and amaze in this magical celebration!

WED, DEC. 4

IN QUEENS

Franken Science: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 3:30-6 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children in grades three to four become mad scientists and learn all about science.

Decoupage Bracelets: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Create beautiful and unique art deco-styled bracelets using decoupage techniques.

THURS, DEC. 5

IN QUEENS

Weird Science: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 3:30-6 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children in first and second grade can explore the weird and fascinating world of science with fun hands-on activities.

Craft time: Howard Beach Library, 92-06 156th Avenue; (718) 641-7086; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30-5 pm; Free.

Children 4 to 12 years old make fun projects.

Project Fashion Mavens: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

If you're interested in fashion, or would like to work in the fashion marketing industry, this program for teens ages 13 to 18 is for you!

"The Offenders": Langston Hughes Public Library, 100-01 Northern Blvd.; (718) 651-1100; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Professional artist and author Jerry Craft discusses his newest novel, "The Offenders," and presents a cartooning and anti-bullying workshop for young people age 10 and up and their families.

Japanese Anime Character Drawing: RESOBOX, 41-26 27th St.; (718) 784-3680; resobox.com/japa-

Continued on page 30

Calendar

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

Continued from page 29

nese-anime-character-drawing-class-kids; 4:30 pm; \$100 per month.

In this class, students explore Japanese contemporary drawing style to create kawaii characters of their own vision and design.

FRI, DEC. 6

IN QUEENS

A Reptile "Adventure": Jackson Heights Public Library, 35-51 81st St. at Northern Boulevard; (718) 899-2500; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

An educational experience with Erik Callender allows children ages 6 and up the unique opportunity to see, touch, and learn about reptiles, amphibians, and even some large insects from around the world.

Celebrate a Polish Christmas: Ridgewood Public Library, 20-12 Madison St. at Forest Avenue; (718) 821-4770; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

Piotr Rudzinski is an actor, guitarist, and singer from Poland who will be performing Polish carols.

FURTHER AFIELD

A Night at the Museum Sleepovers: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; 6 pm; \$145 per person, \$135 (members).

Break out your sleeping bags and experience the museum like never before. This unique after-hours program will thrill kids ages 6 to 13 and their caregivers.

SAT, DEC. 7

IN QUEENS

Animal Care Trainee Workshop: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 10 am; \$21 per child.

This program teaches children about the interesting job of an animal caretaker. Children will have hands-on experience in feeding, brushing, cleaning, and learning all about the needs of the center's animals.

Wreath-Making Workshop: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 10 am, Noon, and 2 pm; \$20.

Make a beautiful evergreen wreath at our enjoyable workshops. All materials provided, you only need to bring a garden shear.

Farmers Market 2.0: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Noon-4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Learn about food and ways to



A festival of fairy tales

Firebone Theatre presents "Long, Long, Ago," a musical mash up of three popular fairy tales beginning on Dec. 5 at Space 38139.

This production combines Oscar Wilde's "The Selfish Giant," Charles Perrault's "The Fairies," and the Grimm Brothers' "Hans Dumm" into a unique holiday festival series of performances for all ages. Families will enjoy music, laughter, and the ever-comforting milk

and cookies.

"Long, Long, Ago" Dec. 5 through Dec. 20, at 7 pm, with special performances on Dec. 7 at 2 pm, Dec. 10 at 11 am, Dec. 14 at 2 pm, and Dec. 17 at 11 am. Tickets are \$20 for adults, and \$15 for children 15 and under, which includes the cookies and milk.

Space 38139 (38 W. 39th St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues in the Garment District, www.firebonetheatre.com).

preserve, prepare, and plant it with hands-on activities, demos, and chats with local urban farmers, picklers, and beekeepers.

Drop-in Moving Image Studio: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Noon; Free with museum admission.

Visitors engage in hands-on creative work, making projects ranging from flipbooks to stop-motion and computer animations, and video games.

Holiday Season Concert: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 1:30 pm; Free.

The New York Vocal Artists Research Center will perform Christmas carols, Chinese and Russian folk songs, and Italian opera arias.

Nature's Snoozers: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1:30 pm; \$21 per child.

Children discover which animals hibernate and how they prepare for their long, winter sleep.

Gingerbread House Workshop: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 2-4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Participants will receive a kit with pieces, icing, and candy to make their own gingerbread house.

