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Letter from the publisher

Mother's Day musings

I've been watching this wonderful series on PBS that airs on Sunday nights with the title "Call the Midwife." It takes place in the east end of London in the 1950s and reflects the changing experience of birthing and parenting as the war years dimmed into the past. It's one of the most socially relevant shows I've ever seen about being a Mother and birthing a child and the network of community.



Reliving all the pregnancies and the births every week has rekindled my own maternal experience from the first fluttering I felt in the bath one night, to the hours of labor and birth, to the 23 years since that moment when my daughter at last

emerged after an exhausting 13 hours.

Being a Mother is not always fun. In the early weeks after birth there are the every few hours wake-ups, feedings and a baby sometimes crying and you don't know why. There is the frustration of the teen years and the loss of control over the child you had that is now often taller than you and more influenced by friends and the media than by you.

But most of it is sheer bliss. The tiny infant that suddenly develops a personality; the first steps; the first time you hear your child say Mama; the first day of preschool; the graduations; the growth spurts that make yesterdays clothes and shoes a thing of the past; the young adult

that matures out of the adolescent that drove you crazy and wouldn't listen anymore and the mutual bond of adults who happen to be parents and their children.

It's an amazing miracle and whether you're a natural Mom or an adoptive Mom or a Step-Mom, the miracle is the same. To watch the development of another human being is truly awesome. To have a major role in that development is a privilege and a gift and it's hard to imagine a role in life that could be quite as satisfying, quite as fulfilling over a lifetime.

The celebration of Mother's Day offers an opportunity for our children to make us a breakfast or buy us a meal in a restaurant or at the very least to recognize our constant love in their lives and say thank you. For us, it's a day to be grateful for a

miracle that changed our lives forever. I, for one, can honestly say that it was the best thing that has every happened to me.

Wishing all of you the Happy Mother's Day you most likely generously deserve. Enjoy all the memories and all the milestones, those that have passed, and those yet to come. Let someone pamper you a bit this Mother's Day if it comes your way, and enjoy the best part of all, the fact that there is someone in this world who calls you Mother.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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The science of *momms*

Six surprising
things you
may not
know about
mothers

BY KIKI BOCHI

Mothers may be the glue that holds many families together, but no two mommies are alike. Still, there are some things moms do have in common — and at the top of that list is the huge impact they have on the lives of their children. To get to the core of these very important family figures, moms are the subject of scientific studies all over the world. Here is the good news in some of the findings.

Good moms have smarter kids

School-age children whose mothers nurtured them early in life have brains with a larger hippocampus, a key structure important to learning, memory, and response to stress, according to research in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The research, by child psychiatrists and neuroscientists at Washington University School of Medicine, was the first to show that a mother's nurturing is linked to this critical region of children's brain anatomy.

"This study validates something that seems to be intuitive, which is just how important nurturing parents are to creating adaptive human beings," research author Dr. Joan L. Luby, said when the study was released. "I think the public health implications suggest that we should pay more attention to parents' nurturing, and we should do what we can as a society to foster these skills because clearly nurturing has a very, very big impact on later development."



Being an empathetic mom goes a long way

Nurturing mothers have always garnered accolades for kissing boo-boos and soothing children to sleep with lullabies. Now they're getting credit for their offspring's physical health in middle age.

In a long-term study published in the journal *Psychological Science*, psychologists found that even among groups that would have higher rates of chronic illness in adulthood, adults who had nurturing mothers in childhood fared better in physical health in midlife. It's just more proof of the huge impact good moms can have.

Attentive moms help keep kids off drugs

Through daily interactions, good moms help children understand healthy boundaries, learn self-control and make good decisions. But it goes beyond that.

A strong mother-child bond in childhood, especially in the first three years of life, develops the brain chemistry that can help people resist drug and alcohol addiction later in life. The research, conducted in Australia, found that some people's lack of resilience to addictive behaviors may be linked to poor development of their oxytocin systems.

“The public health implications suggest that we should pay more attention to parents’ nurturing, and we should do what we can as a society to foster these skills because clearly nurturing has a very, very big impact on later development.”

The antidote? A loving and nurturing mom, of course.

Moms teach their children without even trying

Scientists have discovered that babies only hours old are able to differentiate between sounds from their native language and a foreign language. This finding indicates that babies begin absorbing language while still in the womb during the last 10 weeks of pregnancy, earlier than previously thought.

“The mother has first dibs on influencing the child’s brain,” said Patricia Kuhl, co-author and co-director of the Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences at the University of Washington. “The vowel sounds in her speech are the loudest units, and the fetus locks onto them.” Now, if we could just start training them to pick up their room while in the womb.

Mom’s voice is as comforting as a hug

A simple phone call from mom can calm frayed nerves by sparking the release of a powerful stress-quelling hormone, according to researchers. The study, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, looked at a group of 7- to 12-year-old girls who were challenged to answer math questions in front of a panel of strangers. A third of the girls were comforted by their mothers in person with a hug or pat on the back, a third were given a neutral video to watch, and a third were allowed to talk to their mom on the phone.

The results were dramatic: the children who got to interact with their mothers had virtually the same positive hormonal response, whether they interacted in person or over the phone. The girls’ levels of oxytocin, often called the “love hormone” and strongly associated with emotional bonding, rose significantly among the girls who had contact with their moms,

while the stress-marking cortisol washed away. The video-watching group did not experience the same benefits.

Sometimes, less mom is more

When you plop on the floor to play with your child, there’s more going on than just a game. In a study that looked at the dynamics of play, researchers found that the more moms tried to control the content and pace of the game, the more children pulled away. Children in the study also expressed more negative feelings toward their mothers when the mothers were highly directive. For example, during play with her child, a highly directive mother might make her toddler put the plastic cow in the toy barn through the barn’s door instead of through its window. While mothers often think they are helping their children by correcting them, they are limiting the children’s creativity and taking the fun out of the game, said Jean Ispa, lead author of the study.

“Children flourish when they have opportunities to make choices about what they do, particularly in play situations,” said Ispa, and professor of human development and family studies at the University of Missouri. “Mothers who are highly directive do not allow that kind of choice.”

Moms can counter that effect with affection, however.

“Children take in the meaning of what their mothers are trying to do, so if a mom is being very directive and is generally a very warm person, I think the child feels, ‘My mom is doing this because she cares about me, and she’s trying to do the best for me,’” Ispa said. “If that warmth is missing, then the child might feel, ‘My mom is trying to control me, and I don’t like it.’”

KiKi Bochi is a mother of two who still marvels at her power. A long-time journalist, she writes about family health.

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Circle of friends

Thirty days to a healthier social life

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

Relocations, new babies, and other life transitions can throw a wrench in your social network, leaving you feeling disconnected and lonely. Use the adjustment period as a chance to make a fresh start. Carefully consider your priorities and build connections that support your personal health and the well-being of your family.

Women who feel a balanced sense of connection are healthier and more resilient to stress, anxiety, and depression. According to a recent Gallup poll, stay-at-home moms are more vulnerable to depression compared to women who work outside of the home, and isolation could play a factor. Overall, women are twice as

likely to suffer from depression compared to men.

“When there is a lack of social interaction and a decrease of peer-to-peer contact, there is great potential for depression, which is a combination of sadness and anger,” says Lisa Bahar, a marriage and family therapist and professional counselor.

One day at a time, rev up your social engine for increased happiness and satisfaction. Here are a few suggestions.

- Join a mother’s group. Your sense of self-worth and sense of belonging increases when part of a group of supportive friends.

- Call an old friend. Reconnecting helps you rebuild your confidence as you meet new moms.

- E-mail a mom you’d like to know

better. Arrange a time to meet with you and your kids for a play date at the park or the mall play area.

- Send a Facebook friend request to a mom you’ve met recently. Initiating friendships shows you welcome new friends and boosts your self-confidence.

- Volunteer. Your efforts will positively impact others, and you’ll derive satisfaction and joy from helping out.

- Shake out the welcome mat. Greet your new neighbors with a plate of warm cookies. They’ll appreciate your thoughtfulness and a friendly face in a new neighborhood.

- Strike up a conversation. Kids are great icebreakers. Even a casual conversation with another mom can cheer you.

Stay-at-home moms are more vulnerable to depression compared to women who work outside of the home.

- Brighten a friend's day. Send a card to let her know you're thinking about her or call just to chat.

- Click into an online moms' group. Find comfort knowing your situation is not unique. Reaching out to other moms online who can relate can help you feel less isolated.

- Text a friend with a new baby. The first few weeks can be a rough adjustment. By reaching out, you'll help her feel less alone. If possible, arrange a time to stop by with a meal.

- Coordinate a meet and greet. Got school-aged kids? Invite other classroom moms to a "seasoned moms" lunch to build a sense of community.

- Sign up for a yoga, zumba, or jazzercise class. Exercise releases mood-boosting endorphins and wards off stress. Group fitness helps you feel a sense of accountability.

- Spring for a girls' night out! You may feel a little tired the next day, but recalling all the laughs and stimulating conversation will put a skip in your step.

- Surround yourself with positive people. Move away from draining one-sided friendships that zap your energy.

- Seek balance in your yeses. Stress less by saying "no" to requests that aren't a priority or don't interest you. Your family will thank you.

- Go on a mini-adventure. Explore another part of town, discover a local museum, or take a class that interests you. Stepping out of your normal routine juices your creativity.

- Make time to play. Carve out 15 or 20 minutes to pursue an activity you love. Playing is candy for the soul.

- Start a walking group. Walking and talking for an hour is great exercise and like free therapy!

- Dine and play. Invite other moms, whose husbands travel or work late, for a two-hour afternoon play date and potluck dinner.

Dinner done, kids sleep well, and you're rewarded with a quiet evening ahead!

- Coordinate a group outing at the zoo or a children's museum. Both you and your kids will appreciate the social interaction, exercise and education these venues offer.

- Check out the library. Libraries often feature interesting presenters, book clubs, and other activities. Attend a few discussions to meet others with shared interests.

- Organize a game night or book club with your friends. You and your friends will love the excuse for a lively evening escape!

- Reach out to a receptive member of a group of moms. If she is an active volunteer at your child's school in activities that interest you, ask how you can get involved.

- Rejuvenate at the spa. Soothing for the mind and body, a study at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center found Swedish massage in particular reduces the stress hormone cortisol, boosting immunity by increasing white blood cells, which fight infection and disease.

- Reconnect with your spouse. Find a sitter, get dressed up, and head out for a date night. Feeling sociable? Invite another couple to join you.

- Throw a neighborhood backyard BBQ. Provide outdoor games like badminton, horseshoes, volleyball, chalk, bubbles and hula hoops for the kids to play together.

- Support a friend who sells makeup, jewelry, cookware, or candles by accepting an invitation to one of the parties. Go with a budget and enjoy hanging out with other women.

- Take a break. Schedule time alone to head to a pottery place and paint; go clothes shopping; or watch a movie.

- Regroup with your kids. Set aside a relaxing afternoon to reconnect with your kids. Head to the park for a picnic lunch, play a board game, try ice skating, or go bowling.

- Touch base with your family around the dinner table. Communication builds stronger families. Talk about your day's highs and lows, discuss frustrations, and celebrate successes.

Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines is the author of "Confidently Connected: A Mom's Guide to a Satisfying Social Life." Join her in the "Confidently Connected Moms" discussion group on Facebook.

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Photo by Don Pollard

Maria Cuomo Cole (second from right) with her mother Matilda, nieces and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand.

Lessons in volunteering from mom

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Kids learn about helping others at home. As a mom, you have the ability to inspire your children through positive actions, such as volunteering in your community.

It can turn into a family activity and is a great way to get your kids and teens away from their phones and computers.

And for kids, interacting with other young volunteers is cool, especially for kids and teens who would like to make new friends or boost their social skills. They can also learn about a field they might be interested in as they head off to college, and even advance their career goals while they're in college, by helping out with an organization that matches their interests and passions. They may even get a job offer.

Helping those less fortunate also puts things in perspective: when kids are feeling down or sorry for themselves, they can appreciate what they have when they're exposed to someone who is truly needy or homeless.

Take it from the Cuomos — one philanthropic family with volunteerism in its veins.

Inspiring mother-daughter duo — former first lady of New York State Matilda Cuomo and daughter Maria Cuomo Cole — have made a big difference in the lives of many New Yorkers.

Maria and her husband, popular fashion designer Kenneth Cole, have three daughters: Amanda, Catie, and Emily. Maria's father is former Gov. Mario Cuomo, and she is the sister of Gov. Andrew Cuomo, CNN journalist Chris Cuomo, Margaret Cuomo and Madeline Cuomo.

Growing up, Maria learned the value of giving back by watching her mother, a teacher. Matilda has always championed important causes in her community and beyond. She founded Mentoring USA, a leading national, one-to-one, site-based mentoring program that provides caring, trained mentors to young people ages 7 through 21 — including children from foster care programs — to enable them to realize their full potential.

