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Letter from the publisher

Our multicultural city

If one listened to the news all the time one could get a very dismal point of view about the world today and become largely despondent. There's little doubt as one story after another points out the horrors and the inadequacies



of the global reality that the human experience has room for growth and that outrageous suffering is endured by millions.

Here in New York, however, we are better off in so many ways, starting from the basic fact that we are a pluralistic society that becomes only more so with each passing day. Not that it's perfect here, and we have loads of issues

to deal with and to improve, but it's my contention that if you take warring peoples from far away and bring them here to Coney Island Avenue or the Grand Concourse or Victory Boulevard or Steinway Street or the Lower East Side, they

will go into business together and find their brotherhood and commonality.

This is the great beauty of our complex multicultural city and most of the time there is great beauty and one finds displays of human kindness here and sensitivity that surprise the false impression that we are a rude bunch with no manners and a lack of caring.

Raising children in New York City is a breeze actually compared to the isolation of some of the suburbs and/or a rural world where there is less stimulation and far less contact with others.

Our children are sharper, more astute and more worldly. They are more at ease with differences and thrive because of them. They become creative and sophisticated in ways that are copied by every major industry. The fashion world looks to our street kids to find the next wave and the music is created often on those streets, just a few of the trend setting examples of young influence coming out of our neighborhoods.

Life isn't perfect, but human contact is key to the transition from barbarism to conflict resolution.

As New York parents we must provide our children with as much contact as possible because the opportunity here is profound. Meet your neighbors, get involved in the parent association and make sure your children's day to day world is inclusive. Only by knowing each other can the future society rid itself of ancient grudges, vendettas and prejudice.

Happy New Year! Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2015
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PS 80 THURGOOD MARSHALL MAGNET SCHOOL OF MULTIMEDIA & COMMUNICATION
 171-05 137 AVENUE, JAMAICA, NY 11434

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2015
 9:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M. & 5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2015
 8:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M. & 3:30 P.M. - 5:30 P.M.

PS 354 STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH) MAGNET INSTITUTE OF QUEENS
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NYC Department of Education

MAGNET SCHOOLS

PEACE ON EARTH

Tips for choosing, promoting and teaching peace in your life

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

Pace, as with most aspects of the human condition, is a choice. It may not be obvious or even conscious, but it is always an option. For every instance or occasion when cruelty, abuse, or violence occurs, a more peaceful solution existed.

The thing about peace, though, is that it is hard. It typically requires giving something up — having the last word, making a point, believing your way is the right way, winning at any cost, or getting what you want. There are even those who have given up their lives in the pursuit of peace. Peace is not compatible with selfishness, competitiveness, prejudice, or arrogance. These obstacles to peace grow out of vulnerability, fear, ignorance, and insecurity.

Peace requires personal discipline, courage, patience, tolerance, and grace. An essential prerequisite for peace is empathy — as Atticus Finch explains to Scout in “To Kill a Mockingbird,” “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.” When we can

look into the eyes of others and see all the ways they are like us rather than the ways they are different, we are primed for peace. When we accept the equality of all humankind, we can promote peace.

Unfortunately, we are living in a time when being kind, polite, considerate, decent, respectful, and peace-seeking is not “in.” These qualities are not considered sophisticated, edgy, or trendy. Those observed exhibiting these characteristics are scorned for their naïveté and assumed lack of worldliness. But these individuals are not strangers to controversy and conflict. For peace is not merely the absence of conflict. Peace is both the means as well as the desired end of conflict resolution.

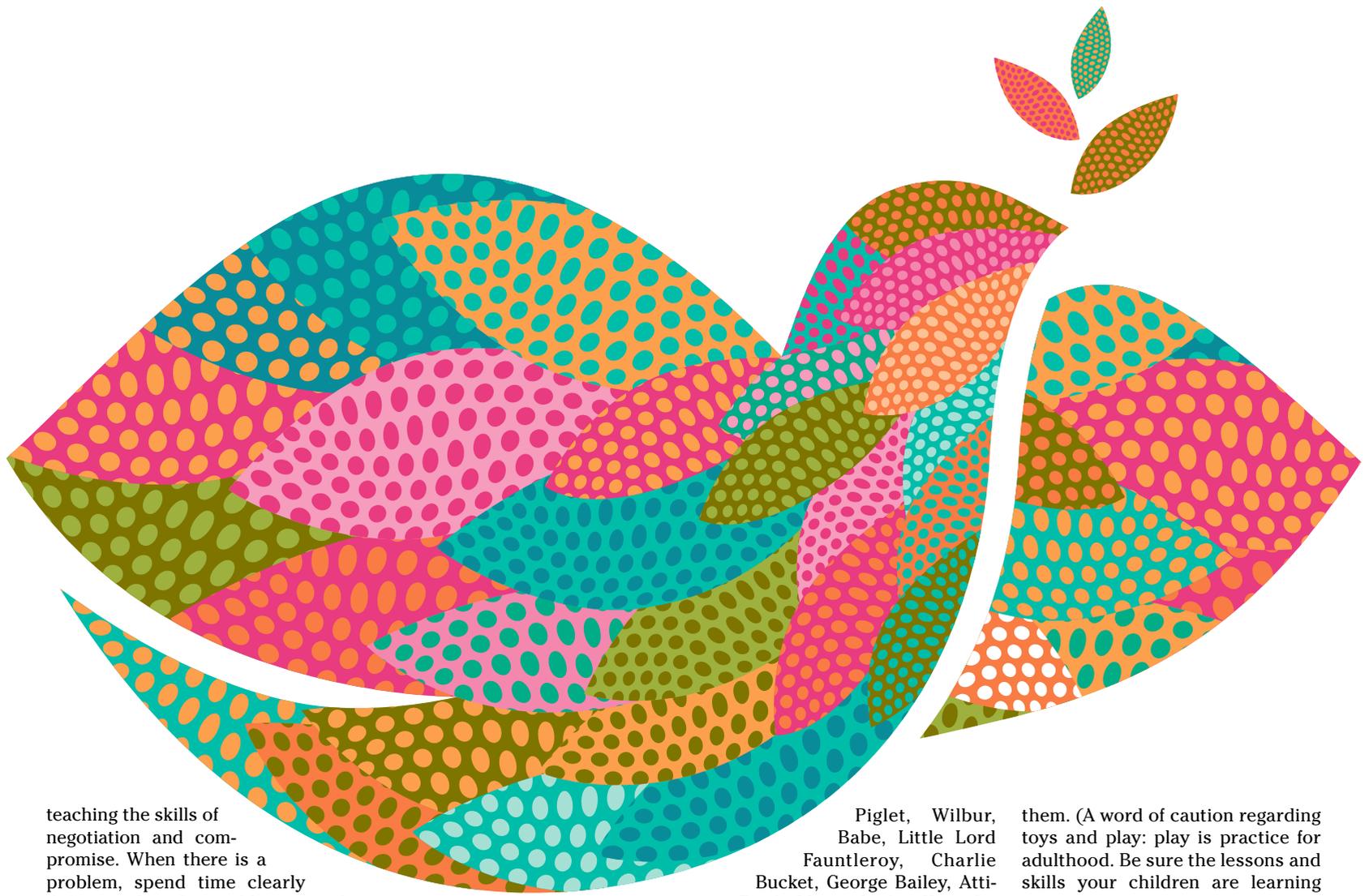
Eleanor Roosevelt said, “It isn’t enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn’t enough to believe in it. One must work at it.” How do we choose peace? What can we do to promote peace in our lives? How do we teach our children peace? Here are a few suggestions for how we can be models of peace in our families, for home is where peace begins:

Study peace. Familiarize yourself with the meaning of peace. Explore the lives of those you would

describe as peaceful individuals. Identify those qualities and practices that exemplify peace. Decide what peace means to you. Evaluate your position on it. Choose words and actions that reflect your beliefs. Share your position with the other significant adults in your child’s life. Develop a plan for peace.

Practice peaceful communication. Remember: communication includes listening as well as speaking, so listen carefully to what others say. Listening does not mean you agree, approve, or give permission. It just means you are listening. Try to identify the feelings behind others’ words. Try getting “into their skin.” Increase your peaceful vocabulary. Think before you speak. Ask yourself how you would feel if someone said to you what you are about to say. Speak without raising your voice. Learn to be honest in a way that expresses caring and concern. It is possible to be honest without being cruel. Make saying something kind a habit. Keep a smile close at hand.

Seek peaceful solutions to conflict. Share the plan for peace with your family. Discuss what the expectations are for resolving conflict peacefully. Spend time learning and



teaching the skills of negotiation and compromise. When there is a problem, spend time clearly defining what the problem is and who is involved. Include all family members in the peace process, when appropriate. Create an atmosphere of trust among family members. Empower family members with the courage to take responsibility for their words and actions as well as the consequences. Take responsibility for whatever part you have played in starting or continuing an argument. Apologize if you have said or done things that have caused another pain. Explore alternatives to unacceptable behavior. Expect everyone to cooperate in instituting the agreed upon peaceful solution. Look for common ground. You are a family. You love each other. That's a good place to start.

Employ peace-compatible discipline. Adopt a preventive approach to discipline. Be sure expectations for behavior are age-appropriate, clear, and understood ahead of time. Be sure consequences are also age-appropriate, related to the offense, consistent, and occur in a timely manner. Whenever possible, make consequences for failure to comply clear ahead of time.