The Swingin' Side of the Blues: Cambria Heights Public Library, 218-13 Linden Blvd. between 218th and 219th streets; (718) 528-3535; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Blues singer and guitarist Eddie Lee Isaacs mixes jazz with the blues in this performance.

SUN, DEC. 8

IN QUEENS

Wreath-Making Workshop: 10 am, Noon, and 2 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Saturday, Dec. 7.

Microscope discoveries: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 10:30 am-12:30 pm and 2-5:30 pm; \$24.

Children 8-12 years old learn how to use a microscope, who invented it, and why we use it. Pre-registration required.

Winter Solstice Celebration and Tree Lighting Ceremony: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St.; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org; Noon-5 pm; Free.

Get into the holiday spirit with an afternoon of activities, including a winter garden tour, crafts, and live musical performances, as well as a Holiday Marketplace. Tree lighting at 4:30 pm and photos with Santa from 1 to 2 pm.

Flushing Historic House Tour: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm; \$12, \$10 (in advance), Free (children under 12).

Seven historic sites invite you to celebrate the holiday season and learn about the houses and their unique histories. Each site will offer special activities and refreshments. A trolley will be available to take you from one house to the next.

Adventure Hour: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1:30 pm; \$16 per child.

This class will offer toddlers and their parents or caregivers an opportunity to socialize and learn about nature in a relaxed environment.

"The Berenstain Bears Live!": New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 3 pm; Free with museum admission.

The cast of "The Berenstain Bears LIVE!" performs "Fluff on your Tummy," the energized dance number from the off-Broadway show, with activities following the performance.

THURS, DEC. 12

IN QUEENS

Decorate a Holiday Cupcake: Windsor Park Public Library, 79-50 Bell Blvd. at 73rd Avenue; (718) 468-8300; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Young people in grades four and up will decorate their own festive and yummy cupcake this holiday season.

Japanese Anime Character Drawing: 4:30 pm. RESOBOX. See Thursday, Dec. 5.

Navidad Flamenca: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 6 pm; Free.

This performance highlights the rich holiday customs of the Spanish-speaking world, from Argentina and Mexico to Colombia, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

FRI, DEC. 13

IN QUEENS

Musical Holiday Celebration: East Elmhurst Public Library, 95-06 Astoria Blvd. at 95th Street; (718) 424-2619; www.queenslibrary.org; 7 pm; Free.

Head to the library for a musical holiday event the whole family will enjoy!

SAT, DEC. 14

IN QUEENS

29th Annual Langston Hughes Kwanzaa Celebration: Langston Hughes Public Library, 100-01 Northern Blvd.; (718) 651-1100; www.queenslibrary.org; 10:30 am; Free.

This all-day celebration for the whole family includes a film screening, African folktales, drums, dancing, craft workshops for children and teens, and crafts on sale for holiday shopping.

Snowy Evergreen Wreath Decoration: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 10:30 am; \$24 per child.

Children create snowy, evergreen

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

wreath banners to take home. Program includes a walk along the center's trails and a cup of hot cocoa with ice cream snowballs.

Storybook Discovery: Voelker Orth Museum, 149-19 38th Ave.; (718) 359-6227; www.vomuseum.org; 11 am-noon; Free.

Children listen to a story in a cozy living room environment. Suggested for children 6 years and older.

Hands-on History: King Manor Museum, Jamaica Ave. between 150th and 153rd streets; (718) 206-0545; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2013/12/14/handson-history-snowflakes-are-falling; Noon-3 pm; Free.

Learn about historic winter fun, read stories, and make snowflakes and other seasonal decorations.

Drop-in Moving Image Studio: Noon. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Dec. 7.

Poetic Fantasia: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 1:30 pm; Free.

Uncle Yao's Chorus will perform a collection of timeless masterpieces of Chinese folk songs conceived by the prolific composer Wang Luo Bin.

Safari story time: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1:30-3 pm; \$18.

Children 3 to 4 years old listen to nature-related stories, plus enjoy an activity. Pre-registration required.

Mestizo Music of Peru: Ridgewood Public Library, 20-12 Madison St. at Forest Avenue; (718) 821-4770; www.queenslibrary.org; 2:30 pm; Free.

Inkarayku uses Andean and European instruments to perform traditional music from the northern coast and Andean highlands and valleys of Peru.