Maria, who says she is still inspired by her mother, has followed

in her footsteps.

As an active, hands-on chair of HELP USA — a leading provider of homes, jobs, and services to homeless families, veterans, and victims of domestic violence — Maria, who is also a film producer, shares with NY Parenting's readers why the work HELP USA does for the homeless and at-risk community, nationwide, is so important.

Tammy Scileppi: Why did you embrace HELP USA?

Maria Cuomo Cole: When my brother, Andrew, became involved with solving homelessness in the mid-1980s, our friends were all excited to be part of his important mission. My father had completed his first term as governor and we were now working in the private sector, but pining for more public service. Andrew and my father's mission inspired me.

The issue of homelessness is growing at an alarming rate. For children, homelessness can be traumatic at so many levels.

Across the top 13 major cities in the US, there was an increase of three percent in homelessness last year, according to the US Conference of Mayors 2013 report on homelessness.

TS: Please describe a family's or single parent's experience, and how they benefited from HELP USA's services.

MCC: I could name numerous families; mothers, fathers, children, who have gained a fresh living in HELP USA's quality and caring shelter environment, and in our permanent housing, with an array of supportive services. Many of our facilities have extensive and customized programs for families and single mothers, including early childhood education, daycare, after school programs, mentoring, and many others.

Perhaps, part of the reason HELP USA has been so effective is due to their innovative strategies in addressing the alarming problem of homelessness. They address all aspects of life. HELP USA offers job training, employment counseling, and after-school care. They even have a street soccer program.

TS: How do you celebrate Mother's Day?

MCC: Despite our busy schedules, we make family a main priority. We try to spend the holidays together.

A second interview with Matilda Cuomo will be coming next month.

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Mother's Day ideas

On Mother's Day, Sunday, May 11, treat the mom in your life to a FabULyss day in New York.

Scheduling the perfect Mother's Day will take some work, but with our DivaMoms suggestions below, Mother's Day planning can be made a little easier!

Brunch. Take the special mom in your life to a beautiful, special brunch spot! Aureole on W. 42nd Street — the city's famous theatre district — is a gorgeous and DeLys-scious option for a Mother's Day brunch, and one of my personal favorites! Dining at the contemporary Aureole is staged in two venues: the formal dining room and more casual bar room. In the dining room, terra-rich colors and golden lighting combine to create a comfortable environment and opulent warm glow, reminiscent of Aureole's original townhouse intimacy. The menu is FabULyss-for American food, and even the DivaKids will be able to find something they like! The Arlington Club, Sarabeth's, Laconda Verde and Gina La Fornarina are also great suggestions.

[135 W. 42nd St. between Seventh and Sixth avenues, (212) 319-1660, charliepalmer.com]

Not to mention, the location segues perfectly into our second Mother's Day celebration suggestion:

A Broadway Show! Taking the special, hardworking mother in your life — whether she be your wife and the mother of your kids or your own mom — is a treat that will inevitably result in wonderful memories for years to come. There are such FabULyss shows out on Broadway right now that the whole family can enjoy, including "Matilda," "Wicked," "If/Then," "Newsies," "Aladdin," "Rocky," or, if she is into the more unique and less mainstream shows, something like "Stomp," "Lady Day," or "Act One" may be something she would enjoy. Either way, you cannot beat the quality and thoughtfulness of a Broadway show on Mother's Day!

Shop. There isn't a DivaMom out there who doesn't enjoy a day or two out of the year shopping for little luxuries! If you are stuck on what to buy her, make hunting for her gift part of the fun of the day! Strolling around Barney's, Bergdorf Goodman, or any of the shops on

Madison Avenue on a sunny spring Sunday is something all moms enjoy — and need every once in a while for all their hard work! When mom picks out something special, hand her a card from you and the kids — and signed by other family members — to go along with her new gift she handpicked and will cherish.

Top of the Rock. Living in New York, we seldom visit tourist attractions. Taking the kids and mom to the Top of the Rock is a sweet way to show her she deserves only the most beautiful things; if you haven't seen it, the view is breathtaking! This is also a great spot to snap a few family photos that will go in your most precious family photo albums. Tickets are \$20 for an adult, but completely worth it!

[30 Rockefeller plaza between W. 50th and W. 49th streets, (212) 698-2000, www.topoftherocknyc.com]

Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spa (or the spa of her choice!). End the day by treating the hard-working mom in your life to a premium spa in the city — like Elizabeth Arden Red Door, which is absolutely wonderful and luxurious — and hand her a gift certificate to use for a massage, facial, or whatever her favorite treatment is! This will let her unwind from the day's fun activities and let her know that her family appreciates everything she does! Show her how much you love her.

[663 Fifth Ave. between W. 53rd and E. 52nd streets, (212) 546-0200, reddoorspas.com]

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



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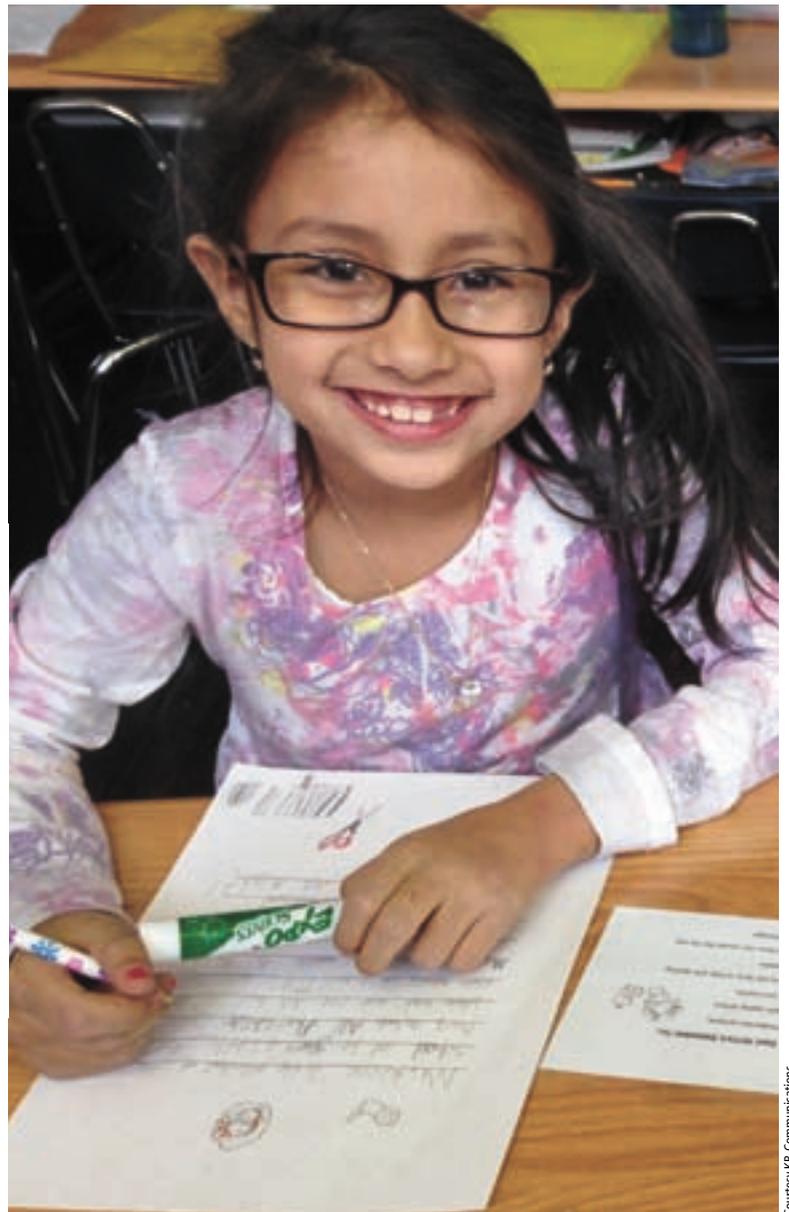
This Queens essay contest winner is in a class of her own

BY SHAVANA ABRUZZO

It pays to be nice. Flushing first-grader Isabella Taxilaga discovered just how much when her sweet masterpiece about kindness won first place in a national student essay-writing contest, earning the budding PS 122 writer a jackpot of prizes, including a cool grand for her school.

The pint-sized philanthropist's stirring composition, capped by a colorful drawing of two smiling girls with a large red heart between them, aced the competition — from Delaware to California — in the Be Kind People Project's "Kindness is the Key to Unblocking Good Character" competition for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Isabella's essay tugged on heartstrings with such golden nuggets of wisdom as "Kindness is everything!" "Being kind is important, because when you do something kind to people they do it back," and "Kindness is important because if you've been mean to someone, you could change it with kindness!"



Courtesy: KB Communications

Congratulations to PS 122 first-grader Isabella Taxilaga from Queens for winning first prize in the national Be Kind People Project's essay-writing contest about the importance of kindness.

Kind acts are routine for the big-hearted 6-year-old, who recently pulled off a gem for her little brother, Noah, 5.

"He had a hard time getting to sleep, so I let him sleep with me," said Isabella, who won a personalized, congratulatory Be Kind Pledge banner for her school, Amazon gift cards for herself and her teacher Stephanie Lupoli, and a chance for her classmates to chat online with members of the Be Kind Crew.

The Arizona-based organization helps grade-schoolers thank their teachers, and build healthy and positive relationships with character-empowering tools, including the Be Kind Pledge.

Students who take the oath com-

mit to be encouraging, supportive, positive, helpful, honest, considerate, thankful, responsible, respectful, and friendly citizens, claimed the group's CEO.

"This is a powerful lesson that can spread from one student to the next, from the classroom to the community, and ultimately, to the nation at large," said Lisa Hartsock.

Williamsburg student Noah Fequiere was also named a winner.

The PS 196 fifth-grader, who won a gift card, reflected, "You must be kind to others, so they will be kind to you."

View Isabella's and Noah's entries, and other winning submissions, at TheBeKindPeopleProject.org.

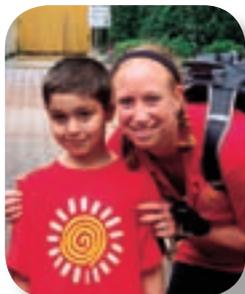


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Take note

How to tell when your child is ready for music lessons

BY LEILA VISS

Not every person is destined to be a concert musician, but everyone can be a music maker, enthusiast, and supporter. Giving your child the gift of learning music on any instrument is something to treasure, but finding the answers on how to provide this gift is not always easy.

You may be unaware of your youngster's readiness for making music, but there are some signs that should help you make that assessment.

Here are some steps toward unlocking your child's innate musicality and readiness.

How can I tell when my child is ready?

Encourage exploration

- Purchase a keyboard instrument (a portable digital keyboard may do the trick, but plan to upgrade when lessons begin) and let your child explore sound before enrolling in lessons.

- Once this exploration begins, notice how your potential musician gravitates and experiments at the keys.

- Download some music game apps such as Piano Dust Buster 2.0, The Most Addicting Sheep Game or Magic Piano and invite your child



to explore. It won't take long for a youngster to be drawn into these magical games that also teach music fundamentals.

- If the keyboard and favorite apps receive regular visitation, this is strong evidence that your future maestro is ready to engage in lessons.

Prime the potential

Some basic skills are involved in learning any instrument, and it's important that these fundamentals

are developed before enrolling in lessons.

An ideal candidate for instrumental lessons can:

- Say and sing the alphabet.
- Count at least to 20.
- Match pitch and sing songs with ease.
- Identify the left from the right hand.
- Cut with scissors.
- Color and draw with markers, pencils, etc.

•Dance and move freely to music.

•Clap and march with a steady beat.

Consider early music education groups, which are perfect for young learners.

How do I know what instrument is right for my child?

The piano is the easiest instrument to begin exploring and eventually making music. Therefore, enrolling your child in piano lessons may be a place to begin her music education.

Once your budding musician is introduced to other instruments in school around fourth or fifth grade, a shift in interest may occur.

How do I choose the right teacher?

Referrals from friends and acquaintances are your best bet for a good teacher. If they are happy with a teacher, there's a good chance that you will be as well. Also, ask to arrange an interview with several teachers, and you'll discover that each owns a unique studio. It's important for you to determine what your priorities are for your child's music education. Here are some things to consider:

•Some teachers may excel at preparing students to compete, while others may lean toward a more relaxed approach with fewer opportunities to compete or perform formally.

•Some may remain set in a traditional approach with standard repertoire, and others may emphasize lessons in creativity beyond the page and various styles other than classical.

•Group lessons are a popular social setting which may best suit those who are still on the fence about studying an instrument. Private lessons usually accommodate schedules more easily and offer one-on-one instruction.