Instead of telling your children what they can't do, try telling them what they can do. Make compliance and cooperation more desirable than misbehavior by expressing appreciation when they occur. We — children, too — tend to respond more favorably to fans than to critics. In her book, "Positive Parenting," Jane Nelsen reminds us, "Our children do not have to be made to feel worse in order to do better." Remember that *you* — your time, attention, approval, and affection — are your child's greatest reward.

Provide age-appropriate models for peace. In addition to modeling peace for your children, point out examples in the world around them with whom they can identify. Introduce them to age-appropriate role models from sources such as history and literature. Knowing that others their age have made peaceful choices in difficult situations can inspire and encourage them when they face the inevitable challenges to peace. (Some of our favorites are Winnie the Pooh and

Piglet, Wilbur, Babe, Little Lord Fauntleroy, Charlie Bucket, George Bailey, Atticus Finch, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Gandhi.)

Choose peaceful forms of entertainment. Pay close attention to the messages your children are getting about relationships, conflict, violence, and peace from television, movies, toys, games, music, and literature. When the messages they are getting go against the values you are trying to teach, speak up! (If you do not believe your children are influenced by what they are watching and listening to, then why do companies spend billions of dollars on advertising? Don't fool yourself. Take control of the influences on your children's lives.)

Take advantage of the opportunity to explain your views regarding what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable messages and behavior. Engage your children in a dialogue about how situations could be addressed in a more peaceful manner. Make it clear how you would expect them to behave in a similar situation. If there are shows, movies, or toys that do not meet with your approval, refuse to let them be viewed — refuse to buy

them. (A word of caution regarding toys and play: play is practice for adulthood. Be sure the lessons and skills your children are learning will be useful to them as peace-seeking adults.) Take the time to explain your position.

Have the courage to make unpopular decisions. After all, we expect our children to do so when they are pressured to participate in bullying, alcohol, drugs, or promiscuity. Practice the peace you preach.

If you fall short of your efforts, forgive yourself, make amends, and try again. Peace is worth it. There is a beautiful song, composed by Sy Miller and Bill Jackson, that proclaims, "Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me." Imagine what might happen if each of us made this our New Year's resolution? Peace be with you.

Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman has degrees in Child Development, Family Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy. Waterbury-Tieman has been married for 29 years and has two sons, ages 24 and 14. She spent 15 years in various agencies and clinics as a family therapist and parent educator and has written extensively on the topic of parenting. To contact her, please e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.



FOCUS

on eye health

How to know
if your child
needs glasses

BY ALLISON PLITT

Every parent should be on the lookout for potential problems with her child's health, and vision impairment is no exception. Marc Weinstein, who worked as the Optometric Director for various New York locations of Macy's Vision Express, gives parents some guidelines to help them evaluate

their child's vision.

Although all pediatricians offer some type of vision testing, Weinstein refers to the recommendations of the American Optometric Association, which represents 39,000 professionals in the field of optometry in the United States. According to the Association, the first eye exam a child should have is by 6 months of age, which consists of

a general evaluation that's done to assess the overall health and alignment of the eyes.

Subsequently, the Association typically recommends a second exam at age 3, when the child is able to give some responses. The first full exam for a child will happen usually before first grade. If the child's eyes are healthy, then he will need an eye exam every two years after that.

"If the child doesn't like the eyeglasses, he's not going to want to wear them. If he doesn't wear them, then this defeats the purpose."

"At the end of the day, children's performance in school is highly dependent on their vision," Weinstein says. "If you notice that your child is having difficulty in school, or if they're complaining that they're rubbing their eyes a lot, or if they're complaining that they're having trouble seeing the board, it's really important to take them in for a full eye exam."

A full eye exam should also include a dilated exam, which is when the optometrist puts drops in the eye to dilate the pupil. This allows the doctor to look in the back of the eye and check for any possible conditions that could be causing a decrease in vision.

Weinstein stresses the necessity of the dilated exam.

"Even though people might say, 'My kid is young and healthy,' it's a really important exam to have done on your child," Weinstein explains. "It gives the doctor baseline measurements, so if anything does change in the future, they can reference previous exams and see what changes have taken place."

For parents with children who have eyeglasses, Weinstein advises, "Make sure your kid really likes the eyeglasses. At the end of the day, no matter what we all do as professionals and as parents, if the child doesn't like the eyeglasses, he's not going to want to wear them. If he doesn't wear them, then this defeats the purpose."

Weinstein encourages parents to "really engage their child in the process of choosing the right pair of eyeglasses. Make sure they get something that they really want to wear. Going beyond that, make sure, obviously, that the eyeglasses fit well, that they're not too loose or too tight, that they're comfortable for the child."

As Weinstein advises, an important component for children's eyewear is that all eyeglasses should always have polycarbonate lenses.

"Polycarbonate is a type of lens. It's shatter-resistant material," Weinstein explains. "It includes scratching and ultraviolet

protection built into the lens. You shouldn't have to pay extra for that. It protects the child's eye, and it's also 30 percent lighter and thinner than standard glasses."

If your children wear prescription eyewear, Weinstein recommends that he should also have a pair of prescription sunglasses.

"People might not realize this, but even at a very young age, exposure to the sun does put us at a higher risk in the future, for things like cataracts," he warns. "So it's very important, even at an early age, to wear protective eyewear for the sun."

Weinstein is the CEO and founder of a company called 39DollarGlasses.com, a website where people can buy glasses for toddlers to adults for only \$39 a pair. Not only does the company provide quality and affordable eyewear, but they work with non-profit organizations to provide free eyewear to children in public schools.

Explaining his charitable work, Weinstein adds, "A lot of times, even when people have vision insurance, if the child loses or breaks the eyeglasses, they don't have coverage for a second pair. Even if the child did get one pair, if there's a problem, and children do frequently break or lose their eyeglasses, they need another pair and the parents can't afford it. That's where the kids fall through the cracks."

Weinstein's 39DollarGlasses.com goes even further to help families who are struggling financially.

"We reach out to schools all over the country, and we try to provide free eyewear for children whose families can't afford it," says Weinstein. "The company pays for the eyeglasses directly from its own profits."

For more information about vision care for your child, visit the American Optometric Association's website at www.aoa.org.

Allison Plitt is a freelance writer who lives in Queens with her husband and young daughter. She is a frequent contributor to *New York Parenting*.

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Fight colds and flu with these foods

It's back! Cold and flu season, that is. Besides the usual prevention tips — washing your hands often, getting eight-to-10 hours of sleep each night, and drinking plenty of fluids — there are specific foods that can prevent and even help shorten the length of this year's colds and flu.

One of the most important things you can do is to consume foods rich in probiotics. Why? These friendly bacteria promote a stronger immune system by populating the gastrointestinal tract (or gut), the largest organ of immunity in the body.

Yogurt made with live and active cultures, fermented vegetables like kimchi and sauerkraut, fermented soybeans products like miso and tempeh are all rich in probiotics.

It's also important to consume foods rich in prebiotics. These are the foods that fuel our body's friendly bacteria. A plant-based, high-fiber diet that includes artichokes, asparagus, bananas, raisins, onions, garlic, leeks, and oats contains prebiotics and is another way to positively impact your gut microflora.

Looking for menu items? These common foods may be in your kitchen right now.

Vegetarian chili

Most chili dishes contain onions, garlic, beans and a variety of spices. Both onions and garlic contain antiviral properties, which can help combat viruses. Kidney beans are packed with vitamin B, which strengthens the immune system and can ultimately help build your defense system against germs. Lastly, spices not only add a hint of flavor to meals, but can clear your sinuses of congestion as well.

Fresh Clementines

Clementines are packed with vitamin C, which we all know is an antioxidant powerhouse. Although loads of vitamin C cannot ensure total cold and flu prevention, it can decrease the duration of both. Two clemen-



tines account for 100 percent of your vitamin C intake for the entire day.

Roast beef sandwich

Both roast beef and whole grain bread are loaded with zinc. This mineral has been known to stop the growth of microorganisms, including harmful bacteria. A half of sandwich with a cup of chicken soup can make for a comforting meal if you are feeling under the weather. Don't forget, chicken soup has been known to help control inflammation and congestion.

Tuna fish

Tuna contains an amino acid, glutamio, which aids in immune health. Spice up this basic lunchmeat with one tablespoon of low-fat mayonnaise and spread on whole grain crackers.

Ginger

Ginger helps relieve congestion and can calm the throat if you have a cough or slight irritation. Make a cup of homemade ginger tea with a bit of honey and a side of ginger snap cookies for a comforting treat.

Don't let the cold or flu get you or your children down this fall. Boost your immune system by consuming both pro- and pre-biotics. These foods provide a greater volume and diversity of microorganisms in the gut which offers a better defense against disease causing invaders.

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.

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The value of Catholic schools

Why parents
choose this
effective
alternative

BY CANDI SPARKS

At a time when the New York City public school system is under so much criticism and revision, working families have found an alternative in the Catholic school system. These schools have historically been the ones to reach out to and support communities in need.

Years ago, hundreds of thousands of immigrants came to the New World to have a fresh start. They put in long hours at low-level jobs, striving for greater opportunity and a better life for their children. It was a financial sacrifice for these immigrants to send their children to Catholic schools, rather than through the public school system, but to them, it was well worth it.

The public schools in their working-class neighborhoods were largely overcrowded and not necessarily providing top-notch education. In order to be more assured that their children would be taught their values — including discipline, which was a rigorous part of their children's life at home — they decided to send their children through a parochial school system, even if it meant struggling to find the extra money to pay for it.