Folk Dances of Paraguay: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

Panambi Vera Ballet Folklórico Paraguayo de Nueva York performs the beautiful dances of Paraguay.

Winter Solstice Star Celebration: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 7:30 pm; \$18 per person.

Join professor and astronomer Mark Freilich for an evening of star gazing and a party in celebration of the winter solstice.

SUN, DEC. 15

IN QUEENS

Beeswax candle workshop: The Shops at SkyView Center, 40-24 College Point Blvd.; (718) 460-2000; ela-

Fun in Toyland

LaGuardia Performing Arts Center's annual show, "Nutcracker and Toyland," is back on Dec. 14.

Watch as Clara dances and dreams through this musical must-see. After the show, children will get to meet Santa

and receive a special gift.

Dec. 14 at 3 pm. \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door.

LaGuardia Community College [31-10 Thompson Ave., at Skillman Avenue in Long Island City, (718) 482-5151, www.lagcc.cuny.edu]



gasse@quinnandco.com; www.shop-skyviewcenter.com; 2-4 pm; Free.

Children make a handmade candle.

QBG Craft Table: Sky View Center, 40-24 College Point Blvd.; 2-4 pm; Free.

Learn how to make beeswax candles with staff from the Queens Botanical Garden.

An Irish Christmas: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Enjoy a concert of timeless Christmas classics and new holiday favorites, including traditional Irish songs, tunes, dances, and storytelling, too!

"Holidays Around the World": LeFrak Concert Hall, 65-30 Kissena Blvd.; (718) 544-2996; ninell.silberberg@qc.cuny.edu; www.kupferberg-center.org; 3 pm; \$20 (\$10 children and seniors).

Family concert series presented by the Queens Symphony Orchestra, featuring traditional holiday music.

Dominican Merengue: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Enjoy a unique presentation of traditional Dominican merengue, or "merengue típico," and "merenhouse," a blend of merengue with American hip-hop and rap.

MON, DEC. 16

IN QUEENS

Haitian Christmas in Song: South Hollis Public Library, 204-01 Hollis Ave. at 204th Street; (718) 465-6779; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Get into the spirit of the season with traditional Haitian Christmas carols sung by Rol'hans Innocent.

Christmas Celebratory Concert: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 6 pm; Free.

Hannah Hsu Wang, concert pianist, will lead the Flushing Union Bible Church Choir in Christmas carols.

Talent and Variety Show: Lefferts Public Library, 103-34 Lefferts Blvd. at 103rd Avenue; (718) 843-5950; www.queenslibrary.org; 6 pm; Free.

Show off your talent and have a jolly good time at this talent and variety show.

TUES, DEC. 17

IN QUEENS

Drama Posse: Hillcrest Public Library, 187-05 Union Tpke. at 188th Street; (718) 454-2786; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Children and teens ages 8 to 14 are invited to participate in the Drama Posse as actors, musicians, scenery artists, sound effects techs and stagehands.

Origami Christmas Decorations: Woodside Library, 54-22 Skillman Ave.; (718) 429-4700; www.queenslibrary.org; 5:30 pm; Free.

Join origami artist Nesta Wu in a demonstration of how to make Christmas tree decorations from recycled paper.

THURS, DEC. 19

IN QUEENS

Winter Holiday Arts and Crafts: Hillcrest Public Library, 187-05 Union Tpke. at 188th Street; (718) 454-2786; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Children ages 6 to 14 will create an original gift and special card for friends and family members.

Japanese Anime Character Drawing: 4:30 pm. RESOBOX. See Thursday, Dec. 5.

Christmas Piano Recital: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 6 pm; Free.

Students of Vivian Fang Liu perform classical piano pieces, Broadway show tunes, and Christmas carols.

FRI, DEC. 20

IN QUEENS

Winter Wonderland Holiday

Party: Briarwood Public Library, 85-12 Main St. at Village Road; (718) 658-1680; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

There's holiday fun for school-age children at this Winter Wonderland party.

Winter Solstice Celebration: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Mark the shortest day of the year and the beginning of winter with stories and a craft.

SAT, DEC. 21

IN QUEENS

Safari time: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 11 am-noon; \$12.

Children 6 to 11 years old take a walk on the wild side and have a safari on the grounds. Pre-registration required.

Drop-in Moving Image Studio: Noon. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Dec. 7.