•Music should be shared, so ask if the teacher offers encouragement and opportunities to perform, even casually. Although difficult, performing instills discipline, motivation, confidence and good experience for public

speaking.

•Teachers usually use a method book or series to teach an instrument. A good question to ask during your chat with a teacher is "What methods and tools will you use to help my child progress in his/her music skills?"

How do I balance being a supportive parent without becoming overbearing?

Here are a couple of tips to help you maintain a healthy attitude:

1)Some teachers may require you to be present at lessons to take notes, so consider this as a free lesson for yourself and learn right along with your child. You will real-

ize that building musical skills is a long-term process with peaks, valleys, and plateaus.

2)Regardless of whether you attend lessons or not, it is important for you to remember that this is your child's endeavor and not yours. Allow your budding musician to:

- Learn how to learn
- Read all assignments
- Take charge and ask the teacher questions themselves when they forget a concept
- Be responsible for collecting books prior to the lesson, etc.

3)The best support you can offer your child is providing a structure.

•Make daily practicing a priority, so it becomes a habit by setting up a schedule.

•Instead of setting the timer and demanding practice, ensure that the teacher's instructions are understood and completed during practice time by reviewing the assignment with your musician. The amount of daily time at the instrument may vary, as consistent practice will make the assignment easier to play by the end of the week.

•Arrive promptly for each lesson and be on time for pick-up.

•Show teachers the respect they deserve by following all studio policies and submitting timely payments.

Music lessons are a worthy investment toward a gift that lasts a lifetime. Happy music making!

It's important for you to determine what your priorities are for your child's music education.



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take lessons along with their kids! Sage Music's innovative curriculum is derived from traditional music school pedagogy combined with tenets from psychology, holistic approaches to health and well-being, and communal creativity. The school is headquartered in Long Island City, New York, and recently opened a second location in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. For more information, visit our website www.sagemusic.co or connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Google+.

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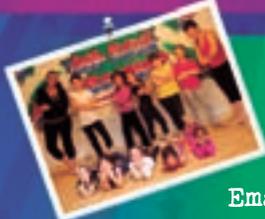
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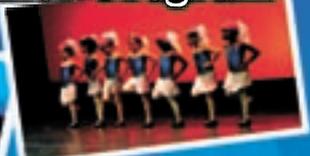
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Three ways to nurture creativity

Ignite their imaginations with these helpful tips

BY MICHELE RANARD

"Creativity is a lot like looking at the world through a kaleidoscope. You look at a set of elements, the same ones everyone else sees, but then reassemble those floating bits and pieces into an enticing new possibility." — Rosabeth Moss Kanter

The ability to see "floating bits and pieces" comes more naturally for some than others, yet parents play a vital role in enhancing their child's ability to do so.

Nurturing creativity may not only improve your child's achievement in academics, but as author of "The Creative Family" Amanda Blake Soule explains, it creates deeper connection with family members.

"You'll make meaningful connections with your children in large and small ways; your children will more often engage in their own creative discoveries; and your family will embrace new ways to relax, play, and grow together."

Consider these three ideas for

nurturing creativity and connecting with your child:

• **Model a creative life.** Nurturing your own creative spirit will not only improve the quality of your own life, but according to Soule, "It will also serve as a guide and model to your children on finding their creative selves." Many avenues exist to explore your artistic side, but a good start is an excellent read. Soule recommends "The Starving Artist's Way" (2004) by Nava Lubelski, which offers 100 "far-out, appealing, and interesting" suggestions. For instance, have you ever made felt from cat hair?

• **Prioritize unstructured time.** Watching television rarely helps the imagination to bloom. Blogger Tracy O'Connor warns, "Television not only encourages children and adults to be passive consumers of entertainment, but it can also promote materialism and obesity." Conversely, unstructured time allows children to engage. Dr. Markham says, "Kids need practice with unstructured time, or they will never learn to manage it." She suggests parents focus on play and

process, not productivity.

Unstructured time does not mean boring or unentertaining time. Do make it fun — the process of creating should be joyful, not necessarily the end product. O'Connor says to choose toys promoting creative play, such as LEGO bricks and blocks. These are superior choices to toys that only do one thing.

If kids know where to find materials for creating, they will use them. Have an organized storage system, and teach them how to properly take care of art items. Soule recommends buying quality art supplies such as a few good quality crayons over a box full of hundreds of mediocre ones.

"It's much more satisfying to work on something when the materials you are using actually 'work' and assist in what you are doing, rather than hinder and slow you down."

Make basic instruments available at home (hand drums, whistles, maracas, harmonicas, recorders, triangles, shakers) so as Soule writes, "They'll naturally discover and play with them as they do with their toys."

• **Head into the kitchen.** There are so many opportunities for creative cooking beyond Tollhouse cookies. Soule recommends "Fairy Tale Feasts" by Jane Yolen (2009), featuring 20 stories, each with at least one recipe (the recipe for "Very French Toast" accompanies the French folktale "Diamonds and Toads"). Another fun option is Georgeanne Brennan's "Green Eggs and Ham Cookbook" (2006) filled with silly recipes for Cat in the Hat pudding and Moose Juice. (You've got to love that the pages of this cookbook are laminated!)

Creativity's pay-off is huge. If improved academic achievement and deeper connection were not reward enough, all of these nurturing experiences are pure fun!

Michele Ranard has a husband, two sons, and a master's degree in counseling. She is a creative dynamo who blogs as a hobby at hellolovelystudio.com.

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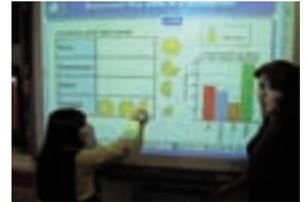
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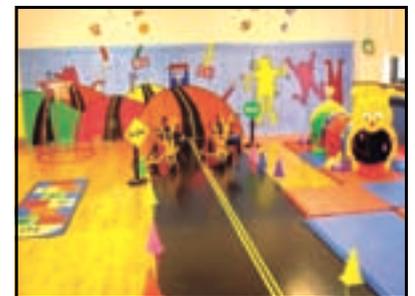


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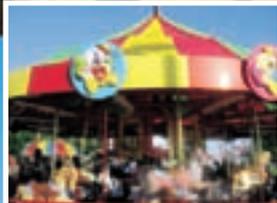


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Singing to learn

Boosting
your child's
literacy skills
with music

BY CINDY HUDSON

Remember all the times you sang the “Itsy-Bitsy Spider” to your baby while walking your fingers together up the water-spout? Maybe you took her hands and guided her in a game of “Patty-Cake” while singing the rhyming verses.

Perhaps you sang out of instinct, because your parents sang to you. Or maybe you were desperate to engage your crying child in something fun to distract him and dry his tears. You probably didn't realize that your simple song, along with the movement, was also setting the stage for him to learn how to read years down the road.

Research and educators say that using music with children can give them a boost when it comes to reading. And having the ability to read well can help kids succeed in school. What can you do to help your kids get a literacy boost from music? Here are a few simple suggestions that are easy to incorporate into your daily routine.

Sing in the car

Pop in a CD and crank up the volume as you drive to the grocery store or run errands. Children don't care if you sing off key or out of tune. They do love to see their parents having fun, acting silly, and playing along with them. Children learn from repetition, so you may want to have a few tried and true standby CDs along every time you are in the car. To increase the variety, and possibly save your sanity, look for new tunes to try in the children's section of your local library.

Move when you sing

It's not just about getting the wig-



Music benefits teens' literacy skills, too

Music benefits teens' literacy skills, too

Young children aren't the only ones who may see an improvement in reading because they make connections with music. Teens can benefit, too.

High school teacher Kim Culbertson is the author of several teen books, and she often uses music as part of writing exercises for students.

"I think music helps with connection," says Culbertson. "Often, we listen to music with our hearts, we feel the music. I encourage students to do the same with reading. I like to play songs that thematically support what we're reading and have the students write about it."

Culbertson also says that what you read or listen to isn't as important as we may sometimes think it is.

"People get really snobby

about, 'Oh, well, I've read (insert fancy book name here),' and I want students to understand that being an informed, intuitive reader can happen when you read the comics, when you read a magazine, a cereal box, anything."

As Culbertson explains, she hasn't found one type of music to be more encouraging than another. The key, as with books, is letting teens lead the way with what they find interesting.

You obviously won't be playing silly music games with your teens or giving them writing assignments, but you can take an interest in the songs they connect with. You can ask what your kids listen to and talk about what it means to them. If they are willing, you can even look up lyrics online together and watch videos of their favorite bands performing.

gles out. Musician, author, and child development specialist Jim Gill says moving to music also helps kids "regulate themselves from being active and excited to a calmer and more focused state to be successful at a task." He cites moving to the "Carnival of the Animals," St. Saens' classical music piece, as an example. When children and parents play along, he says, "They will find themselves moving slow like turtles, galloping like horses, stomping like mules," and more.

Extend the music to other activities

Words to songs can have more meaning when you tie them in to other activities, like drawing or painting. It also helps children hone their creativity. Songs that mix things up can be especially good at sparking the imagination. Just think about what your kids can do with crayons and paper when they listen to the Raffi song "Down By the Bay" with its silly words, "Did you ever see a goose, kissing a moose?" and "Did you ever see a whale with a polka-dot tale?"

Talk about the lyrics

Songs often use words we don't hear in everyday life, which means children can expand their vocabu-

lary. Take that waterspout in the "Itsy-Bitsy Spider" for instance. You can point out a downspout on your home and say that reminds you of the song, then sing it. Gill says music can also help "accentuate rhyming patterns, helping children to begin listening and predicting those." He recites a verse from his song "My Ups and Downs" as an example of a song that brings it all together: "As I ascend/ my arms extend/ and I intend/ to stretch my body straight/ as I elevate."

"Many children aren't exposed to that type of vocabulary in their everyday actions with parents and caregivers," says Gill, "but music play provides an opportunity for children to hear those words and to bring meaning to them through the play."

Once you start adding music into regular interactions with your child, you're likely to find even more opportunities to sing and dance and play musical games that help your children see learning as fun, rather than work. Now there's a spoonful of sugar that can help the medicine go down.

Cindy Hudson writes about reading, family literacy, and books for kids and their parents at MotherDaughterBookClub.com. She lives with her husband and two daughters.



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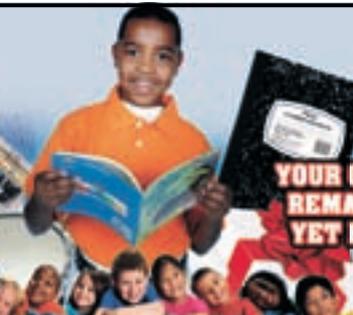



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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Unsettling mistakes

How misunderstandings can stall a divorce

The Hacketts were divorced: on January 12, 2006, the parties settled their divorce action and executed a written settlement agreement.

Then why, eight years later, in March, 2014, was another court issuing a decision and order related to the 2006 divorce settlement?

In January, 2008, Mr. Hackett brought an action “seeking to reform the settlement agreement on the ground that an alleged mutual mistake had resulted in the unequal division of the marital assets.”

“Mutual mistake” refers to a misunderstanding involving every party (in this case, the spouses) in a contract (here, the divorce settlement).

Mr. Hackett’s argument to the court was that the 2006 agreement between him and his former wife contained a “computational error.” Whereas the parties had intended that each receive an equal share of the property, the former Mrs. Hackett ended up with a windfall “in excess of \$100,000.”

In the end, the Appellate Division of the Second Judicial Department rejected Mr. Hackett’s claim.

One factor that the court apparently relied on was that, “The parties acknowledged in open court that they had read and understood the terms of the settlement agreement, and had not been forced” to sign it.

The court cited earlier case law stating that “marital settlement agreements are judicially favored and are not to be easily set aside,” and that the mutual mistake must be “so material that it goes to the foundation of the agreement.”

Additionally, the court said that “to overcome the heavy presumption that a deliberately prepared and executed written instrument manifested the true intention of the parties, evidence of a very high order is required.”

Here, Mr. Hackett “failed to meet his high burden of proof of demonstrating that, as a result of a mutual mistake, the settlement agreement did not reflect the true intent of both parties with respect to the distribu-



tion of the marital estate.”

Our judicial system likes finality, but doesn’t always provide it. It is a tough road to prove that there was a mutual mistake and to set aside a settlement agreement, but that doesn’t mean that someone won’t try to get there.

The Hackett case is evidence of this.

Other mistakes:

How long will it take?

The Hacketts had already settled back in 2006. They may have litigated before then. Did the wife, or even the husband, imagine at that time that their settlement would be challenged, leading to more years of litigation?

Many parties hire litigators and then are shocked, even after hearing the horror stories, to find that they themselves are spending years of their lives in a legal battle.

The law is clear, I am right, and the judge will find in my favor.

Basically, whenever a case is “reversed,” it means that a judge (or panel of judges) disagrees with what another judge decided earlier about the same case.