In the early days of the immigration wave, it was primarily Irish and Italian immigrants that sent their children to Catholic parochial schools. As the years went by and new immigrants came from more countries

and continents, the demographic shifted and one didn't necessarily have to be Catholic to choose this educational option. As a result, many Catholic schools throughout the city have continued as an integral part of our citywide school landscape.

Currently, Catholic schools serve more than 160 nationalities. With each wave of immigration — Hispanic, Asian, Slavic and many others — Catholic schools offer diversity. These schools are not just racially diverse; there is also religious diversity in the Catholic school system. In fact, non-Catholics comprise about one quarter of the student body.

"Catholic schools are not just meant for the faithful. We are here to grow faith by building community and reaching out to those in need," says Tom O'Brien, of the Brooklyn Diocese, which is involved in raising scholarship funds to help families offset tuition. "But not every Catholic school family is in great economic need. Our demographic is changing. We have seen an influx of middle income families who choose Catholic school because of the class size, excellence in education, and for a safer environment than what most parents think the neighborhood public school would offer."

Patty, a public school teacher from the Bronx, sends her son Ronald to a Catholic elementary school.

"The environment stresses academics and doing the right thing,"

she says. "The teachers set high standards for the children. They are expected to do well and they rise to the occasion."

Many Catholic school students are the first ones in their families to graduate from college. In low-income neighborhoods, this means that the school is providing the lion's share of educational support for children who do not have access to private tutoring or help at home.

There is a 99 percent graduation rate for Catholic high schools, followed by a 97 percent college graduation rate for those who graduated Catholic high school. Compared to the 41 percent public high school graduation rate, Catholic school students have a better success rate. They are guided up the ladder of growth and achievement, making a real difference for present and future generations. Overall, Catholic school seems to outperform public school and is a viable, less-expensive system of education in the private sector.

In fact, the only two private schools in New York State that were designated by the U.S. Department of Education as Blue Ribbon — a program that honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools whose students achieve at very high levels, or schools that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap — in 2011 were both Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York. The honorees were St. Ignatius Loyola School on E. 84th Street in Manhattan and St. Ignatius on Mott Street in Manhattan. This year's honorees show the excellence in education and the diverse population served by Catholic schools. The incentives for getting a Catholic school education are different than what they used to be, and this is changing the demographics of Catholic school students.

"Families that don't have money don't usually have many choices. We needed to find a school with the right mix for Benny. He really wanted to play baseball. The only school that we could find to bridge the gap was a Catholic school. We are all very happy with the switch," says Elizabeth, a Brooklyn mother of two, who chose to send her son to a Catholic school with solid academics and a baseball program.

Likewise, Patty, of East Harlem, sends her daughter Amber to a bilingual Catholic school.



"My daughter goes to a school that gives her [education] in both languages," says Patty. "Sure, they speak the same languages in the public school around the corner, but it is unofficial. The public school does not have the same structure." Amber's Catholic school is also closely related to other parish activities and offers bilingual masses, events and service projects for the community. This makes the Catholic school a great way for Patty and Amber to meet people of similar backgrounds and build a community. Parochial schools celebrate the tradition of faith, family and community.

Unfortunately, keeping these schools open has become a challenge. The Catholic school sector is no different than any other, and closings have been publicized. In response, Catholic

schools are researching and developing new educational business models. Some Catholic schools have closed their doors, only to reopen as academies. For example, in South Ozone Park, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary School and St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr School closed their doors, only to be succeeded by the Divine Mercy Catholic Academy. Because the school involves more than one parish, the school is called an academy to differentiate it from a single-parish school. Since 2005, the Brooklyn Diocese has opened many Catholic academies in Brooklyn and Queens.

The Brooklyn Diocese has also implemented the program "Preserving the Vision." The name means exactly what it says: preserving what has always been an integral part of Catholic life: the education of chil-

dren. This vision includes developing new schools that will be better able to meet the diverse and changing needs of students and parents, and providing competitive compensation and benefits to teachers and staff.

Even though two schools in the Archdiocese of New York have won the 2011 Blue Ribbon Award, the organization is still committed to improving. The Archdiocese has initiated the "Pathways to Excellence" program, aimed at professional development for principals, teachers and staff at schools that already do outstanding work. Because of the diverse population, there is still more than can be done to close the achievement gap. The program is aimed at raising standardized test scores and providing teachers with new classroom tools, such as the digital teaching

program for fourth and fifth grade math, "Time to Know," which provides online learning, data collection and feedback for the school.

Personally, I am proud to share that my fondest childhood memories revolve around a humble beginning, in a humble neighborhood. My siblings and I attended a Catholic elementary school, Our Lady of Victory, for eight years. I am pleased that Catholic schools are committed to remaining vibrant institutions for generations to come.

Candi Sparks is the author of children's books about money including "Can I Have Some Money? Educating Children About Money," "Max Gets It!" and "Nacho Money." She is a Brooklyn mother of two and is on Facebook (Candi Sparks, author) and Twitter (Candi Sparks, author). Her website is www.candisparks.com.



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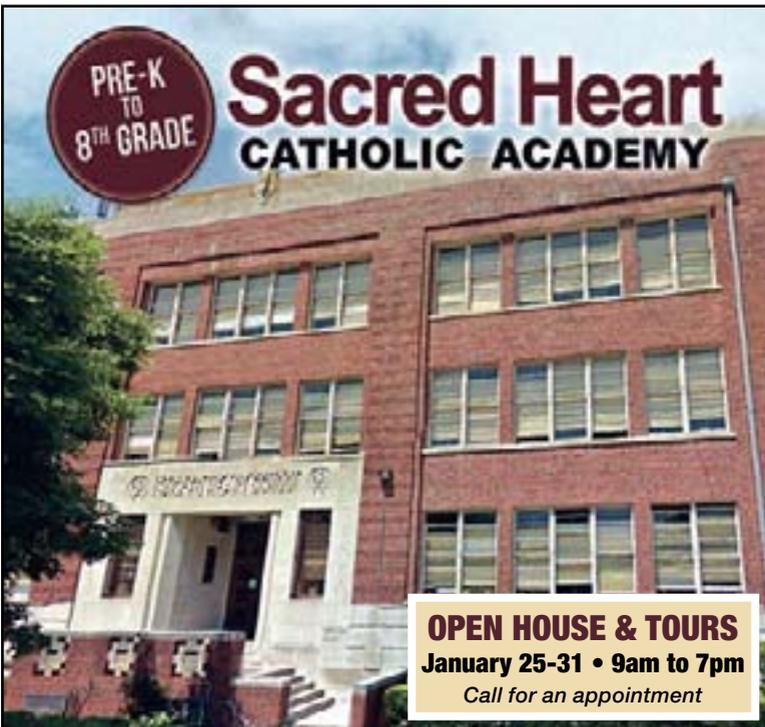
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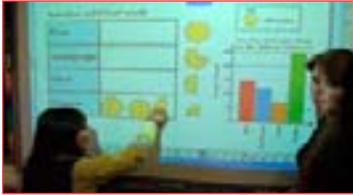


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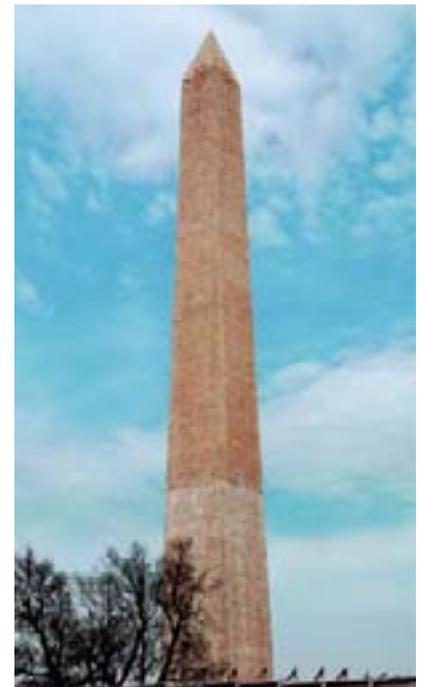


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The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial on the National Mall (left) is hosting special events this month.

Washington DC

A great weekend for families

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Trying to figure out what to do over the long weekend of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day? Looking to go somewhere that is just a short plane, train, or car ride from New York? Consider Washington, D.C., where you can learn more about the civil rights leader. Although America's capital city is known for its politics, its history, diversity, and accessibility draws families from throughout the country all year long.

Some of the biggest draws in D.C. are the impressive monuments, museums, mansions, and government buildings — many of which are free of charge. As expected, there is heightened security in D.C., but there are concerted efforts to keep the significant buildings open to the general public. With proper planning, you can schedule a visit or even a tour. The opportunity to witness the government in action is equally

thrilling. Imagine walking through the Pentagon, taking a peek into the Supreme Court, or standing in awe of the lavish rooms in the White House. If you are planning to visit the White House, remember that trips must be coordinated through your member of Congress at least 21 days before the planned trip.

The Arlington National Cemetery — and its “sea of stones” that holds thousands of graves of those who served in the U.S. military — will humble you. The gravesites of President John F. Kennedy and his well-known brothers (former Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and former Sen. Ted Kennedy) are also housed at Arlington.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial is grand in scale, and is even more impressive in the evening with its spotlight beaming. By visiting the Memorial (or any of the memorials on the National Mall and Tidal Basin) at night, you will encounter smaller crowds. If visiting on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Jan. 19), you can

witness the parade and peace walk. As part of the celebration for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, you can also attend the Kennedy Center celebration “Let Freedom Ring,” or participate in a day of service to honor the slain civil rights leader.