Christmas Workshop: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm; Free.

Create beautiful Christmas wreaths with up-cycled fabrics, beads, and ribbons, which will be donated to local senior centers in Queens.

Winter Snow Globes Workshop: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1 pm; \$24 per person.

Learn the scientific concepts of density and properties of liquid through "colorful" experimentation. You'll also learn about the history of snow globes and create your own snow globe.

Slavic Arts Ensemble Christmas Concert: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 1:30 pm; Free.

At this concert, the Ensemble will perform European and American

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Calendar

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

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Christmas music.

Nature workshop: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1:30-3:30 pm; \$21.

Children 5 to 6 years old learn about how animals hibernate in the winter. Pre-registration required.

Nature's Snoozers: 1:30 pm. Alley Pond Environmental Center. See Saturday, Dec. 7.

Kwanzaa Workshop: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 3 pm; Free.

Experts talk about the importance of dress and personal style as manifest in the Kwanzaa principle of Kujichagulia, or Self-Determination.

THURS, DEC. 26

IN QUEENS

Japanese Anime Character

Drawing: 4:30 pm. RESOBOX. See Thursday, Dec. 5.

FRI, DEC. 27

IN QUEENS

ReMake the Holidays: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 9:30 am-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Bend, twist, light, sculpt, and animate a new version of the holiday season with workshops, demos, artist installations, and more.

Mom's Winter Break: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 11 am; \$24 (Members), \$30 (Non-members).

Enjoy some well-deserved time for yourself while your children enjoy a fun afternoon at the center, constructing a gingerbread house and taking a winter wonderland scavenger hike.

Holiday Open House: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; Noon-4 pm; Free.

Enjoy tours of the decorated farmhouse, craft activity for children, and mulled cider.

SAT, DEC. 28

IN QUEENS

ReMake the Holidays: 10 am-6 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Friday, Dec. 27.

Holiday Open House: Noon-4 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Friday, Dec. 27.

Drop-in Moving Image Studio: Noon. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Dec. 7.

Gingerbread House Workshop:

2-4 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, Dec. 7.

SUN, DEC. 29

IN QUEENS

ReMake the Holidays: 10 am-6 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Friday, Dec. 27.

Holiday Open House: Noon-4 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Friday, Dec. 27.

Family Nature Crafts: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Road at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm; Free.

Learn about conservation through eco-crafts.

MON, DEC. 30

IN QUEENS

ReMake the Holidays: 9:30 am-5 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Friday, Dec. 27.

Animal Care Club: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 10 am; \$21 per child.

Children will have hands-on experience in feeding, brushing, cleaning and learning all about the needs of the center's animals.

Winter Wildlife: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 10 am - noon; \$21.

Enjoy the birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians on the grounds, play games, and do arts and crafts. For children 3 through 7 years old. Pre-registration required.

Sounds of Science with Bash the Trash: Sunnyside Library, 43-06 Greenpoint Ave.; 3:30 pm; Free.

Bash the Trash builds and performs on musical instruments made from reused and repurposed materials.

The Music, the Rhythm, the Pulse of Kwanzaa: Pomonok Public Library, 158-21 Jewel Ave. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 591-4343; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

Musician, poet, and storyteller Atiba Kwabena-Wilson brings forth the beauty and joyousness of Kwanzaa in an uplifting program of music, dance, and celebration.

LONG-RUNNING

IN QUEENS

Gingerbread Lane: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Tuesdays - Fridays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am - 6 pm, Now - Thurs, Dec. 12; Free with museum admission.

It's a 300-square-foot village made entirely of edible gingerbread, royal icing and candy, and is a contender for the Guinness World Record for the largest gingerbread exhibit.

Playground: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 10 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm, Now - Tues, Dec. 31; \$4 per person plus museum admission.

Children explore, discover and have fun in this outdoor playground with slides, seesaws and pits as well as fog machines. Each session lasts 45 minutes; weather permitting.

Space Junk 3D: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Tuesdays - Sundays, 10 am-5pm, Now - Tues, Dec. 31; \$6 (\$5 children) plus museum admission.

Children experience collisions, soar 22,000 miles above the earth and explore the challenges faced in protecting our planet.

Rocket Park Mini Golf: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm, Now - Tues, Dec. 31; \$6 (\$5 children, plus museum admission).