Often, a client meets with a law-

yer and says, “Tell me what will happen in my case.” But the law is much too nuanced for this. Litigators spend their professional lives arguing about how the law should be applied in one case after another. Many would happily argue either side of a matter, and there is nothing unethical about this.

The point is that even judges can and do disagree with one another at times. How then, can you as a (potential) litigant, be so certain of the outcome? Certain that a judge will agree with you?

Even if the judge does rule in your favor, might the other party return to court? Might an appellate (“higher court”) judge decide against you? The only certainty is that it will take years to find out.

New York City and Long Island-based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin helps clients end their relationships respectfully and without going to court. Contact him at lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com, (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lchabin.

Disclaimer: All material in this column is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

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JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

365 days of happy

Moms owe themselves the love they give

For years on Mother's Day, many of us have enjoyed being lavished with cards, gifts, and love from our family to show their gratitude to us for all we do, day in and day out, all year long.

It is sweet, and any of us who are lucky enough to enjoy such appreciation should feel cherished and respected. Wouldn't it be nice if we did that for ourselves — everyday?

It is a fact that for many women, myself included, becoming a mother became synonymous with becoming a caretaker, an unelected fixer of all things, and a selfless being. Many times it is a self-imposed sentence placed on us by societal demands because what is a good mother other than always there for her family? And don't get me wrong, I firmly believe that we need to attend to our children's needs and recognize them for the complicated individuals they are, but somewhere along the way (and preferably as soon as we get home from the hospital), we need to keep ourselves in the mix.

When was the last time you spent a whole day doing exactly what you liked doing? Or had a beauty night the way you used to when you were single, or simply curled up with a good book or movie? When was the last time you delegated one of your endless responsibilities to your spouse or kids? When was the last time you said "no" to a friend?

Too many of us have become so absorbed in building a family that we have forgotten we owe it to ourselves to build a happy person from the inside out. A mar-

tyr is the very opposite of who we want to model to our children, and after a while we can't help but feel overburdened and exhausted, and then no one is happy — not us, our spouse, or our kids.

It might be difficult, hell, it IS difficult. I am in the process of doing this right now. But I know it CAN be done because, like you, I know many women who never relinquish their vitality to the role of mother. They deliver a baby and still keep up with friends, museum exhibitions, parties, and hobbies that make them feel good. They delegate and don't put it upon themselves to have to do everything. They take turns with childcare with their spouse and friends. In other words, they treat themselves with regular doses of T.L.C., and that is just as vital as nutrition and vitamins for good mental and physical health.

I am not saying it is easy, but if I were to mentally tack up my female friends, the majority of them put themselves last behind their spouse, children, and even relatives and friends. We need to ask ourselves if that is what we want our own daughters to do because what they live, they will duplicate.

It is that age-old airplane analogy: put your own oxygen mask on first so you can save your kids; but in this case we need to put our own happiness first so we can foster enough of it to share with those in our life that mean the most. So, while you are enjoying that half-cooked breakfast in bed and scribbled crayon cards, and after you thank those special people, try to take a minute to thank yourself for doing a fabulous job — right after you promise to treat yourself with all the compassion and love you heap upon those gorgeous little people that made you a mother in the first place!

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



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**DEAR
DR. KARYN**
DR. KARYN GORDON

Teens and dating

Dear Dr. Karyn,

I have a 19-year-old son who is attending university. He has decided to go back out with an old girlfriend who is not good for him and doesn't treat him well. Is there anything I can do?

Dear parent,

The simple answer: there is nothing direct you can do. Since your son is 19, you obviously cannot control who he chooses to date. But you can be an incredible support for him, which is very powerful. The interesting thing about dating is that we choose who we want to date. So, when I coach teens through their relationships, I get very curious about what it is about their partner that they are attracted to.

What does it say about your son that he is drawn to a girl who does not treat him well or who is not "good for

him?" I've coached teens for nearly 20 years and when I see this pattern, there is often a common theme, which comes back to self-esteem.

There are three different kinds of self-esteem. There is low self-esteem, or people who put themselves down, which I call the "blind." There is false self-esteem, or people who put others down, which I call the "disguised." And there is healthy self-esteem, or people who treat themselves and others with respect, who I call the "lifers."

The fascinating aspect of self-esteem is this attitude that we have of ourselves radically impacts every decision we make, including the kind of person we choose to date. Often, the blind are attracted to the blind or disguised while the lifers are often attracted to the lifers. When parents don't like who their son or daughter is dating, it is often because the partner is the disguised or blind.

The real issue is that your son may be struggling with a self-esteem issue, and until this is addressed, my concern is that he will continue to choose partners that don't treat him well or who are not good for him. My number one encouragement for you is to be a safe place for him to talk. Share with him your concerns and ask him what you can do to be helpful for him through this time. If he is open, ask him if he would like to see a counselor to help him sort through his relationship. Relationships are tough and the more help, wisdom, and support we can get, the better!

Youth and the psychology of music

Dear Dr. Karyn,

I can't stand the music my son is listening to — it all sounds so angry. Is this just a phase? How can I put restrictions on my son's music without being too controlling? Out of frustration, last week, I told him to turn down his music, because it's disgusting. As you might suspect, he got extremely angry. I'm confused with what my role as a parent should be in this.

Dear parent,

I've got a few suggestions. First, it's important to understand the psy-

chology of music for youth, and even adults for that matter. We all choose music because we are drawn to it for one reason or another. When I coach youth, one of the first questions I ask them is, "What kind of music do you listen to?" What youth choose to listen to speaks volumes of who they are. After all, music is an expression of personal taste and values. Therefore, putting down your son's music is often misinterpreted as a personal attack.

The worst thing you could do is put down your son's music, or say it's disgusting because, chances are, your son interpreted that comment as you saying he was disgusting. Very few youth can differentiate between who they are and what choices they make. I'm not saying parents should be silent on this issue. But how parents raise this topic is equally, if not more important, than what they say.

My second suggestion is to use your son's music as a tool to open up dialogue with him. What kind of music he listens to reflects a lot about where he is at emotionally. Many youth I've coached listen to angry-sounding music, because they can relate to it; they also feel a lot of anger inside of them. So learn to ask the right questions. Really seek to understand where your son is coming from. Ask questions such as: What is it you like about this music? What does it mean to you? Why are you drawn to it?

Third, talk about the issue of respect as it relates to his music, specifically content and volume. Obviously, if there is content that puts down other people, I would encourage you to not let it be played in the home. As it relates to volume, discuss with your child what is a respectful volume he can play in his room, so it doesn't bother others. The key is to discuss this with him.

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



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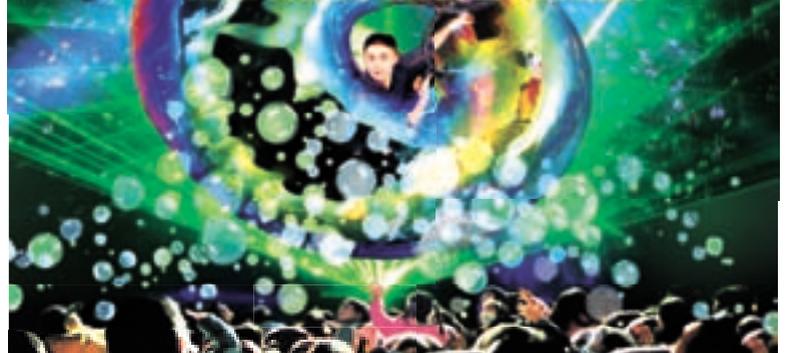
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Safe in the water

Tips to help prevent drowning

US SWIM SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Drowning is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. On average, 3,533 people die as a result of drowning each year, and most of those deaths are children under the age of 4, who drown in backyard swimming pools. The tragedy of these statistics is that nearly all drowning deaths are preventable.

To help educate children, parents, families and swim instructors on preventive measures to avoid a drowning incident, US Swim School Association, the preeminent swim school organization in the country, has compiled the latest life-saving water safety and swim instruction tips for National Water Safety Month in May.

There are several standard water safety precautions recommended to parents including: keeping children under constant supervision,

enrolling children in swimming lessons, knowing CPR, and having pool fences and barriers installed. In addition to these vital steps, here is a list of tips parents can use to build extra layers of protection for their children around water from Sue Mackie, executive director of the United States Swim School Association.

Drowning prevention and water safety tips

- Create a verbal cue for your toddler or child that must be given by you before he can enter the pool.
- Never allow your baby or toddler in the pool without a swim diaper.
- Create a process the child must go through before entering a pool, such as putting on a swim diaper, a swimsuit, and applying sunscreen.
- Never use flotation devices or water wings when swimming or when teaching kids to swim.
- Children should learn to swim without goggles. Teach your chil-

dren to open their eyes under water; if they fall in, they can find the side of the pool or a step and get out safely.

- For very young children, practice having them put their entire face under water in the bathtub and blow bubbles to build their comfort with water.

- Create a water safety plan for your family and have water emergency drills with your kids — covering how to recognize the signs of someone struggling in water and what to do in this type of emergency.

- Make sure your guests and kids' friends know your pool rules before they go outside and get in the pool.

- Start swim lessons at 6 months of age and continue them year-round.

- Always make sure your children wear life jackets on boats, personal watercraft, and in open bodies of water.

For more information on US Swim School Association, visit: <http://www.usswimschool.org>.



PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

Parent friendships

Dear Sharon,

Do you have any suggestions for creating a network of other parent friends here in the city? This is our first child and I'm feeling lonely and cut off. We haven't been living in New York very long and I don't have a network established yet of close friends. Any advice would be appreciated.



Dear new mom,

Congratulations on your new little one and welcome to New York!

One way to meet other parents is by regularly visiting neighborhood playgrounds and parks. These are good places to make friends and gather information about local resources. If you are shy, encourage yourself to say "hello" to a friendly looking mom or dad, he or she will probably be more than happy to get to know another parent and share helpful ideas. One of my nieces met her closest mom friend when her baby was an infant in a playground a few blocks from her house. The now-8-year-old boys are still best buddies today.

Online groups are also a great way to gather information, receive support, and find out about or organize mothers groups in your

area. If you search the internet for "parent groups in New York City," or your borough or neighborhood, you will find a wealth of listings to check out. Joining an online parent group can give you a regular opportunity to be in contact with many other moms and dads. Some have thousands of members while others, representing an assortment of neighborhoods or focused on different commonalities, (i.e. parents of teens, single parents etc.), are smaller. Each group usually discusses common parent questions and local resources for families. For example, this magazine group has NYParenting.com on both Facebook and Twitter.

Many neighborhood cafes also welcome new moms and their babies. If you look around your area in the afternoon there could well be gatherings of parents and children getting together for company while sharing a snack or cup of coffee or tea together.

Local libraries also often sponsor children's book readings and

other events. Stopping by the library in your neighborhood could produce some new ideas and some new friends.

Of course as you can readily see, this magazine is a wealth of information about music, dance, exercise classes, and much more that you can attend with your child. Choosing something in your neighborhood can increase the likelihood of meeting other parents who live nearby.

Watch for street fairs close to home as well. Organizations and family centered businesses often have tables with helpful information.

New York has so many people "hurrying" around that it can seem hard to find kindred spirits in the hustle and bustle, but there are lots of neighborhood pockets that are a lot like small towns. If you keep yourself reaching out to people you are likely to find openhearted parents who will be thrilled to have you join their circle of friends.

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

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

The missing

Renew your commitment to safety this Missing Kids Awareness Month

BY JAMIE LOBER

As May is Missing Kids Awareness Month, this is the prime time to renew your commitment as a family to safety.

This past year the number of kids reported missing in New York State increased slightly, from 21,390 to 21,656. It is a very real issue in our community, and many families are surprised to learn that all missing kids cannot be lumped into one category.

“There are family abductions, non-family abductions which include stranger abductions, runaways, throw-aways and the issue of lost or missing children for short periods of time,” said Pam Weaver, director of community education with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, New York Regional Office.

The predators are not always who you may think.

“It is important for people to understand that children are more at risk of being abducted by a family member or someone they know instead of a stranger,” said Weaver.

There are about four times as many family abductions as non-family abductions.

“A child is usually taken because of custody issues or issues with divorce or hurt feelings between people, but it is not always in the best interest of the child,” said Weaver. A parent may be able to rationalize his choice to take the child away, but that does not mean that there are no consequences. “Even if a child is taken by a family member they still could be unfortunately a victim of physical, emotional or sexual abuse in the hands of the parent who takes them,” said Weaver.

There is no stereotypical child that predators approach.

“Research is telling us that chil-

dren that are by themselves walking or playing outside are more at risk because it is a crime of opportunity,” said Weaver.

One of the most valuable safety rules you can instill in your child is to always take a friend with you because there is safety in numbers.

“There are more attempts of abductions when children are going

to and from school or school activities,” said Weaver.