Throughout D.C., there are statues, plaques, and monuments to honor those who helped shape our country. The most visited sites are on the National Mall, and the National Park Service has conveniently developed an app to navigate the area easily (entitled “NPS National Mall”). Another feature of the app is the “park lens” that aids users in locating nearby monuments. You can follow a recommended tour or create your own. If you plan ahead, you can also print a copy of the useful “Be a Park Ranger” packet for your kids. This will add a sense of adventure to your visit to the National Mall and its monuments.

Washington D.C. is a terrific place for families, and you will be drawn in

by the educational and historical appeal the city offers. There are also tantalizing restaurants that you will want to seek out. During the week of Jan. 19 to 25, you can take advantage of Restaurant Week, when more than 200 restaurants will be offering three-course lunches for \$20.15 and three-course dinners for \$35.15. This will be a great opportunity to experience D.C.'s best restaurants at affordable prices.

Here are 10 places and events that you cannot miss:

Bureau of Engraving and Printing

www.moneyfactory.gov/tours/washingtonctours.html, 300 14th St. SW, Washington, DC 20228, (202) 874-2330

Also referred to as the "Money Factory," it offers a self-guided tour that takes approximately 35 minutes. As you would expect, this tour is quite popular, so plan ahead.

Discovery Theater

www.discoverytheater.org, 1100 Jefferson Dr. SW, Washington, DC 20560, (202) 633-8700

A theater devoted to young audiences, it offers 300 programs a year exploring art, science, and global heritage.

International Spy Museum

www.spymuseum.org, 800 F St. NW, Washington, DC 20004, (202) 393-7798

This museum explains the art of espionage and displays cool gadgets. Please note that this museum is best for older kids and teens — strollers are not allowed in the museum.

Mount Vernon

www.mountvernon.org, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon, Va., 22121, (703) 780-2000

Visit George Washington's former home, which is now home to farm animals, a discovery center, and museum. This site is stroller friendly and dogs are welcome. Open all year.

National Air and Space Museum

www.airandspace.si.edu, Independence Avenue at Sixth Street, Southwest, Washington, DC 20560, (202) 633-2214

One of the most popular museums in Washington, it houses 23 galleries that illustrate the story

of aviation, space, and human attempts at flight.

National Museum of Natural History

www.mnh.si.edu, 10th Street and Constitution Avenue Northwest, Washington, DC 20560, (202) 633-1000

This huge museum is dedicated to natural wonders and boasts a great collection on dinosaurs. It also houses an "Insect Zoo," which is home to live insects and other critters.

National Zoo

www.nationalzoo.si.edu, 3001 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20008, (202) 633-4888

One of the world's most renowned zoos, it is family friendly and easily navigable with a stroller.

National Gallery of Art

www.nga.gov, Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue Northwest, Washington, DC 20565, (202) 737-4215

During the winter months, there is an outdoor ice skating rink in the sculpture garden. View sculptures while skating with your children.

Newseum

www.newseum.org, 555 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001, (202) 292-6100

This museum houses seven floors of interactive exhibits covering the history of journalism. The exhibits are sure to engage kids of all ages.

United States Botanic Garden

www.usbg.gov, 100 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20001, (202) 225-8333

Located on the Capitol grounds, the garden has living exhibits in the conservatory, such as seasonal exhibits.

Other links:

Be a Junior Ranger: www.nps.gov/kids/jrRangers.cfm

NPS App: www.nps.gov/nama/photosmultimedia/app-page.htm

Washington DC Restaurant Week: www.ramw.org/restaurantweek

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



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JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

The strange eating habits of your kids

When it comes down to it, every single thing that a parent does is a judgment call, from breastfeeding to braces, and beyond. Typically, when you think a particular action is wrong, you discourage your kids from doing it. But what about all those gray areas?

Eating is perhaps the one area that causes us great concern right from the start. Should I breastfeed? Should I let my kids eat cookies? How many? How often?

My firstborn had a seemingly normal appetite, but a really strange affinity for breadcrumbs and grated cheese. When I would take them out to make a meal, she would stick a spoon in them and eat them plain. It was cute yet weird at the same time. My husband and I joked that she thought she was a bird. Her odd affection for these two plain ingredients did wear off, but for a certain period, she asked for a spoonful of breadcrumbs or a spoonful of grated cheese and I indulged her. No harm done, I figured. She was a good eater otherwise.

Some moms allow far more than I did. It's been noted that Angelina Jolie lets her kids eat crickets — as in the actual bug — for a snack! She says they eat them “like Doritos,” and that sometimes they eat so many, she has to tell them to stop because she's afraid they'll get sick. You think? Apparently she also is said to have eaten cockroaches herself, so I guess her eating rules are a little broader than most.

I realize that people do, in fact, snack on insects in other countries, but there is no way I'd let my kids eat bugs anytime soon. And I know that many food colors have derivatives from insects, but somehow chomping down on a crunchy six-legged creature just doesn't seem the same as taking a spoonful of Jell-O.

Angelina Jolie's bug craving might be an extreme case in the kids and food department, but I have many friends whose kids will only eat the



pizza after wiping off all the cheese (my mother would have gone nuts over that one — wasting food!) or will only eat food if it is not touching any other food on their plate. Others go through a period of only consuming white food, or junk food. My childhood friend ate nothing but bologna sandwiches for months on end until she finally got sick of them and chose to consume a normal diet.

To a certain point, I really think most kids outgrow their strange eating behavior and I don't see it being a big deal, unless they're eating paint

or chalk, etc. Yet many moms believe it's important to be strict and deny these food preferences.

What do you think? What's the weirdest thing your child likes to eat? Do you let him or her, or are you strictly business when it comes to mealtime?

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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Show time!

Kids Night on Broadway is a great intro for little folks

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

As a parent, you have to decide the right age for your child to experience his first live theater show. Kids Night on Broadway offers the perfect opportunity to see if your child is ready. Hosted by the Broadway League, the 19th annual Kids Night on Broadway provides parents a chance to expose their kids to this sector of the performing arts. It will take place between Friday, Jan. 9, and Thursday, Jan. 15, and kids between the ages of 6 and 18 can see Broadway shows for free when accompanied by a full-paying adult. As a bonus, a Kids Night On Broadway ticket includes restaurant discounts and educational programs for individual shows, such as activity and study guides.

This event was created in order to introduce young people to live theater and make Broadway accessible to young theater-goers. Kids Night on Broadway is not just happening in New York, but all over the country. Select shows currently touring the United States are offering nights in various cities to welcome young people to Broadway-style shows for free. Kids Night On Broadway is presented by The New York Times and is sponsored by WABC-TV with additional support from KidzVuz and Z100. Tony Award-winning actress Judith Light will serve as the National Ambassador for the 2015 Kids Night on Broadway.

Participating shows include:

“A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder”

<http://agentlemansguidebroadway.com>, Walter Kerr Theatre, 219 W. 48th St.

The 2014 Tony-winner for Best Musical, this uproarious comedy is set in England’s elegant Edwardian era, and shows just how low we’ll go to make it to the top.

“Aladdin”

www.aladdinthemusical.com, New Amsterdam Theatre, 214 W. 42nd St.

Adapted from the Disney film and centuries-old folktales including “One Thousand and One Nights,” the story of Aladdin is brought to fresh



Photo by Kristina Bumphrey / Stampix

Actor Tony Danza, pint-sized theater critic Iain Armitage, and actress Judith Light celebrate the launch of Kids Night on Broadway.

theatrical life in this exuberant new musical comedy.

“Beautiful – The Carole King Musical”

<http://beautifulonbroadway.com>, Stephen Sondheim Theatre, 124 W. 43rd St.

The musical tells the inspiring, true story of Carole King’s remarkable rise to stardom, becoming one of the most successful solo acts in popular music history.

“Chicago”

<http://chicagothemusical.com>, Ambassador Theatre, 219 W. 49th St.

There’s never been a better time to experience “Chicago,” Broadway’s razzle-dazzle smash. A sensational tale of sin, corruption, and all that jazz, “Chicago” has everything you could want in a musical: knockout dancing, an edge-of-your-seat story, and one showstopper after another.

“The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time”

<http://curiousonbroadway.com>,

Ethel Barrymore Theatre, 243 W. 47th St.

Fifteen-year-old Christopher has an extraordinary brain; he is exceptionally intelligent but ill-equipped to interpret everyday life. When he falls under suspicion for killing his neighbor’s dog, he sets out to identify the true culprit, which leads to an earth-shattering discovery and a journey that will change his life forever.

“Honeymoon in Vegas”

www.honeymoonbroadway.com, Nederlander Theatre, 208 W. 41st St.

A regular guy with an extreme fear of marriage finally gets up the nerve to ask his girlfriend to marry him. But when they head to Las Vegas to get hitched, a smooth-talking gambler falls head-over-heels for his fiancée.

“If/Then”

www.ifthenmusical.com, Richard Rogers Theatre, 226 W. 46th St.

“If/Then” is a contemporary new musical that follows two distinct storylines in the life of Elizabeth



The genie is a crowd pleaser in "Aladdin," one of the featured shows.

(Idina Menzel), a city planner who moves back to New York to restart her life in this city of infinite possibilities. When her carefully designed plans collide with the whims of fate, Elizabeth's life splits into two parallel paths. "If/Then" follows both stories simultaneously as this modern woman faces the intersection of choice and chance.