Putt your way through a nine-hole miniature course that teaches the science of spaceflight.

Drop-In Moving Image Studio: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Saturday, Nov. 23, 12 pm; Saturday, Nov. 30, 12 pm; Saturday, Dec. 7, 12 pm; Saturday, Dec. 14, 12 pm; Saturday, Dec. 21, 12 pm; Saturday, Dec. 28, 12 pm; Free with museum admission.

Young visitors 7 years and older engage in hands-on creative work.

Flight of the Butterflies in 3D: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Tuesdays - Fridays, 11 am, Noon & 2 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, Noon, 1, 2 & 3 pm.; \$6 (adults), \$5 (children, students & seniors,) plus NYSCI admission.

Join millions of real butterflies on an amazing journey to a remote and secret hideaway in this award-winning film.

Holiday Puppet Party Workshop: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Sunday, Dec. 1, 1:15 pm; Saturday, Dec. 21, 1:15 pm; Sunday, Dec. 22, 1:15 pm; Monday, Dec. 23, 1:15 pm; Thursday, Dec. 26, 1:15 pm; Friday, Dec. 27, 1:15 pm; Saturday, Dec. 28, 1:15 pm; Sunday, Dec. 29, 1:15 pm; Monday, Dec. 30, 1:15 pm; Tuesday, Dec. 31, 1:15 pm; \$10.

Children will design their own unique characters, and then take turns performing with them in a short televised puppet show.

Story time: Barnes & Noble, 70-11 Austin St.; (718) 793-1395; www.barnesandnoble.com; Wednesdays, 10:30 am, Sundays, 2:30 pm, Now - Sat, Dec. 7; Free.

Children hear stories from staff members and do a fun craft.

Story time: Barnes and Noble, 23-80 Bell Blvd.; (718) 224-1083; www.barnesandnoble.com; Mondays, 11 am, Now - Mon, Dec. 2; Free.

Join in for an exciting adventure at every turn of the page.

Rehearsals and auditions: Queen of Angels Church, 4404 Skillman Ave. at 45th Street; (917) 548-1086; unitystagecompany@gmail.com; www.unitystagecompany.com; Thursdays, 4-5:30 pm, Now - Fri, March 7, 2014; call for prices.

Unity Stage is offering children in grades Kindergarten through sixth to take part in a production of "Oklahoma." The public performance is in March. Registration required.

Celebrate with Crafts!: Pomonok Public Library, 158-21 Jewel Ave. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 591-4343; www.queenslibrary.org; Thursday, Dec. 5, 4:30 pm; Friday, Dec. 6, 4:30 pm; Thursday, Dec. 12, 4:30 pm; Friday, Dec. 13, 4:30 pm; Thursday, Dec. 19, 4:30 pm; Friday, Dec. 20, 4:30 pm; Thursday, Dec. 26, 4:30 pm; Friday, Dec. 27, 4:30 pm; Thursday, Jan. 2, 4:30 pm; Friday, Jan. 3, 4:30 pm; Free.

Kids and teens are invited to make crafts that celebrate the season and can be made for holidays.

Canned Goods Drive: Hillcrest Public Library, 187-05 Union Tpke at 188th Street; (718) 454-2786; www.queenslibrary.org; Weekdays, 2-6 pm, Fri, Dec. 6 - Mon, Jan. 6, 2014; Free.

The library will collect unexpired cans and boxes of nonperishable food to distribute to neighbors in need.

Rehearsals and auditions: St. Mark's Church, 33-50 82nd St. and 34th Avenue; (917) 548-1086; unitystagecompany@gmail.com; www.unitystagecompany.com; Fridays, 5-6:30 pm, Now - Sat, March 8, 2014; call for prices.

Unity Stage is offering children in grades Kindergarten through sixth to take part in a production of "Oklahoma." The public performance is in March. Registration required.

FURTHER AFIELD

Broken? Fix It!: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road, Long Island; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; Tuesdays - Sundays, 10 am-5 pm, Now - Sun, Jan. 5, 2014; Free with museum admission.

How do you fix it? It's easy! Visi-

Calendar

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

tors enter the family repair shop and try their hand at a variety of fix-it activities.

Holiday train show: New York Botanical Garden, 200th St. and Kazimiroff Blvd., The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am–6 pm, Now – Sun, Jan. 12, 2014; \$20 (\$8 children).