Kids who are unaccompanied are logical targets because they are more vulnerable and look like easy prey.

“Usually it is children between the ages of 10 and 14 that are more likely to be abducted in those situations because the reality is that



One of the most valuable safety rules you can instill in your child is to always take a friend with you because there is safety in numbers.

younger children usually are supervised," said Weaver.

Teaching the concept of stranger danger in the schools has become a thing of the past since kids are at greater risk of being abducted or sexually abused by someone they know.

"Ninety percent of sexual abuse occurs by someone the child knows," said Weaver. There are a few basic ground rules you can set with your child. "The first rule is to check first, which means that children should always check with a grown-up that is in charge of them before they go anywhere," said Weaver. This applies to anyone who stops them or tries to get them to go in the car. "The second rule is to take a friend if they are riding a bike or playing and if they are real young, it should be a grown-up friend like mom, dad or a teacher," said Weaver.

One of the hardest things for kids to do can be to say no but they must figure out how.

"If anyone is making them scared, uncomfortable or trying to take their hand to take them somewhere and they know that is not the person they should be with, they should yell no," said Weaver.

The final rule is for kids to always tell a grown-up what has happened if they ever feel uncomfortable so the grown-up knows about the potential danger.

You can talk about the fact that some kids wind up missing in our community at an age-appropriate level with your child, but it can be more constructive to empower them with safety skills rather than fear tactics.

"Instead of saying, 'Look at all these bad people in the world,' instead, say that 'mom and dad love you and want to make sure you are safe just like you wear a seat belt when you are in the car

or bike helmet when you are riding your bike,'" said Weaver.

It can complicate things that kids are trusting.

"They might think it is okay to get in the car with a teacher or coach because they know them, but the reality is that they should not get in the car with someone even if they know them unless the adult in charge of them says it is okay," said Weaver.

Runaways are a huge issue in our state.

"Sometimes kids run away because home does not feel like a safe place or they are being victimized, parents have drug or alcohol issues, an adult coming into the household that might be touching them inappropriately or just because they do not like the rules," said Weaver.

It is a good idea for kids to reach out to an adult that can help them.

"Often times once they are out in the community the people that befriend them may take advantage of them or get them involved in prostitution, pornography or selling drugs," said Weaver.

Online relationships are another reason that kids may run away and that is particularly concerning because the person on the other end of the computer could be an online predator. Speak up. Parents need to monitor what their kids are doing online and see if they are talking to strangers or making poor choices.

"If you are having issues with your child, quarrels or your child does not want to obey the rules, you may want to reach out and get some help from school," said Weaver. "It is really about parent communication and talking to kids about safety in the real world and online world as well."

If your child were to go missing, the first thing you should do is call 911.

"There is no waiting period if a child is missing," said Weaver. It is also wise to call the National Center at 1-800-THE-LOST as they can help with the investigation as well. "It is important that parents always have a current, updated, close-up picture of their child's face," said Weaver.

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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DEATH BY CHILDREN

CHRIS GARLINGTON

Focused and fearful

A tale of traveling with an insane daughter

My daughter has ADD. When I say she has ADD, I mean she can't finish a sneeze without starting a new art project. Her mind is an endless rollercoaster that only stops for princess-level emergencies and shiny doodads with which she lines her nest.

The flipside of ADD is powerful, unwavering, laser-like focus, which, when joined with fear, makes for a splendid day of cave diving in Mexico, which is where (my attorney) and I decided we'd take our kids during August (the month wherein your shoes melt).

On our way to this cave, or *cenote* in Spanish (death hole in fear-english), the sun tried every trick in the book to make our skin bubble and melt our jeep. So when we finally arrived at the *cenote* and crawled haltingly down the rickety wooden walkway into its gaping mouth, we were kind of on fire. Getting our kids to jump off the end of that rickety walk into crystal-clear water was slightly mitigated by our impending immolation, and with a splash and a lot of screaming we found

ourselves floating in the cool, cool blue water with a bunch of other pale gringos.

We paddled our family up to the rest of the group where the guide was whispering important instructions about avoiding the needle-sharp stalactites aimed for heads, how to make sure our flotation device stayed tight, not to drop the waterproof flashlight, and to please be quiet so as not to disturb the thousands, and thousands, and thousands of sleeping bats hanging from the ceiling only inches from our faces, to which my daughter replied: "AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"

A couple of stalactites broke off and killed a guy from Wisconsin. We all slowly looked up at the ceiling, only 20 or so inches away, which was wriggling with snoring, leathery, winged rodents. Batman would have pooped in his tights. Our daughter, however, could not take her eyes off them. She kept a running, whispering monologue of exactly how close

we were to them, a monologue that began to rise as the bat-coated ceiling dipped toward us

as we drifted toward a stalactite-toothed cavern entrance designed by the "Lord of the Rings" special effects crew to look creepy. As we got closer, her voice got higher and louder — and though I can't understand a lot of Spanish, I do know the major curse words and *gordo* (which means fat man), and I can translate the glares we were getting without even looking at a book.

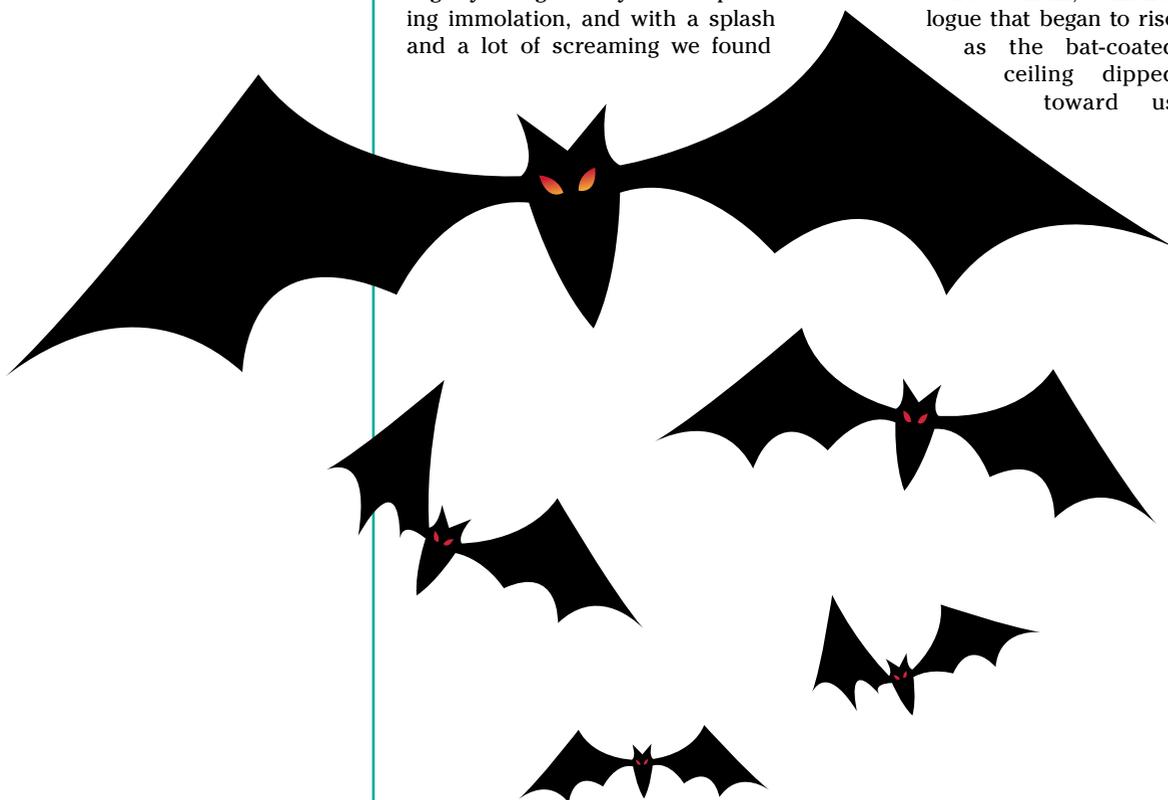
Breaking off from his scowl, our guide informed us we'd need to be careful as the water got shallower because the bottom of the *cenote* was cushioned by about nine feet of pure *guano*.

"What's *guano*?" my daughter asked, between screams.

Before I could say, "Don't tell her!" the guy closest to us said, "It's bat poop," and the girl morphed into some kind of top-lure imitation as she tried to float between the leering ceiling fangs, the hungry bats, and a watery carpet of poop.

I learned a lot from our recent vacations. I now know how much waterproof flashlights cost in pesos. I know what cave bats smell like. I know how it feels to step onto the cruise ship and realize you got back 17 pesos from the \$200 bill you used to buy \$3 of ice cream. And I learned that all my future vacations will occur at home. We'll watch the Nat Geo channel. It's almost the same — and much safer.

Bull Garlington lives in a standard two kids, wife, dog, corner-lot, two-car dream package. He drives a 2003 Camry, sports a considerable notebook fetish, and smokes Arturo Fuente Partaga Maduros at the Cigar King as often as possible. His stories have appeared in Florida, Orlando, Orlando Weekly, Catholic Digest, Retort, Another Realm, The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature, South Lit, and other magazines. His short story collection, "King of the Road," is available on Amazon. His column "My Funny Life," was nominated for a national humor award. He is the author of the infamous anti-parenting blog, Death By Children; the anti-writing blog, Creative Writer Pro; and co-author of "The Beat Cop's Guide to Chicago Eats."





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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Synthroid trouble?

Hashimoto patients go natural to find relief

If you have Hashimoto's disease, an autoimmune disease that causes low thyroid function along with a host of often debilitating symptoms, you may have been told to take a thyroid replacement pill, typically Synthroid or the generic Levothyroxine, and you will be just fine — or that it might just be all in your head. That is just what Lorraine Carapola was told a few years after she diagnosed.

"After being treated with Synthroid for years, my T.S.H. (thyroid stimulating hormone) levels regulated, but I was still miserable. I was freezing all the time, had incredible digestive issues, migraines, brain fog, and heart palpitations. My doctor even suggested I was making it all up and treated me like I was crazy," she says.

Unfortunately, Carapola's experience is not uncommon. Quick chats with Hashimoto patients will all relate the same story, but why is this happening?

For starters, many endocrinologists are primarily focused on treating diabetes and for those that do treat thyroid disorders, most were trained on the simple and incorrect preface that Synthroid is a fix-all, when in reality it is not beneficial for all patients, and does not address the autoimmune present in the body; it simply regulates the thyroid stimulating hormone.

Pharmacist and author of "Lifestyle Interventions of Finding and Treating the Root Cause," Izabella Wentz explains how despite lifestyle modifications and natural supplements being stressed as helpful treatments for nearly every other disease, that has not been the case with Hashimoto's disease:

"The only intervention recommended by physicians was a pharmacological one, I didn't feel that medication alone was the answer," she says.

Leading Hashimoto specialist Dr. Datis Kharrazian says that normal thyroid stimulating hormone levels mean very little. In "Why Do I Still Have Thyroid Symptoms? When My Lab Tests Are Normal: A Revolution-



ary Breakthrough In Understanding Hashimoto's Disease and Hypothyroidism," Dr. Kharrazian explores the reasons behind the mismanagement of the disease under today's old-fashioned medical standards, chiefly taking a synthetically generated Synthroid pill daily:

"It has been staggering the number of stories of we have received from patients whose medical doctors disregard their complaints once T.S.H. is normalized with thyroid hormones. They still feel awful and have symptoms, but are told to quit complaining, to start exercising more, to get a hobby, or to take antidepressants," says the physician.

After seeing four endocrinologists in five years, Carapola saw an integrative specialist who switched her from synthetically produced Synthroid to Armour, a natural desiccated hormone (N.D.T.) taken from a pig's gland. He also put her on vitamin D and B12 supplements along with Cytomel, a T3 specific medication.

"It changed my life. I forgot what it felt like to feel human again," she says.

Thyroid patient, advocate, and author of the book, "Living Well With Hypothyroidism: What Your Doctor Doesn't Tell You That You Need To Know," Mary Shomon explains why natural works better:

"A normal thyroid gland produces

primarily T4 (the storage hormone) and some T3, and the T4 is converted into T3, the active hormone, for use by the cells and tissues of the body," she says.

Synthroid targets T4, which in some people can convert to T3 but a healthy thyroid makes many hormones: T4, T3, T2, T1 and calcitonin. Synthroid works on the premise of conversion from T4 to T3, which many Hashimoto patients' bodies cannot do, and even if it does convert, patients miss the other necessary hormones for healthy thyroid functioning.

In "What Every Patient Should Know About Synthroid," Dr. Ronald J. Grisanti explains, "Only a thyroid hormone preparation that contains T3 will accelerate these patients' metabolism. Hence, when T4 therapy normalizes T.S.H. blood levels of many patients, it leaves their metabolism subnormal."