"It's Only A Play"

<http://itsonlyaplay.com/>, Schoenfeld Theatre, 236 W. 45th St.

It's opening night of Peter Austin's (Matthew Broderick) new play as he anxiously awaits to see if his show is a hit. With his career on the line, he shares his big First Night with his best friend, a television star (Nathan Lane), his fledgling producer (Megan Mullally), his erratic leading lady (Stockard Channing), his wunderkind director (Rupert Grunt), an infamous drama critic (F. Murray Abraham), and a fresh-off-the-bus coat check attendant (Micah Stock) on his first night in Manhattan.

"Jersey Boys"

www.jerseyboysinfo.com/broadway

www.augustwilsontheatre.com, August Wilson Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St.

"Jersey Boys" is the Broadway musical based on the life story of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons.

"Kinky Boots"

<http://kinkybootsthemusical.com>, Al Hirschfeld Theatre, 302 W. 45th St.

Inspired by a true story and based on the film of the same title, "Kinky Boots" is a funny, heartwarming musical about being true to yourself.

"Les Misérables"

www.lesmis.com/broadway, Imperial Theatre, 249 W. 45th St.

Set against the backdrop of 19th-century France, "Les Misérables" tells an enthralling story of broken dreams and unrequited love, passion, sacrifice, and redemption — a timeless testament to the power of the human spirit.

"The Lion King"

www.lionking.com, Minskoff Theatre, 200 W. 45th St.

Giraffes strut, birds swoop, gazelles leap — the entire Serengeti is represented in this Disney production about the circle of life. And as

the music soars, Pride Rock slowly rises from the stage.

"Mamma Mia!"

<http://mammamianorthamerica.com/>, Broadhurst Theatre, 235 W. 44th St.

This sunny, funny tale of family and friendship unfolds on a tiny Greek island. On the eve of her wedding, a daughter's quest to discover the identity of her father brings three men from her mother's past back to the island they had last visited 20 years ago.

"Matilda The Musical"

<http://us.matildathemusical.com/>, Shubert Theatre, 225 W. 44th St.

It's the story of an extraordinary girl who dreams of a better life. Armed with a vivid imagination and a sharp mind, Matilda dares to take a stand and change her destiny.

"On the Town"

www.onthetownbroadway.com, Lyric Theatre, 213 W. 42nd St.

The Bronx is up, the Battery's down, and three sailors are hoping to get just a little bit lucky on their one day of leave in the Big Apple.

Three sailors and the high-spirited young women they meet chase love, dreams, and each other during an unforgettable day in the city that never sleeps.

"The Phantom of the Opera"

www.thephantomoftheopera.com/new-york, Majestic Theatre, 245 W. 44th St.

"The Phantom of the Opera" is based on the novel by Gaston Leroux. It tells the story of the hideously deformed Phantom who lurks beneath the stage of the Paris Opera, exercising a reign of terror over its occupants.

"Rock of Ages"

www.rockofagesmusical.com, Helen Hayes Theatre, 240 W. 44th St.

This explosive musical takes audiences on a joyride set to blazing hits from iconic 1980s rockers such as Journey, Bon Jovi, Styx, Reo Speedwagon, Pat Benatar, Twisted Sister, Poison, Asia, Whitesnake and many more.

"Wicked"

www.WickedTheMusical.com, George Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St.

Long before Dorothy drops in, two other girls meet in the land of Oz. One, born with emerald-green skin, is smart, fiery, and misunderstood. The other is beautiful, ambitious, and very popular.

"You Can't Take It With You"

<http://youcanttakeitwithyoubroadway.com>, Longacre Theatre, 220 W. 48th St.

James Earl Jones plays wily Grandpa Vanderhof, leader of a happily eccentric gang of snake collectors, cunning revolutionaries, ballet dancers, and skyrocket makers. But when the youngest daughter brings her fiancé and his buttoned-up parents over for dinner, that's when the real fireworks start to fly.

Tip:

Purchase tickets via Telecharge.com and use the code KIDS2015 when purchasing tickets.

For participating restaurants, visit www.kidsnightonbroadway.com/restaurants

For show dates, visit www.kidsnightonbroadway.com/shows/calendar

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



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Cut the mean girls out of your circle

Do you have a toxic friend? If you are a woman, chances are you have had a toxic friend, and surprisingly, you may have kept that friendship for a while. Self Magazine and Today.com asked 18,000 readers about their experiences with toxic friends. 84 percent of women said they'd had a toxic friend at some point, and 1 in 3 surveyed said they had a toxic best friend.

The disturbing part is that 83 percent said they had held onto a friendship longer than was healthy simply because it was hard to break up with that friend. Yet a dysfunctional relationship is still dysfunctional, even if it is between two female friends, so why is it so difficult to end the friendship?

"The reason it's hard to dump a toxic friend is the same reason people stay in all kinds of dysfunctional relationships," says Dr. Gail Saltz, associate professor of psychiatry at New York Presbyterian Hospital. "There's something in it that you find compelling or familiar. Depending on the nature of what's going on in the relationship, you may feel guilty [about breaking things off]. Or it could be that the person has implied you need them in some way — that you would be a bad person to walk away."

It's worth noting that women's friendships are centered on feelings where as men's friendships mostly focus on joint activities and business. Some of the toxic friendship types include those who are chronic downers, self absorbed, overly critical, undermining, and unreliable.

The popular movie, *Mean Girls* that focuses on high school social cliques and the detrimental effect they can have on girls, reflects not only high school. Unfortunately often cliques form in elementary and middle school, and continue into adulthood, in friendship circles, family get-togethers and even the workplace.

What we should teach our young girls is that if anyone treats them poorly on a consistent basis, they probably shouldn't be their friend.



Furthermore, they shouldn't feel bad for ending a friendship; they should feel empowered for protecting themselves. Of course, most of us don't want to be intentionally mean, but setting boundaries for what you accept from others is one of the very most important ways you can teach your kids self-love.

I am just now learning how to do this over the past few years. Growing up, I was always taught to be polite, help others, and extend yourself, which are all good things. It's just that I never learned how to set boundaries for myself or even realize when I was being taken for advantage in my friendships, and being helpful can quickly turn into being an easy target. It's amazing how many of us can recognize when

a boyfriend or a boss is being insincere or sneaky, but don't immediately see it in our girlfriends.

The ironic part is that my friends, my best friends in adulthood, have showed me through example how to be set boundaries without being mean and how to cut off those female friends who are there for the wrong reasons, or in other words, toxic. It's the most freeing thing I've done. Have you had a toxic friend? Did you stay friends longer than you should have?

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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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Mediators versus divorce attorneys

I'm talking with someone at a networking event, and he asks about the work I do. "I'm a mediator," I say. "I help people — often people who are getting divorced — resolve their conflicts without going to court." He responds, "I wish I had known about you when I was going through my divorce. It was horrible."

How many times has someone said this to me? Many times.

I'll often ask, "Did you have a lawyer for your divorce?" Almost everyone answers "yes."

"Did your lawyer tell you about mediation?" Almost always, the answer is "no."

Some mediation clients tell a similar story. They started with a divorce lawyer, didn't like where it was going, and then learned about mediation, but not from the lawyer. The attorney didn't say anything about the process.

Mediator colleagues have told me of similar experiences. The stories are anecdotal, but I believe that they are indicative of a widespread problem; namely, that when potential clients consult with lawyers, the lawyers fail to provide them with information that they might find important and helpful.

I want to acknowledge the lawyers who do share such information, and I think that there are more than a few matrimonial attorneys who tell a potential client about mediation, even at the risk of "losing" (not being retained) by that person.

Should all divorce lawyers tell those coming to them about something mediation, when doing so might cost them business?

David Saxe apparently thinks so. Saxe, an associate justice at the Appellate Division, wrote an article for the *New York Law Journal* (read primarily by lawyers) in 2011, entitled "Encourage Divorce Clients to Mediate". In it, he pointed out that the litigation process often extended into years, exacerbating conflicts instead of resolving them amicably, and that legal fees can often be enormous,



sometimes well into the six figures, for the more contentious cases.

Saxe wrote that mediation was "more focused on the needs of the parties [than litigation]," and that in mediation "the majority of the expended time is devoted to exploring disputes, proposals, suggestions and possible solutions."

Are many more matrimonial attorneys informing (let alone 'encouraging') those who come into their offices about mediation since the Saxe article was published? Who are giving a brief overview of how it works and saying that the process might save time and money? That spouses who mediate reach their own agreements on how to spend time with their children, how to divide property, and on all their other questions? I doubt it.

Informed decision-making is at the very heart of mediation. That is, parties in mediation are required to gather and share information so that they can make the important decisions that they need to.

Imagine a wife saying in regard to her husband, "I don't need to know anything. What's his is his and I don't care." Imagine that same wife learning that her husband is holding a winning lottery ticket worth \$5 million, and that she may be entitled to a share of the proceeds. Might this

hypothetical wife make a different decision, knowing about the lottery ticket and its value, than she would if she were ignorant of it?

While the example seems far-fetched, I think that the point is clear. Having information may impact our choices.

According to the New York Rules of Professional Conduct <https://www.nycourts.gov/rules/jointappellate/NY-Rules-Prof-Conduct-1200.pdf>, communication is rule number one: A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

I don't believe, as some do, that everyone should have to try mediation, but everyone getting divorced should at least know that it is an option. Then that person can decide what to do. In my view keeping such information from a potential client is downright unethical.