Large scale model trains cover a wide variety of ground and features favorites including The Statue of Liberty, Rockefeller Center, The Brooklyn Bridge, and many others.

The Butterfly Conservatory: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am–5:45 pm; \$27, \$16 (children).

This annual favorite features up to

500 live, free-flying tropical butterflies from Central, South, and North America, Africa, and Asia.

Origami Holiday Tree: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am–5:45 pm; Now – Sun, Jan. 12, 2014; Free with museum admission.

The Origami Holiday Tree and two 19-foot Holiday Barosaurs welcome visitors throughout the holiday season.

Train show: Grand Central Station, 87 E. 42nd St., Manhattan; (718) 694-1600; Mondays – Thursdays, 8 am–8 pm, Fridays, 8 am–8pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–6 pm, Now – Sun, Feb. 23, 2014; Free.

The annual show features Lionel's new limited edition model of Grand

Central Terminal as well as illustrations from Next Stop Grand Central.

Frogs — A Chorus of Colors:

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; awang@amnh.org; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am–5:45 pm; Now – Sun, Jan. 5, 2014; Suggested admission \$19, \$10.50 children, \$14.50 seniors and students.

See more than 150 live frogs, including 10 species of colorful dart-poison frogs. Learn about their importance to ecosystems and the threats they face in the wild.

Family Sundays: Nassau County Museum of Art, 1 Museum Dr. Route 25A, Long Island; (516) 484-9338 X 12; www.nassaumuseum.org; Sunday, Nov. 24, 1 pm; Sunday, Dec. 1, 1 pm; Sunday, Dec. 8, 1 pm; Sunday, Dec.

15, 1 pm; Sunday, Dec. 22, 1 pm; Sunday, Dec. 29, 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Docent led family walk throughs, and art activities.

"A Christmas Story": The Theater at Madison Square Garden, 2 Pennsylvania Plaza; (212) 465-6741; www.thegarden.com; Wednesday, Dec. 11, 2 pm; Thursday, Dec. 12, 11 am; Friday, Dec. 13, 7:30 pm; Saturday, Dec. 14, 2 pm; Sunday, Dec. 15, 1 pm; Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2 pm; Thursday, Dec. 19, 11 am; Friday, Dec. 20, 7:30 pm; Saturday, Dec. 21, 2 pm; Sunday, Dec. 22, 1 pm; Monday, Dec. 23, 2 pm; Thursday, Dec. 26, 2 pm; Friday, Dec. 27, 2 pm; Saturday, Dec. 28, 2 pm; Sunday, Dec. 29, 1 pm; \$49-\$199.

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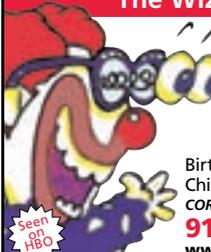
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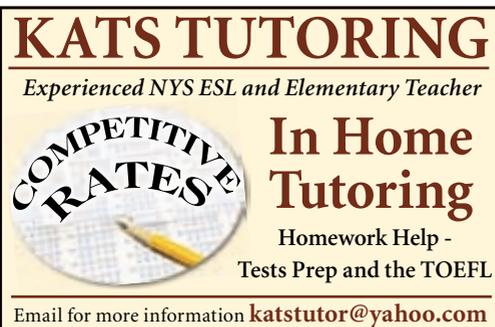
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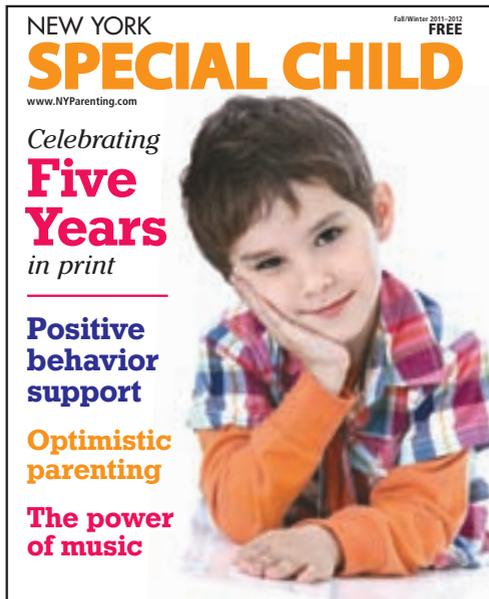
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