He continues, "Evidence indicates that financial incentives from the marketers of Synthroid have influenced endocrinologists to endorse the product. Synthroid has a history of manufacturing, stability, and potency problems, and it has not met F.D.A. criteria for effectiveness and safety. These problems with product quality led to F.D.A. action against Synthroid. Many alternative medical physicians report that treatment results with Synthroid are inferior to those with products containing both T4 and T3, or T3 alone."

The best a patient can do is to learn about the various treatments and supplements available. Often, doctors who practice a more holistic approach to treatment are more knowledgeable in the disease.

Coming next month: Natural supplements, vitamins, and lifestyle changes that help improve Hashimoto's disease.

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



ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
ESQ.

Changes to tax laws

I have heard reports that the new state budget includes changes to the estate tax laws. How does this affect my planning? Do I need to redo my will?

You heard correctly. Gov. Cuomo commissioned a task force to examine the impact of taxes on New Yorkers and to propose reform. The Commission concluded in December 2013 that many New Yorkers were fleeing the state to places like Florida that do not have an estate tax. Until recently, New York imposed an estate (or “death”) tax on assets in a decedent’s estate exceeding \$1 million. The tax was imposed only on the excess. New York also did not impose a gift tax on lifetime transfers and has not done so since 1999. After a flurry of activity, the powers that be in Albany included estate tax reform in the Executive Budget, which was passed at 11 pm on March 31, effective April 1. Among other provisions (pre-K funding!) the estate tax reform will exempt almost 90 percent of all New York estates from estate tax. This will provide relief to those whose estate value is largely made up of their homes, or for the nearly 2,800 farms in downstate and upstate New York, many of which would otherwise not have been able to be passed down

to the next generation, because it would have had to be sold to pay estate taxes.

On the positive side: New York will allow a higher estate tax exemption, raising it immediately from \$1 million (the third lowest exemption in the nation) to \$2,062,500. Starting April 1, 2015, the exemption will annually increase by \$1.0625 million through Jan. 1, 2019, until it reaches the original federal exemption of \$5.25 million on Jan. 1, 2019. At that point, the exemption will be annually adjusted for inflation as is the federal exemption.

However, “grave” dangers lurk.

Cliff-hangers and phaseouts: Decedents have a narrow window to escape, pushing the entire estate off a tax “cliff” into an abyss. Before April 1, a New Yorker’s estate paid tax only on assets above the \$1 million threshold, not on the entire taxable estate. Under the new law, if an estate exceeds the exemption amount by less than five percent, the tax is between 6.5 percent and eight percent on the excess above the threshold. Once the taxable estate exceeds the five percent, the full value of the estate is subject to the tax, not just the amount exceeding the exemption. The tax is then computed on a sliding scale from 3.06 percent to as high as 16 percent for estates exceeding \$10 million.

This translates into what is being referred to as the “marginal 164 percent tax.” For example, in June 2017, a decedent with a New York taxable estate of \$5,512,500 (five percent more than the then-\$5.25 million exemption) would pay New York estate tax of \$430,050. That is effectively a tax of \$430,050 on the extra \$262,500 in the decedent’s estate, as opposed to the roughly \$26,250 that would be due if the tax was imposed solely on the amount exceeding the exemption. This can pose serious problems for New Yorkers with assets exceeding five percent of the exemption, inclusive of any gifts.

Gift tax: The new law increases

the overall exemption, but claws back lifetime gifts into the gross taxable estate. Now, the gross estate of a New Yorker will include any taxable gifts made on or after April 1, 2014 but before Jan. 1, 2019 if they were made within three years of death, and made while the donor was a New York resident.

Taxes on trusts: The law closes loopholes on trusts that were previously not subject to New York tax. First, distributions of accumulated income on or after June 1, 2014 to New York beneficiaries of non-taxable New York resident trusts are now taxable. This does not change to income accumulated before Jan. 1, 2014 or to non-resident trusts created by a non-New Yorker. Second, the law targets Incomplete Non-Grantor Trusts. These are trusts established in another jurisdiction by a New Yorker who is the grantor and remains a beneficiary. The law now treats these trusts as “grantor trusts” for New York income tax purposes, taxing all income to the grantor.

In addition, New York still lacks “portability,” allowing spouses to automatically pass exemptions between each other.

The reform is expected to save New Yorkers \$380 million over three years. Yet, the state expects overall state tax revenues to increase by \$1.4 billion this year based on expected economic growth.

It is always important to review your estate plan every year to ensure that it continues to meet your needs in light of changes to the tax laws, as well as changes to your family or assets.

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 Alison Besunder on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at www.besunderlaw.com.



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Calendar

MAY



Springtime at the farm

It's springtime at the Queens County Farm Museum — and time for sheep shearing fun.

Children can explore the farm, learn about sheep shearing, practice wool spinning at a workshop, enjoy hayrides, purchase plants and seeds at an outdoor sales market, listen to live music, and so

much more.

Taste locally made food and tour the farm for a perfect spring afternoon!

Sheep shearing on May 4 from 11 am to 4 pm. Tickets are \$5.

Queens County Farm Museum [73-50 Little Neck Parkway, in Floral Park, (718) 347-3276, www.queensfarm.org].

Submit a listing

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

Send your listing request to 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!

THURS, MAY 1

IN QUEENS

Fragrance of Spring: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; Noon; Free.

Toddlers ages 18-36 months will dance with scarves, ribbons, fabric and soft pom poms and will create their own 3D mobiles, spring pop-up cards and fancy butterflies.

A Reptile "Adventure" with Erik Callender: Hillcrest Public Library, 187-05 Union Tpke at 188th Street; (718) 454-2786; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Children ages 6 and up have an opportunity to see, touch and learn about reptiles, amphibians and even some large insects from around the world.

Mother's Day Craft: McGoldrick Public Library, 155-06 Roosevelt Ave., off Northern Boulevard; (718) 461-1616; www.queenslibrary.org/event/mothers-day-craft-0; 5 pm; Free.

Children ages 7-11 will work on a fun craft for mom on her special day.

Cinco De Mayo Craft: Richmond Hill Public Library, 118-14 Hillside Ave., corner of Lefferts Boulevard; www.queenslibrary.org/event/cinco-de-mayo-craft; 5 pm; Free.

Children ages 6-12 make beautiful tissue-paper flowers.

Teen Fashion Maven Sewing Lab: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

This beginning sewing course teaches teens how to make their own PJ pants. All materials and supplies will be provided.

FRI, MAY 2

IN QUEENS

American Sign Language Workshop: Broadway Public Library, 40-20 Broadway at Steinway Street;



Photo by Joe Droboszko

Little Red's adventure

Little Red is coming to the Flushing Meadow Park on May 18.

"Little Red's Hood," presented by the City Parks Foundation's PuppetMobile is a modern tale on an old favorite.

The fresh retelling of the classic "Little Red Riding Hood" tale, is an updated modern twist that will appeal to children of all ages. The production features a dozen,

hand-made marionettes crafted by the expert puppeteers from the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre.

Little Red's Hood on May 18, at 1:30 pm and 3 pm. Admission is free.

Flushing Meadow Park (Near the Unisphere, at Avenue of the States St., in Corona, www.cityparksfoundation.org/arts/puppetmobile/).

(718) 721-2462; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Learn how to communicate with your hands at this interactive workshop on the basics of American Sign Language.

"What's for Lunch Today?": Jackson Heights Public Library, 35-51 81st St. at Northern Boulevard; (718) 899-2500; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

This interactive puppet show uses puppets, live actors and original music to consider healthy everyday eating choices.

Geometry through Dance:

Lefrak City Library, 98-30 57th Ave.; (718) 592-7677; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Participants will choreograph their own dances, moving their bodies in various shapes based on mathematical principals of rotation and angles.

Traditional Music and Dance of Veracruz: Corona Public Library, 38-23 104th St. between 38th and 39th streets; (718) 426-2844; www.queenslibrary.org; 5:30 pm; Free.

Radio Jarocho is a New York City-based group devoted to the "son jarocho" and fandango traditions from southern Veracruz, Mexico.

SAT, MAY 3

IN QUEENS

Sheep Shearing Weekend:

Queens Zoo, 53-51 111th St.; (718) 271-1500; queenszoo.com; 10 am-5 pm; Free with zoo admission.

This annual event features shearing demonstrations, plus arts and crafts, where children can make their very own felt necklaces or bracelets to take home.

Citizen Science Series: 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.

Citizen Science Series introduces audiences to a range of science projects.

Cinco de Mayo Festival:

Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 12:30-3 pm; \$15, \$12 (children).

Audiences will enjoy a variety of workshops and performances celebrating Cinco de Mayo.

Science Fair 101: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1:30 pm; \$24.

From hypothesis to conclusion children will get hands on experience to collectively create an innovative science fair project.

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

Children will listen to a nature related story followed by a craft during activity time.

Family Day Jam: Langston Hughes Public Library, 100-01 Northern Blvd.; (718) 651-1100; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Celebrate hip-hop history and culture with an afternoon of music, dancing and art as MCs, DJs, break dancers and graffiti artists recreate the atmosphere of the original hip-hop park jams.

FURTHER AFIELD

Meet the author/illustrator:

New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Brian Biggs shares his colorful characters. For children 3 years and older.

Picture book time: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 2-4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Continued on page 40

Calendar

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

Continued from page 39

Educator James Giovan leads a tour of Borough Hall. Suggested for children 9 years and older. Pre-registration required.

Family walk: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 3-4 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

Celebrate 100 years of the children's garden with an interactive walk and hands-on activities.

SUN, MAY 4

IN QUEENS

Sheep Shearing Weekend: 10 am-5 pm. Queens Zoo. See Saturday, May 3.

Little Makers: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am-12:30 pm; \$8 plus museum admission.

Create a colorful pencil case with recyclable materials to take home, plus use simple everyday materials to make your own pencil.

Open Studio: The Noguchi Museum, 9-01 33rd Rd.; 718-204-7088; www.noguchi.org; 11 am-1 pm; \$10 per family.

Families are encouraged to explore the galleries and then make art in the Education Room in response to this experience.

Celebrate Queens Farm: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 11 am; \$5.

Live music, sheep shearing and more. Free parking.

Elena Moon Park And Friends: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 2 pm; Free.

This performance features Elena Moon Park, a mandolinist, violinist, and trumpeter, who mixes Asian languages with English in sea shanties, rhymes, sing-alongs and more.

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

Enjoy a concert that includes traditional, classical, and popular music from a faraway land.

Mariachi Flor de Toloache: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

This all-female ensemble performs Mexican favorites as part of the Sunday Concerts at Central series.

FURTHER AFIELD

Meet the author/illustrator:

1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, May 3.

MON, MAY 5

IN QUEENS

Cinco de Mayo Crafts: Corona Public Library, 38-23 104th St. between 38th and 39th streets; (718) 426-2844; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children in second grade and up work on crafts to celebrate Cinco de Mayo.

American Sign Language

Workshop: Ozone Park Public Library, 92-24 Rockaway Blvd., off of 92nd Street; (718) 845-3127; www.queenslibrary.org/event/american-sign-language-workshop-spring-series; 4:30 pm; Free.

Learn how to communicate with your hands at this interactive workshop on the basics of American Sign Language.

TUES, MAY 6

IN QUEENS

Queens Memory: St. Albans Public Library, 191-05 Linden Blvd. at 191st Street; (718) 528-8196; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Queens Memory staff will be on hand to scan your photographs, postcards and other memorabilia and post them to the "Queens: Neighborhood Stories," page on Historypin.

Nature Kids: Sunnyside Library, 43-06 Greenpoint Ave.; 3 pm; Free.

Greening Queens Library staff members teach about worms, mushrooms, seeds, soil, plants, insects and more.

"The Sounds of Science": Woodhaven Public Library, 85-41 Forest Pkwy.; (718) 849-1010; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

In this program by Bash the Trash, veteran trash-basher Skip La Plante will show you some of his strange and wonderful instruments and demonstrate the science behind them.

Mother's Day Craft: Broadway Public Library, 40-20 Broadway at Steinway Street; (718) 721-2462; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Participants will make a heart-shaped jewelry box in this two-session program.

Butterfly Garden Club: Woodside Library, 54-22 Skillman Ave.; (718) 429-4700; www.queenslibrary.org; 5:15 pm; Free.

Join the Butterfly Garden to plant, water and weed across the street in Steinmann Triangle Park.

WED, MAY 7

IN QUEENS

Timeless Tales: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 10:30 am; Free.

Children ages 3-5 and their caregivers meet for weekly storytimes with a children's librarian.

"What's for Lunch Today?":

Queens Village Public Library, 94-11 217 St. at 94th Avenue; (718) 776-6800; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

This interactive puppet show uses puppets, live actors and original music to consider healthy everyday eating choices.