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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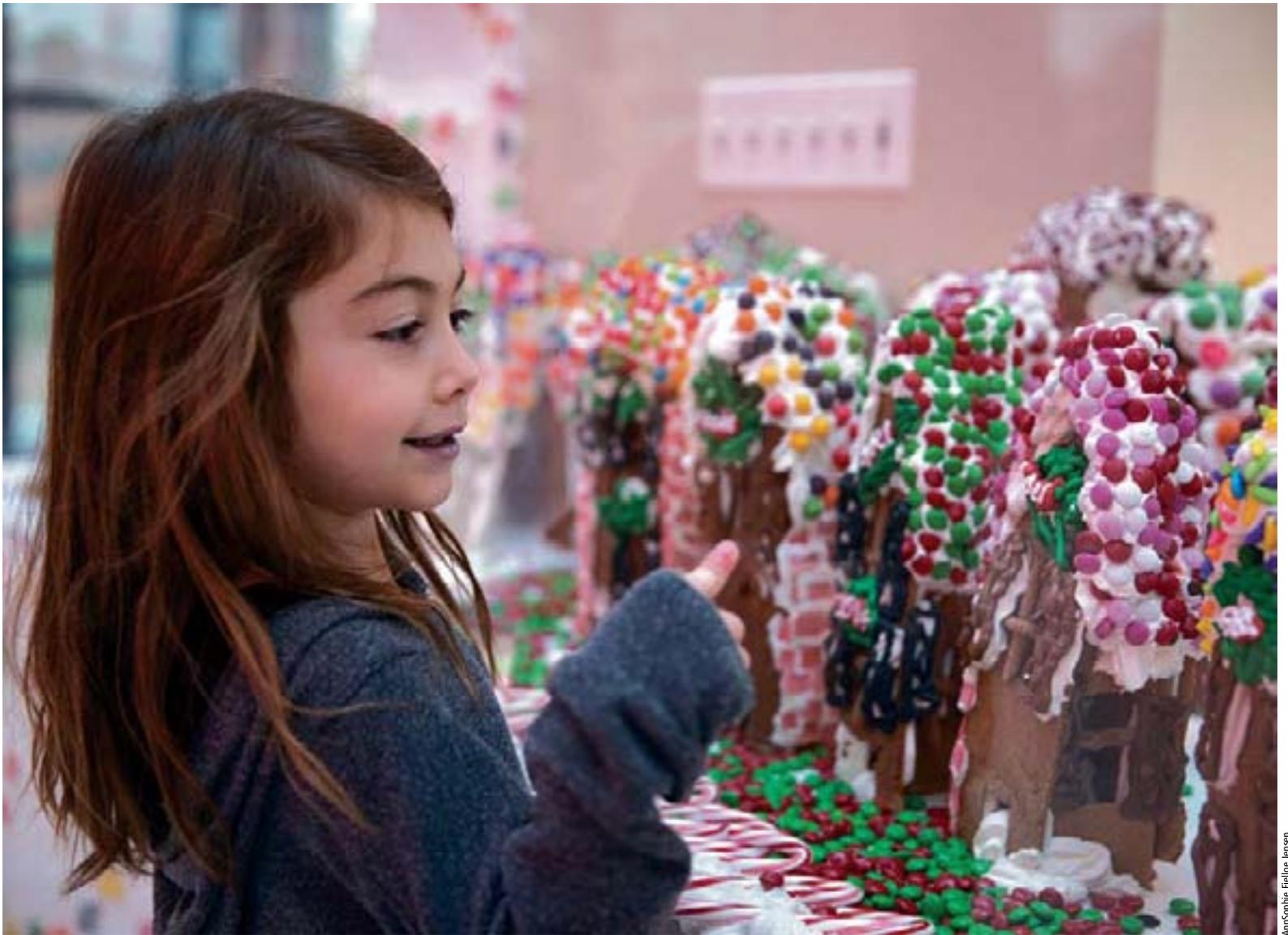
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Calendar

JANUARY



AnnSophie Fjelløe Jensen

Take a stroll down Gingerbread Lane

There is still time left to take a stroll down Gingerbread Lane at the New York Hall of Science now until Jan. 11.

Marvel at the homemade houses that are bedecked with gum-drops, chocolate bits, and colorful sprinkles. Gingerbread Lane is made from only real edible ingredients.

On Jan. 11, visitors are invited to take a piece of the Gingerbread Lane home. Houses will be given

away on a first-come-first-served basis until the last square of real estate is gone. Limit one house per person.

Gingerbread Lane is open daily, 10 am to 4 pm, until Jan. 11. The gingerbread give-away on Jan. 11 begins at noon. Free with museum admission.

New York Hall of Science [47-01 111th St. in Corona, (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.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, JAN. 1

IN QUEENS

Stop-Motion Shapes: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; 2:30 pm; \$5 (materials fee).

Family workshops offer an hour-long class using cutouts, strings and blocks. For children 8 years and older.

FRI, JAN. 2

IN QUEENS

Stop-Motion Shapes: 2:30 pm. Museum of the Moving Image. See Thursday, Jan. 1.

Picture Bingo: Bellerose Public Library, 250-06 Hillside Ave. at 249th Street; (718) 831-8644; www.queenslibrary.org; 3-3:45 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 10 years old play simple games.

TGIF - Games: Hillcrest Public Library, 187-05 Union Tpke at 188th Street; (718) 454-2786; www.queenslibrary.org; 3-5 pm; Free.

End your week playing video games, or just hang out with friends.

Happy Hour: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 4-6 pm.

Teens and tweens hang out with friends and play electronic, board and card games.

Flash card spelling: South Jamaica Public Library, 108-41 Guy R. Brewer Blvd.; (718) 739-4088; www.queenslibrary.org; 4-6 pm; Free.

Children 6 to 12 years old compete to see who can spell the most words from flash cards — the winner gets a pizza.

FURTHER AFIELD

Music and movement: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 12:30 pm; Free with museum



Photo by Carol Roszegg

Chinese New Year fun

The Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company comes to the Colden Auditorium, Kupferberg Center for the Arts on Jan. 28 and 29.

Usher in the Year of the Sheep with a world-class presentation by company dancers dressed in colorful costumes, performing ancient melodies on traditional instruments while acrobats and lion dancers do awe-inspiring

feats. Every age will enjoy this performance.

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, Jan. 28 and 29. Performance times are 10:30 am to noon on both days. Tickets are \$8.

Colden Auditorium, Kupferberg Center for the Arts, Queens College [65-30 Kissena Blvd. in Flushing; (718) 544-2996; www.kupferberg-center.org].

admission.

Stomp your feet and count the beats — learn about traditional dances.

Light it up: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Many holiday traditions use light in this dark time of year. Come learn the science behind lightbulbs, and safely experiment with electricity using common objects in strange and fun ways.

SAT, JAN. 3

IN QUEENS

Smart Club: Long Island City Public Library, 37-44 21 St. at 43rd Avenue; www.queenslibrary.org; 2-3 pm; Free.

Children 9 to 14 years old work in

groups and learn about science, math, art, reading, and technology.

Stop-Motion Shapes: 2:30 pm. Museum of the Moving Image. See Thursday, Jan. 1.

FURTHER AFIELD

Ken Waldman: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road, Long Island; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; 11:30 am and 2 pm; \$5 with museum admission (\$4 LICM Members; \$10 theater only).

The fiddling poet of Alaska pays a visit to the museum and shares his Alaska-set stories with Appalachian-style string band music including poetry written by children. Suitable for ages 5 years and older.

SUN, JAN. 4

IN QUEENS

Stop-Motion Shapes: 2:30 pm. Museum of the Moving Image. See Thursday, Jan. 1.

Heart & soul: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 3-4 pm; Free.

Keep the New Year celebration going with a concert of classic rock, dance, disco, Motown, and country rock.

Quadrantids meteor shower: Cunningham Park, 73rd Ave. and Francis Lewis Boulevard; 6 pm; Free.

Urban Park Rangers will be your guides to the solar system. Children use telescopes and binoculars to observe specific astronomical events. All equipment is provided. The Quadrantids makes its appearance each time of year.

MON, JAN. 5

IN QUEENS

Frozen Follies: Voelker Orth Museum, 149-19 38th Ave.; (718) 359-6227; www.vomuseum.org; 2 pm; \$5; (Children under 3 free).

Warm up with laughter when you join in for an afternoon of 1920s animated cartoons. Light refreshments served after screening.

Build a chair: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 to 5 pm; Free.

Teens learn the fundamentals of structure, force and resistance as they design and construct a life-sized model chair out of cardboard. Sponsored by National Grid.

Rock music workshop: Queens Library for Teens, 2002 Cornaga Ave.; (718) 471-2573; www.queenslibrary.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Learn how to make music with a ukulele, from Bruno Mars to Jason Mraz. Pick a song and learn how to play.

Discover STEM: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Middle schoolers explore the concepts of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) through interactive activities.

Bubble gum thoughts: Laurelton Public Library, 134-26 225th St. at Merrick Boulevard; (718) 528-2822; www.queenslibrary.org; 5-6 pm; Free.

Teen girls listen to local poet Christina Carpenter and learn how, who, and why they are.

Continued on page 30

Calendar

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

Continued from page 29

TUES, JAN. 6

IN QUEENS

Teen club: Hillcrest Public Library, 187-05 Union Tpke at 188th Street; (718) 454-2786; www.queenslibrary.org; 3-4 pm; Free.

Make new friends and voice your opinions on programs and events at the library. Light refreshments served.