Mother's Day Celebration:

Astoria Public Library, 14-01 Astoria Blvd. at 14th Street; (718) 278-2220; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:15 pm; Free.

The Children's Theater of Queens Library at Astoria celebrates Mother's Day with a performance for the entire family of stories from around the world adapted for the stage, in English and Spanish.

THURS, MAY 8

IN QUEENS

Fragrance of Spring: Noon. Central Library. See Thursday, May 1.

Mother's Day Craft: 3:30 pm. Broadway Public Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

American Sign Language

Workshop: Long Island City Public Library, 37-44 21st St. at 43rd Avenue; www.queenslibrary.org; 5:30 pm; Free.

Learn how to communicate with your hands at this interactive workshop on the basics of American Sign Language.

FRI, MAY 9

IN QUEENS

Mother's Day Craft: Douglaston/Little Neck Public Library, 249-01 Northern Blvd. at 249th Street; (718) 225-8414; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

All ages are invited to celebrate Mom or Grandma by creating a hand-made card and small gift.

Horacio Laguna Performs Music of the Americas: Woodside Library, 54-22 Skillman Ave.; (718) 429-4700; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Buenos Aires native and current Queens resident Horacio Laguna plays guitar and sings songs from Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, Paraguay,

Uruguay, Ecuador, Spain and the US.

Geometry through Dance: 4:30 pm. Lefrak City Library. See Friday, May 2.

SAT, MAY 10

IN QUEENS

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

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

Children's Nature Photography: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 10:30 am; \$66.

Children will be introduced to the basics of composition and nature photography rules while using disposable cameras in this two-session workshop.

Seed(ling) Swap and Giveaway: Steinway Public Library, 21-45 31 St. at 21st Avenue; (718) 728-1965; www.queenslibrary.org; 11 am; Free.

Get a new start for your garden when you swap seeds, seedlings and ideas with local gardeners.

"Latin Beat": Bayside Public Library, 214-20 Northern Blvd. at 215th Street; (718) 229-1834; www.queenslibrary.org; 2:30 pm; Free.

Alexander Wu and the ZigZag Quartet explore Latin music, including salsa and samba, with tango dancers Carolina Jaurena and Diego Blanco adding their smooth moves to this video presentation.

Workshop for Children on the Autism Spectrum: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; dmeza@nysci.org; www.nyscience.org; 3:30-5 pm; Free.

Hands-on science experiments and sensory-rich art projects in workshops specially designed for young children, ages 3-5, with autism spectrum disorder and their parents and siblings.

Seed(ling) Swap and Giveaway: Sunnyside Library, 43-06 Greenpoint Ave.; 3:30 pm; Free.

Get a new start for your garden when you swap seeds, seedlings and ideas with local gardeners.

May Star Safari Astronomy

Adventure: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 7:30 pm; \$16 adults, \$7 children.

For adults. Pre-register. Children 9 and up welcome with accompanying adult.

Star Safari Astronomy Adventure: Alley Pond

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

Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 7:30 pm; \$16, \$7 (Children).

Families with children ages 9 and up are welcome to participate in an indoor interactive question and answer session on basic astronomy, fun and games followed by outdoor viewing using a professional telescope.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Children enjoy erecting new buildings with an assortment of blocks.

Cultural connections: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages view a dance of traditional Chinese dancers in authentic costumes. Onstage demos and audience interaction.

Picture book time: 2-4 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, May 3.

Family walk: 3-4 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, May 3.

SUN, MAY 11

IN QUEENS

Mother's Day Fun and Plant Sale

Sale: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St.; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org.

Make mom happy — visit the garden! Pack a little picnic lunch or snack to enjoy in the Arboretum, pick up a treat at the Plant Sale, and kids can make a special craft for mom at our Children's Activity Table from noon to 4 pm.

"Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella"

New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 12:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Audiences will be treated to two songs and appearances by Cinderella and the Fairy Godmother, as well as Science or Magic, a demonstration by New York Hall of Science's Explainers, during a special Mother's Day performance.

FURTHER AFIELD

Block Party: 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, May 10.

I love mommy: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.



Celebrating the earth, with song

Celebrate Mother Earth in this flowing tapestry of song, dance, and puppetry — "The Earth and Me" at the Jamaica Center for the Arts and Learning on May 13, 14, and 15.

The beautifully presented puppet

play by Shadow Box Theater inspires children with hope and empowerment. The children learn how to help protect our Earth and its delicate balance of harmony, tolerance, and peace.

"The Earth and Me," on May

13, 14, and 15 at 10 and 11:30 am. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door.

Jamaica Center for the Arts & Learning [153rd St. and Jamaica Avenue in Jamaica, (212) 724-0677; www.shadowboxtheatre.org].

Children celebrate moms for Mother's Day.

MON, MAY 12

IN QUEENS

The Sounds of Science: Ozone Park Public Library, 92-24 Rockaway Blvd., off of 92nd Street; (718) 845-3127; www.queenslibrary.org/event/bash-the-trash-presents-the-sounds-of-science; 4 pm; Free.

In this program, veteran trash-basher Skip La Plante will show you some of his strange and wonderful instruments and demonstrate the science behind them.

Make a Mini-Greenhouse:

Steinway Public Library, 21-45 31 St. at 21st Avenue; (718) 728-1965; www.queenslibrary.org; 6 pm; Free.

Turn old CD cases into mini-greenhouses to germinate the seeds of vital wild plants and foods.

TUES, MAY 13

IN QUEENS

The Earth and Me: Jamaica Center for the Arts and Learning, 153rd Street and Jamaica Avenue; (212) 724-0677; www.shadowboxtheatre.org; 10 am and 11:30 am; \$10 (\$15 at the door).

A child celebrates the Earth through dance, music, and puppetry.

Queens Memory: 3 pm. St. Albans Public Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

Nature Kids: 3 pm. Sunnyside Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

Butterfly Project Native Plant Swap and Giveaway: Woodhaven Public Library, 85-41 Forest Pkwy.; (718) 849-1010; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

Get a new start for your garden when you swap seeds, seedlings and ideas with local gardeners.

Butterfly Garden Club: 5:15 pm. Woodside Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

WED, MAY 14

IN QUEENS

The Earth and Me: 10 am and 11:30 am. Jamaica Center for the Arts & Learning. See Tuesday, May 13.

Timeless Tales: 10:30 am. Central Library. See Wednesday, May 7.

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

The entire family will enjoy 2013's best animated film, "Frozen."

THURS, MAY 15

IN QUEENS

The Earth and Me: 10 am and 11:30 am. Jamaica Center for the Arts & Learning. See Tuesday, May 13.

FURTHER AFIELD

Thursday night: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718)

Continued on page 42

IDing your treasures

It's Identification Day at the American Museum of Natural History on May 10.

Do you have a treasure? Everyone's favorite museum is inviting visitors to bring in their own specimens and objects to be identified!

Bring in shells, rocks, insects, feathers, bones, artifacts and more to be identified by Museum scientists, then explore

rarely seen objects from the museum's collection. Scientists will attempt to identify your discoveries and even provide a certificate of identification!

Identification Day on May 10, from noon to 4 pm. Free with museum admission.

American Museum of Natural History [Central Park West and 79th Street on the Upper West Side (212) 769-5100 <http://www.amnh.org>].



American Museum of Natural History / R. Mickens

Continued from page 41

735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3 pm; Free.

Enjoy the museum after hours and have fun exploring.

FRI, MAY 16

IN QUEENS

Honey Bee Alive!: Long Island City Public Library, 37-44 21st St. at 43rd Avenue; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children in grades one through five and their parents or other adult caregivers will get a chance to make a candle from beeswax and taste a delicious edible honey stick.

Break Dance Workshop: Langston Hughes Public Library, 100-01 Northern Blvd.; (718) 651-1100; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

In this fun workshop, participants will learn an energetic break dance routine.

Geometry through Dance: 4:30 pm. Lefrak City Library. See Friday, May 2.

SAT, MAY 17

IN QUEENS

Children's Nature Photography: 10:30 am. Alley Pond Environmental Center. See Saturday, May 10.

Urban Chickening: Steinway Public Library, 21-45 31 St. at 21st Avenue; (718) 728-1965; www.queenslibrary.org; 11 am; Free.

In this fun and educational program for the whole family, Queens residents Robert McMinn and Jules Corkery will discuss how to raise and keep chickens in New York City.

Crazy for Caterpillars: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1:30 pm; \$24.

Children will learn how caterpillars

change into beautiful butterflies. Participants will also take home a caterpillar of their own.

Chinese Ethnic and Folk Dances: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 1:30 pm; Free.

This presentation, directed by choreographer Ms. Rebecca Fung, will feature dances from ethnic Han, Korean and Uyghur groups and will include instant face-changing as well.

FURTHER AFIELD

Viking fest: Owl's Head Park, 68th St. and Narrows Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 748-5950; 10 am-5 pm; Free.

The East Coast Scandinavian hosts this annual event featuring a Viking Fillage, half-size replica of a Viking ship and crew.

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

Pre-school tots learn counting and discovering how much fun shapes are.

Concert: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

MetLife Early Learner Performance presents a Force Majeure Quintet Family concert. Learn all about wind instruments.

Family walk: 3-4 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, May 3.

SUN, MAY 18

IN QUEENS

Butter Up: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am-12:30 pm; \$8 plus museum admission.

Explore new ingredients and invent your own flavor as you shake up a batch of delicious homemade butter.

"Junie B. Jones": Queens Theatre, Flushing Meadows Corona Park; (718) 760-0064; www.queentheatre.org; 1 and 3 pm; \$14.

Families will enjoy this new musical based on the popular children's books.

Ologundk: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 2:15 pm; \$12, \$8 (children).

Ologundk celebrates the rich Afro-Brazilian culture of Salvador, Bahia through a diverse repertoire of music, dance and martial arts.

FURTHER AFIELD

Math Mania: 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, May 17.

MON, MAY 19

IN QUEENS

Break Dance Expo: Langston Hughes Public Library, 100-01 Northern Blvd.; (718) 651-1100; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Explore the history of break dance through film and discussion, then watch as professional b-boys perform a break dance routine.

Artistic Collage Special

Occasion Cards: Steinway Public Library, 21-45 31st St. at 21st Avenue; (718) 728-1965; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Instructor Jamie Ross brings unique materials to make one-of-a-kind card designs for any occasion. Best for adults and children 10 and up.

TUES, MAY 20

IN QUEENS

Queens Memory: 3 pm. St. Albans Public Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

Nature Kids: 3 pm. Sunnyside Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

All Aboard the BioBus: Woodside Library, 54-22 Skillman Ave.; (718) 429-4700; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Look through powerful microscopes aboard the BioBus and change the way you see the world.

Butterfly Garden Club: 5:15 pm. Woodside Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

WED, MAY 21

IN QUEENS

Timeless Tales: 10:30 am. Central Library. See Wednesday, May 7.

"Once on This Island": Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 6 pm; Free.

Set in the Caribbean, *Once on This Island*, tells the story of a peasant girl who brings together the people of her island through love and forgiveness, as performed by JHS 189 students.

THURS, MAY 22

IN QUEENS

"Once on This Island": 6 pm. Flushing Town Hall. See Wednesday, May 21.

FRI, MAY 23

IN QUEENS

Geometry through Dance: 4:30 pm. Lefrak City Library. See Friday, May 2.

SAT, MAY 24

IN QUEENS

World's Fair Train Show: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St.; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org; 10 am-5 pm;

Calendar

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

Free.

Working G scale model trains make their way through an outdoor display that includes a miniature of the World's Fair Unisphere, plus families can take a motorized train ride through select parts of the Garden (additional fee applies).

Memorial Day Fair: Sunnyside Gardens Park, 48-21 39th Ave. at 50 Street; (718) 672-1555; sunnysidegardenspark.org/events?eventId=889313&EventViewMode=EventDetails; Noon-5 pm; Free.

Fun for all ages, families will enjoy carnival games, rides, face painting, and more.

Sound of Spring with Dr. Hsin-Ya Hsiao and Students: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 1:30 pm; Free.

Soloist and collaborative artist Dr. Hsin-Ya Hsiao and her students will present a flute and piano recital featuring classical and popular music.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

What makes a circle unique? Discover the structure of the amazing shape.

Flip books: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

All sorts of books are on the agenda for children 4 years and older.

NYC Atlas: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 2-4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 years and older learn about maps, then make a map of their own.

SUN, MAY 25

IN QUEENS

World's Fair Train Show: 10 am-5 pm. Queens Botanical Garden. See Saturday, May 24.

Exploring Circuitry: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am-12:30 pm; \$8 plus museum admission.

Explore the basics of circuitry with copper tape, coin batteries and colorful LEDs, while using repurposed everyday objects, such as cardboard and



Photo by Carol Rosegg

Advice from a genius

Making Books Sing makes math fun in its latest musical production at Theatre 3, from May 3 to 18.