WED, JAN. 7

IN QUEENS

Creative writing: Auburndale Public Library, 24-55 Francis Lewis Blvd. at 24th Road; (718) 352-2027; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

Twins and teens bone up on their literary skills by creatively writing about a topic.

THURS, JAN. 8

IN QUEENS

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

Children 4 to 12 years old create a unique project to take home.

Science lab: Long Island City Public Library, 37-44 21 St. at 43rd Avenue; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Get messy and learn about science.

African Dance workshop:

Queens Library for Teens, 2002 Cornaga Ave.; (718) 471-2573; www.queenslibrary.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Teens dance to the beat of the drum in an explosion of rhythm and movement led by Damon Foster.

FRI, JAN. 9

IN QUEENS

Spelling Bee: Broadway Public Library, 40-20 Broadway at Steinway Street; (718) 721-2462; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children will be divided into three categories, grades 2 and 3; 4 and 5 and 6 and 7; Winners get a special prize and then be entered to compete in the grand finale bee in April. Registration required.

African Dance workshop: 4-5 pm. Queens Library for Teens. See Thursday, Jan. 8.

SAT, JAN. 10

IN QUEENS

"Please Mr. Panda": Barnes and Noble, 23-80 Bell Blvd.; (718) 224-1083; www.barnesandnoble.com; 11 am; Free.

Join in for a special storytime with a



Ben Rudnick & Friends

Ben Rudnick & Friends come to Symphony Space on Jan. 31.

The popular Boston children's band returns to New York City for a morning jam session of cheerful kid-friendly music. Playing everything from light folk and bluegrass to calypso and rock and even Irish jigs, Ben Rudnick & Friends are guaranteed to supply

an entertaining musical morning for all members of the family. And singing along is expected!

Ben Rudnick & Friends on Sat. Jan. 31 at 11 am. Tickets are \$12 and up.

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

fun activity.

Storybook days: Voelker Orth Museum, 149-19 38th Ave.; (718) 359-6227; www.vomuseum.org; 11 am-noon; \$5 per family.

Take a break from the cold and step into the warm, cozy parlor of the mansion and listen to a fun story about snow. Children can create their own paper plate snowman to take home. Recommended for children under 6.

Drop-in studio: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Noon-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrating the closing weeks of

What's Up Dock, animation activities include pencils, crayons, cameras, and computers for young visitors to make a media-inspired project. For children 7 and older accompanied by an adult.

An afternoon with Ken Dashow: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 2-3:30 pm; Free.

The Legendary DJ talks about his years at WNEW-FM and Q-104.

FURTHER AFIELD

Divorce workshop: Half Hollow Hills Library, 55 Vanderbilt Parkway, Long Island; (631) 271-4211; www.familiesrecoveringfromdivorce.org; 9:30 am-12:30 pm; Free.

This free event offers parents advice in recovering from divorce. Adolescents and children over 6 years old are welcome. Registration required.

SUN, JAN. 11

IN QUEENS

Gingerbread Lane Giveaway:

New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.ny-science.org; Noon; Free with museum admission.

Take a piece of the Gingerbread Lane home with you. Houses will be given away on a first-come-first-served basis until the last square of real-estate is gone. Limit one house per person.

Recycled crafts: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main Street; (718) 886-3800; www.queensbotanical.org; 1-3 pm; Free.

Children learn about recycling and how to repurpose items.

FURTHER AFIELD

Perseum: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road, Long Island; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; 2 pm; \$5 with museum admission (\$10 theater only).

Presented by the Experiential Theater Company, this re-telling of the mythic tale uses puppetry and post show activities. Suitable for children 5 years and older.

MON, JAN. 12

IN QUEENS

Celebrate Pakistan: Lefferts Public Library, 103-34 Lefferts Blvd. at 103rd Avenue; (718) 843-5950; www.queenslibrary.org; 4-6 pm; Free.

Learn henna hand-painting with Summiya and Samia.

WED, JAN. 14

IN QUEENS

Looney Tunes & Classical music: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 4-5:30 pm; Free.

Find out what Bugs Bunny and Franz Liszt have in common.

FURTHER AFIELD

Epilepsy workshop: Epilepsy Foundation, 1500 Hempstead Tpke., Long Island; (516) 739-7733 X 1145; jromeo@epicli.org; 7-9 pm; Free.

The Changing Landscape of Special Needs event is presented by the Epilepsy Foundation of Long Island and hosts Craig Marcott, a special-needs consultant. Reservations required.

Calendar

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

THURS, JAN. 15

IN QUEENS

Story live! Cambria Heights Public Library, 218-13 Linden Blvd. between 218th and 219th streets; (718) 528-3535; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children who love acting perform in an interactive read-aloud. Suitable for children 6 to 12 years old.

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

Children 8 to 14 years old explore their funny bone and share their jokes, riddles and silly skits. Must come to this audition to participate. Final show is Jan. 22.

FRI, JAN. 16

IN QUEENS

African Dance workshop: 4–5 pm. Queens Library for Teens. See Thursday, Jan. 8.

“Paradise Lost”: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 8 pm; Free with RSVP online.

A mesmerizing Korean performance featuring costumes, movements, dynamic drums and enchanting singing.

SAT, JAN. 17

IN QUEENS

“Hug Machine”: Barnes and Noble, 23-80 Bell Blvd.; (718) 224-1083; www.barnesandnoble.com; 11 am; Free.

Get a warm hug in this special storytime.

Drop-in studio: Noon–5 pm. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Jan. 10.

Tribute to Martin Luther King Jr.: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 1–2 pm; Free.

Joy Kelly experienced the civil rights movement first-hand. She will perform songs of the movement, and share her stories of being involved in school integration.

Smart Club: Long Island City Public Library, 37-44 21 St. at 43rd Avenue; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Children 9 to 14 years old work in groups and learn about science, match, art, reading and technology.

Explore the nighttime sky: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 7–9 pm; \$9 (\$15 non-members).

Join with astronomer Mark Freilich and view the winter sky. Bring your



Journey to ‘Paradise’

“Paradise Lost” comes to Flushing Town Hall on Jan. 16.

This mesmerizing Korean production presented by the energetic group from Korea Norian Maro Leodo features traditional costumes, sweeping movements, dynamic drums, and enchanting singing. This must-see transports

the audience to Leodo, a fantasy island treasured by the people in Jeju, a beautiful province in Korea. For all ages. “Paradise Lost” on Jan at 8 pm. Tickets are free with RSVP online.

Flushing Town Hall [137-35 Northern Blvd. in Flushing; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org].

own telescope or pair of binoculars. Information packet is included. Children must be accompanied by an adult chaperone.

FURTHER AFIELD

Let’s March: 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.

Learn all about the civil rights leader.

Film Screening: Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-

4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 12:30 pm; Free with Museum admission.

“Our Friend, Martin.” This animated film uses historical footage of the civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

SUN, JAN. 18

IN QUEENS

Drop-in studio: Noon–5 pm. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Jan. 10.

“Beloved Prey & Moon Princess Song Cycle”: Flushing Town

Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 2 pm; Free.

A portable opera with koto. A lioness adopts a baby antelope; a mother antelope seeks to rescue her child. Also featured is “Moon Princess Song Cycle,” performed by soprano-piano duo Sara Heaton & Akiko Sasaki.

FURTHER AFIELD

Film Screening: 12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children’s Museum. See Saturday, Jan. 17.

Scavenger Hunt: Nassau County Museum of Art, 1 Museum Dr., Long Island; (516) 484-9337; 1–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

China comes to the mansion and invites children to embark on a scavenger hunt through ancient and contemporary art. Create shadow puppets, play traditional Chinese games; join in a fan dance workshop and learn some simple Chinese words.

TUES, JAN. 20

IN QUEENS

Holiday Jeopardy: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Blvd.; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 4–5 pm; Free.

Questions cover education and popular trivia — with a big screen, buzzers and bells.

WED, JAN. 21

FURTHER AFIELD

Epilepsy workshop: South Huntington Public Library, 145 Pidgeon Hill Rd., Long Island; (516) 739-7733 X 1145; jromeo@epicli.org; 7–9 pm; Free.

The Changing Landscape of Special Needs event is presented by the Epilepsy Foundation of Long Island and hosts Craig Marcott, a special-needs consultant. Reservations required.

THURS, JAN. 22

IN QUEENS

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

Children 8 to 14 years old explore their funny bone and share their jokes, riddles and silly skits. Must come to this audition to participate. Final show is Jan. 22.

The Gates of Equality: Baisley Park Public Library, 117-11 Sutphin Blvd. at Foch Boulevard; (718) 529-1590; www.queenslibrary.org; 5–6 pm; Free.

Urban Stages presents this dramatic
Continued on page 32

Calendar

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

Continued from page 31

presentation about the life and times of the civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

SAT, JAN. 24

IN QUEENS

Build a bird feeder: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Rd. at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am; Free.

Urban Park Rangers lead this hands-on nature workshop that teaches children to develop various skills and indulge their curiosity. All supplies provided to build this bird-feeder. Registration required.

"I Love You Night and Day": Barnes and Noble, 23-80 Bell Blvd.; (718) 224-1083; www.barnesandnoble.com; 11 am; Free.

Children learn all about love in this beautifully illustrated book.

Juggling workshop: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm; \$7, \$4 (Free for members with tickets to 2:15 pm show).

Pre-performance juggling interactive workshop with Greg Kennedy. For children 6 years and older.

Juggling: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 2 pm; \$13, \$8 (\$10 members; \$6 member children).

Greg Kennedy performs "Spherus," a nonverbal trio show featuring aerial acrobats.

TUES, JAN. 27

IN QUEENS

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

For children in grades 3 to 6.

FURTHER AFIELD

Bug Out: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3:30 pm; Free with Museum Admission.

Meet grasshoppers, worms, stick bugs and cockroaches — eek!

WED, JAN. 28

IN QUEENS

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company: Colden Auditorium, Kupferberg Center for the Arts, Queens College, 65-30 Kissena Blvd.; (718) 544-2996; www.kupferbergcenter.org; 10:30 am-noon; \$8.

Usher in the Year of the Sheep with



Photo by Mark Douet

'Lionboy' at New Victory Theater

"Lionboy" comes alive at the New Victory Theater from Jan. 23 through Feb. 1.

When Charlie Ashanti's parents are abducted, brave Charlie sets out to save them. Using his secret weapon (he can talk to cats), he takes the audience on a cross-continental rescue mission to a

floating circus, a hot air balloon, a pride of talking lions, and a very crafty chameleon.

"Lionboy" from Jan. 23 through Feb. 1. Tickets start at \$15.

The New Victory Theater [209 W. 42nd St. in Times Square; (646) 223-3010; www.newvictory.org]

a world class presentation by company dancers dressed in colorful costumes, performing ancient melodies on traditional instruments, all the while doing feats of awe-inspiring acrobats and lion dancers. Suitable for children of all ages.

THURS, JAN. 29

IN QUEENS

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company: 10:30 am-noon. Colden Auditorium, Kupferberg Center for the Arts, Queens College. See Wednesday, Jan. 28.

Nutrition workshop: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Teens learn about health snacks and how to eat right.

SAT, JAN. 31

IN QUEENS

Give a voice workshop: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 2-4 pm; Free.

What if all objects have a soul, and they become living creatures at night when you are asleep? They have plenty of stories to tell. Children 3 to 7 years may bring old objects and give them a voice in this workshop. Following participants make a short play play together.

Smart Club: 2 pm. Long Island City Public Library. See Saturday, Jan. 17.

Give a voice workshop: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 4-6 pm; Free.

What if all objects have a soul, and they become living creatures at night when you are asleep? They have plenty

of stories to tell. Children 8 to 15 years may bring old objects and give them a voice in this workshop. Following participants make a short play play together.

FURTHER AFIELD

Quilting Kids: 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.

Discover the art of quilts and share stories and decorate a quilt square to take home.

To the Moon: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children discover why some traditions are based on the moon and touch a real rock from outer space.

Calendar

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

LONG-RUNNING

IN QUEENS

Gingerbread Lane Exhibit: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Daily, 10 am–4 pm, Now – Sun, Jan. 11, 2015; Free with museum admission.

Marvel at creative culinary constructions of gumdrops, candy, icing and gingerbread.

Youth Adaptive Swim: Roy Wilkins Family Center, Baisley Blvd & 177th St.; Fridays, 4 pm, Now – Sat, Feb. 7, 2015; Free with recreation center membership.

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

Digital Media workshop: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Friday, Jan. 9, 4 pm; Friday, Jan. 23, 4 pm; Friday, Feb. 6, 4 pm; Friday, Feb. 27, 4 pm; Friday, March 13, 4 pm; Friday, March 27, 4 pm; Friday, April 17, 4 pm; Friday, May

1, 4 pm; Free.

Teens hang out and experiment with different media making activities. For children 14 years and older only.

FURTHER AFIELD

More than meets the "I": Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am–5 pm, Now – Mon, Jan. 19, 2015; \$9 general admission (children under 1 free).

The new exhibit at the museum provides young scientists the opportunity to explore innovations in biology, health, robotics, and technology.

Holiday Train Show: New York Botanical Garden, 200th St. and Kazimiroff Blvd., The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Saturdays, 10 am–6 pm, Now – Mon, Jan. 19, 2015; \$20 (\$8 children, Free for children under 2).

The annual tradition is open again. Model trains are enlivened amid the glow of twinkling lights in Victorian

style glasshouses featuring replicas of New York landmarks crafted of natural materials by designer Paul Busse's team.

Ice skating: Lefrak Center in Prospect Park, Parkside and Ocean avenues, Brooklyn; (718) 594-7439; info@brooklynice.org; www.brooklynice.org; Tuesdays – Thursdays, 11 am–6 pm, Fridays, 11 am–8 pm, Saturdays, 10 am–9 pm, Sundays, 10 am–6 pm, Now – Tues, March 31, 2015; \$6 (\$8 on Sat. and Sun) plus \$6 skate rental.

Families have a great time twirling and skating and enjoying the rink.

Art Kids: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Fridays, 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, Fri, Jan. 2 – Fri, March 6; Free with museum admission.

Children explore a new style of art and discover the artistic process while developing artistic skills.

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, Jan. 11, 2015; Free with museum admission.

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

Needlework and games: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1–3 pm.; \$3.

Join in with staff and make a small sampler and play board games.

Ice skating school: Lefrak Center in Prospect Park, Parkside and Ocean avenues, Brooklyn; (718) 594-7439; info@brooklynice.org; www.brooklynice.org; Mondays and Wednesdays, 4–6:30 pm, Now – Tues, March 10, 2015; Free.

Instructions, fitness, homework help and lots more. Preregistration required.

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Windows & wheels

Learning to let go when your child grows up

CHERISH THE MOMENTS

BY PATRICK HEMPFING

Why did I have to see that when I peered out from my in-laws' patio on Christmas morning? It could have been anything else — a rambunctious squirrel, a trespassing dog, or low-flying vultures. Instead, I saw a teenage girl run across my in-laws' backyard to the rear window of the neighboring house. She paused at the window and looked toward the street. She blew two kisses to, I'm guessing, the friend who dropped her off. Then she carefully lifted the window from the outside, crawled into her house, and closed the window and blinds behind her.

As a parent, I had trouble processing what I had just witnessed. If my daughter was sneaking out of the house for who-knows-what-kind of get together, I'd want to know about it. I'd certainly rather deal with it now than nine months later when there could be additional issues. However, I didn't know the people, and wouldn't want to cause trouble between my in-laws and their new neighbors. I decided to mind my own business; yet, I couldn't get it out of my head.

About an hour later, I was helping my 8-year-old daughter, Jessie, with her new purple dress. As I buttoned it up in the back and tied the bow around her waist, I flashed back to the teenage girl I had seen earlier that morning. It feels like I was just changing Jessie's diaper. Now she's wearing size 10 dresses and stands as tall as her mother's chin.

I felt it was time for a talk. No, not "the talk" as her mother, Mattie, will cover that one. This one I could handle. I told Jessie that she must never sneak out of the house. Her response didn't put me completely at ease, though I accepted it. She said, "I'll check with Momma." Maybe she knows that Dad will say "no" more quickly when it comes to dating decisions.

Later on Christmas Day, Jessie opened a special gift — a pair of roller skates. The next day we went to the park to break them in. Mattie was on one side holding her hand while



I was a steady force on the other side. Even though Jessie had on her helmet and elbow and knee pads, it was still stressful for me. We went back to the park to practice again the following two days. Jessie improved dramatically each day. On the third day, Mattie just watched while I held my daughter's hand. Then Jessie said it. "Daddy, you need to let go."

Reluctantly, I released her hand but remained within catching distance behind her. Mattie's brother, who was with us, laughed at me as I zoomed in ready for the catch each time Jessie flailed her arms. His laughter didn't bother me, though, because I was right where I needed to be.

Later, I again thought about the teenage girl in the window, knowing that Jessie's teenage years aren't that far away. I realize that more "letting go" times are ahead. I also know it's not possible to catch all the falls. I'm hoping that because I've stood beside Jessie when she learns to

skate, and for many of the other important times of her childhood, that I'll never have to stand guard outside her bedroom window.

I've concluded that parenting requires seeing your child through a series of wheels — stroller, wagon, tricycle, training, bicycle, scooter, and now roller skate wheels. I'm going to enjoy the pink skate wheels stage to the fullest. Something tells me that seeing Jessie behind the wheel of a car will be much harder. When that time comes, I'll be beside her in the front seat. Then it will be time for Daddy to let go again, and Mattie and I will find ourselves peering out the window, waiting for her safe return home.

Patrick Hempfing had a 20-year professional career in banking, accounting, and auditing before he became a father at age 44. He is now a full-time husband, stay-at-home dad, and writer. Follow him at www.facebook.com/patricklhempfing and on Twitter @PatrickHempfung.

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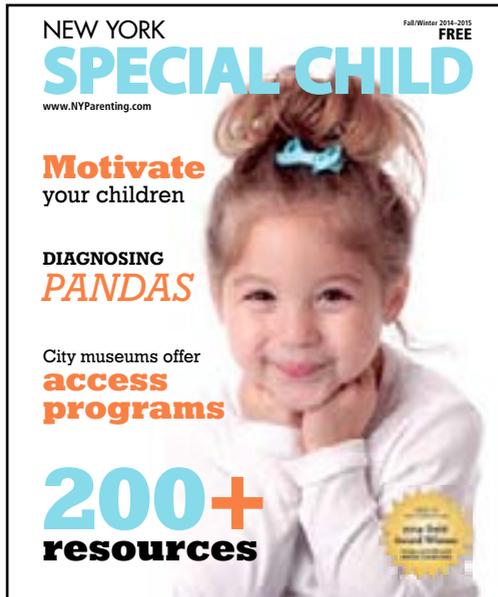
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