"Dear Albert Einstein" tells the story of a young girl who struggles with the choice to be like everyone else or stay true to herself — with a little help from her imagination.

The 70-minute show combines early rock-n-roll, swing, and clas-

sical music, and is great for children 8 and up.

"Dear Albert Einstein," May 3-18, Wednesdays at 10:30 am, Thursdays and Fridays at 10:30 am and 7 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm and 7 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm. Tickets are \$25.

Theater 3, [311 W. 43rd St., at Eighth Avenue, 3rd floor, (646) 250-1178, www.makingbookssing.org].

paper, into illuminated works of art.

FURTHER AFIELD

Circle secrets: 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, May 24.

Flip books: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, May 24.

NYC Atlas: 2-4 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, May 24.

MON, MAY 26

IN QUEENS

World's Fair Train Show: 10 am-5 pm. Queens Botanical Garden.

See Saturday, May 24.

TUES, MAY 27

IN QUEENS

Nature Kids: 3 pm. Sunnyside Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

Butterfly Garden Club: 5:15 pm. Woodside Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

WED, MAY 28

IN QUEENS

Timeless Tales: 10:30 am. Central Library. See Wednesday, May 7.

THURS, MAY 29

IN QUEENS

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

The Chinese Community Center of Flushing will showcase the talents of its members in performances of martial arts, music and dance.

FRI, MAY 30

IN QUEENS

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

Participants will get up close and personal with two hens that are a special miniature breed and will learn how they help enhance the success of small gardens.

SAT, MAY 31

FURTHER AFIELD

Meet the authors: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Poets Paul Dubois Jacobs and Jennifer Swender share their prose with children 3 years and older.

Family walk: 3-4 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, May 3.

LONG-RUNNING

IN QUEENS

Science Playground: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm.; \$4, plus museum admission.

Children are encouraged to explore

Continued from page 43

science through slides, seesaws, climbing webs, a water play area, sand boxes, and more, weather permitting.

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; Weekdays, 9:30 am–5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–6 pm.; \$6 (adults,) \$5 (children and seniors,) plus museum admission.

Golfers of all ages can learn about key science concepts such as propulsion, gravity, escape velocity, launch window, gravitational assist, and more!

UniverSoul Circus: Roy Wilkins Park, 177th Street and Baisley Boulevard.; www.universoulcircus.com/schedule; Thursday, May 1, 10:30 am; Friday, May 2, 10:30 am; Saturday, May 3, noon; Sunday, May 4, 12:30 pm; Thursday, May 8, 10:30 am; Friday, May 9, 10:30 am; Saturday, May 10, noon; Sunday, May 11, 12:30 pm; \$16–\$48.

Families will enjoy this circus featuring a highly interactive combination of circus arts, theater, and music.

Youth Adaptive Swim: Roy Wilkins Family Center, Baisley Boulevard and 177th Street; Fridays, 4 pm; Free with recreation center membership.

Children and teens with disabilities can practice swimming skills in this adaptive swim program.

"Princess Particular!": The Secret Theatre, 44-02 23rd St.; (718) 392-0722; www.secrettheatre.com; Saturday, May 3, 2 pm; Saturday, May 17, 2 pm; Saturday, May 31, 2 pm; Saturday, June 14, 2 pm; Saturday, June 28, 2 pm; \$15, \$10 (children).

Children and adults alike will enjoy watching the story of Princess Particular come to life on the stage.

Little Hatchlings: Queens Zoo, 53-51 111th St.; (718) 271-1500; queenszoo.com; Wednesdays, 10:15 am, 11:45 am, Now – Wed, June 4; WCS Membersfree, \$250 non-members, \$270 for classes in one session.

Little Hatchlings is an early education program for children ages 10 to 23 months with an adult. The program will provide a fun and engaging introduction to animals, nature, and the environment. Participants will explore the zoo with their children and learn about animals through songs, arts-and-crafts, and guided visits to animal exhibits designed especially for toddlers. Each session is led by an early childhood education zoo instructor.

"Pirate Pete's Parrot": The Secret Theatre, 44-02 23rd St.; 718-392-



Happy Birthday, SONY

Happy Birthday to SONY Wonder Technology Lab for turning 20! Tekkies can help celebrate the milestone with a slew of cool activities on May 10 and 17, including robot mask-making, face painting, taking "selfies" in the birthday photo booth, playing "Pin the Eyes" on the lab's first robot mascot BB Wonderbot, and

participate in an exciting BB Wonderbot scavenger hunt!

Happy B-Day SONY on May 10 and 17, from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm. Free.

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

0722; www.secrettheatre.com; Saturday, May 10, 2 pm; Saturday, May 24, 2 pm; Saturday, June 7, 2 pm; Saturday, June 21, 2 pm; \$15 (adults,) \$10 (children).

This new musical pantomime show will take audiences on an adventure with Pirate Pete as he searches for his missing parrot.

FURTHER AFIELD

Dinosaur Safari: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; Weekdays, 10 am–5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–5:30 pm.; \$20.95 (\$16.95 children; Free for children under 3; \$18.95 seniors).

Mysteries Revealed features more than 30 dinosaur species and how scientists reconstruct the fossil pieces. The ride runs through the zoo and has fully animatronic dinosaurs as they move and snarl. The 40 foot T-Rex is joined by deinonychus, prohodadros, stegosaurus and edmontonia.

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; Now – Mon, May 26; \$27, \$16 (children).

This annual favorite features up to

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

"Bessie's Big Shot": Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, 79th Street and West Drive, Manhattan; (212) 988-9093; Tuesdays – Fridays, 10:30 am & Noon, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, Now – Sun, June 29; \$10, \$7 (children under 12).

It's a bird, it's a plane, no — it's Bessie the cow! Based on the PuppetMobile show of the same name, this popular production is making its debut at the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre.

Art Kid: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Fridays, 11:30 am, Now – Fri, May 30; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 years and older explore a new style each week.

Little Kids, Big Stars: MCU Park, 1904 Surf Ave. at W. 17th St., Brooklyn; (718) 37-BKLYN; info@brooklyncyclones.com; www.brooklyncyclones.com; Saturday, April 12 – Saturday, June 7; Free.

Baseball is back and the Cyclones want the little ones to experience the game. Coaches of little league and softball leagues throughout the bor-

oughs can nominate one player their team to be named Little Kids, Big Stars of the week. For boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 14 years old. The child should have a passion for baseball/softball, serve as a leader to the team and be helpful to the coaches. The winners will receive an invitation to a baseball clinic with the Cyclones a chance to throw out a first pitch and a commemorative T-shirt.

Touch tank: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am–12:30 pm and 2:30–3:30 pm, Now – Sun, June 1; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages touch a starfish, a horseshoe crab, or a sea snail.

The Art of Math: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm, Sat, May 3 – Sun, June 1; Free with museum admission.

Children learn all about shapes, triangles, squares.

"Jungle Book": Vanderbilt Museum Carriage House, 180 Little Neck Rd., Long Island; (516) 293-0674; www.ArenaPlayers.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, Now – Sun, May 4; \$10, \$8 (children 3 and up).

Arena Players children's productions involve the audience, and in this new show, cast members invite children to join in the fun in this re-telling of Kipling's classic tale.

Urban gardening: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1:30 pm, Now – Sun, June 1; Free with museum admission.

Children 4 years and older learn about seeds, planting, and how to make a garden more efficient.

Arty facts: Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org; Sundays, 11 am and 1:30 pm, Now – Sun, May 18; \$10 materials fee plus museum admission.

Children 4 to 7 years old explore the galleries, enjoy an activity and take an art class.

Bug out!: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays, 11:30 am–12:30 pm and 2:30–3:30 pm, Now – Tues, May 6; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages meet grasshoppers, worms, and Madagascar hissing cockroaches.

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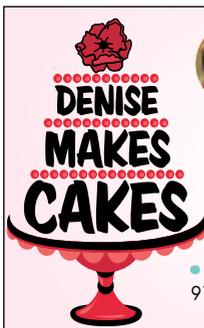
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CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Taste the rainbow

After the darkness of this year's brutal winter, we welcome the first bright burst of spring and look forward to adding color back to our wardrobes. It's also a good time to colorize our diets.

But how exactly is that done without breaking the bank and spending loads of time on cooking? What are the myths about eating the colors of the rainbow? And how do you appeal to your picky eaters?

'White foods aren't good for you' and other myths

For years we've heard the message to eat the colors of the rainbow. But where does that leave white and brown foods?

"While it's true that deeply pigmented produce is especially healthy, there are plenty of foods that aren't colorful in the traditional sense that are still incredibly good for you," advises registered dietitian nutritionist Frances Largeman-Roth, author of "Eating in Color: Delicious, Healthy Recipes for You and Your Family."

She points to black and tan ingredients "like chia, hemp and flax seeds, as well as barley, coconut and chocolate," as being healthy. White foods such as cauliflower,



onions and mushrooms also hold incredible nutritional power.

You can still add color to your family's diet while staying on a budget. Don't forget frozen fruits and vegetables are picked at the peak of freshness with a nutritional value just as good as fresh. Largeman-Roth, a mother of two (with one on the way), recommends Community Supported Agriculture shares to obtain lower-cost, high-quality, local fresh produce.

Isn't it time consuming to cook healthy? Not necessarily. Largeman-Roth suggests making a weekly date with your kitchen.

"If you're ready with ingredients and have blocked out time in your calendar, you'll find that you can prep enough food for three to four meals plus snacks," she says.

Picky, picky, picky

Playing up the fun factor of colorful and nutrient-packed foods can help kids with even the most discerning palates dig into what's good for them.

Even picky eaters (kids and adults, alike) can be tantalized with beautiful-looking food. And don't be afraid to serve veggies with cheese on top or with a dip. A little bit of extra flavor can go a long way toward encouraging little ones to try new things.

Vibrantly colored foods found in nature can be healthy and taste yummy, too. So add a pop of spring color not only to your wardrobe this month, but also to your family's meals.

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

Salad in a Jar

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

- ¼ cup walnut oil
- ¼ cup cranberry juice
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon agave nectar (light or dark)
- 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1-15 ounce can garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- 1 head radicchio, sliced crosswise into ribbons
- ½ head red leaf lettuce, chopped

DIRECTIONS: In a medium bowl, whisk together the oil, cranberry juice, mustard, agave nectar, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Place the beans in the bowl with the dressing, stir to coat, and set aside. Place ¼ cup of the bean mixture in the bottom of a tall mason jar. Follow with 2 tablespoons feta, 1 tablespoon cranberries, one-quarter of the radicchio, and one-quarter of the red leaf lettuce. Repeat with the remaining jars.

NUTRITION FACTS: 330 calories, 32 g carbohydrates, 5 grams fiber, 7 grams sugar, 9 g protein, 18 g fat (4 g sat fat), 17 mg cholesterol, 428 mg sodium

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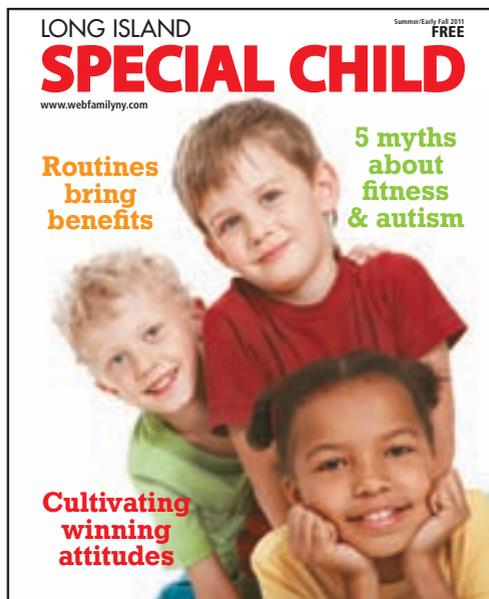
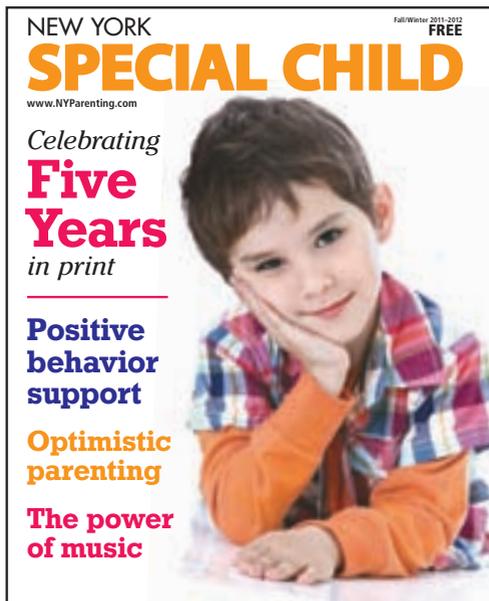
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