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Autumn in New York

September was such a beautiful month here in the city. We can only hope that October will also provide us with sunny days and good spirit. I always hope for decent weather on Halloween so the kids can have a fun time trick-or-treating. It's a real drag when it's raining or too cold. A bit brisk, OK, but if the kids have to cover their costumes with coats and carry umbrellas, it really ruins the whole thing. It should be autumnal, not wintry. Any way, I have my fingers crossed.

This issue presents a special teen focus in addition to all the regular items. October is when many of the high schools offer Open Houses for the coming school year and when middles schoolers and their parents are checking out their options.



Be sure to see what schools are highlighted here inside. In addition we have a few articles on teen issues that will be certain to stir some emotional response. Anyone who has had a child with an eating issue will tell you how important it is to be on the lookout for signs of bulimia. Not always easy to spot, be sure to read this to become more informed. If detected early, kids can get the therapeutic help they need to break the control factor that is at the root of this syndrome and many others.

Another one is centered around abuse behavior. In this issue we highlight a New York City program called Day One and our resident writer Tammy Scileppi has interviewed their director, Michelle Paoella. This organization provides a local voice

on the issue of dating violence and domestic violence among our youth. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and we want to contribute to the awareness by entering the conversation and shedding light on this issue. Part II will be found in the November issue.

These are important topics for us to be addressing. They impact all of our lives in numerous ways. No one's family is immune. Regardless of income, strata or education level, the human conditions remain prevalent. Adolescence is a tough time and it takes very determined parents to talk tough topics with their kids. Our writer Christina Katz addresses this in her tips for talking to your tweens and teens. We can all use as much advice and help as possible. Pressures are out there for our kids that we don't even know about. Every generation presents its own new elements of stress. As parents we

must be trying to do our best and researching and listening for what the new signs are that signal trouble.

There's so much to be aware of. It's hard to imagine when you hold that new baby in your arms what a myriad of issues your will be dealing with in the years ahead. With no classes or degrees to prepare us or back us up, we take on this role and hopefully find support, information and intelligence in our quest to raise healthy and happy adults.

We hope very much that our Award winning editorial helps. That's our goal.

Thanks for reading.

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Mistakes happen

How to help
your child
overcome the
fear of failure

BY HELEN NIEVES

Has your child ever been afraid of failing at something that he never tried it at all? Does your child make excuses in order to not engage in practices? Fear of failure, or atychiphobia, is an irrational fear that will hold a person back in life.

He will refuse to do anything, because he is not sure he will succeed. Your child may want to engage in an

activity, but the fear is so great that he would rather avoid it in order to prevent symptoms of anxiety or depression. The fear of failure is connected to self-worth, and your child will try to protect his worth by avoiding failure, and consequently, he will miss out on opportunities. This fear will cause him to not put forth enough effort or give up before he even had the chance to try. Children fall into four categories when dealing with failure:

Students who love learning and see failure as a way to learn from it. They do not believe failure diminishes their self-worth.

Students who over-strive and avoid failure by knowing they will succeed. They may engage in activities where they know positive outcomes will be the result. Their success is motivated by fear that they will not be perfect or succeed. Over-strivers usually doubt their abilities.

This fear will cause your child to not put forth enough effort or give up before he even had the chance to try. Consequently, he will miss out on opportunities.

Students who accept failure and believe that their failure is due to having little to no ability. They give up on succeeding, and their self-worth is low. If they do succeed at something, they do not believe they had the ability to succeed at it, but rather believe that their success was outside their control.

Students who do not expect to succeed and avoid activities. They believe they have low ability and low worth when they try at something but fail. They may procrastinate or make excuses in order to avoid failure that is due to lack of ability. These children have internalized failure. Avoiding failure, to them, is impossible.

What parents can do

Parents of a child with fear of failure should try to convince their child to believe in himself. They need to teach their child that mistakes are part of life and that it is okay to fail. Teaching their child to learn from failure rather than allowing the fear to prevent him from engaging in activities is important. Here are some tips you can try to encourage your child to take risks:

Help your child to look at failure as a learning experience. Teach your child to embrace failure and understand that mistakes help him to do better next time. If your child does not make mistakes, he will not learn or improve. Remember that failure or making mistakes gives him an opportunity to do things better and to feel more inspired. Help him seek to fail doing things that he normally won't do. Your child will learn a valuable lesson and realize that failing is not a bad thing. Give him an example of someone who has failed before they succeeded at something.

Emphasize effort over ability. Provide your child with praise and positive feedback that focuses on effort. If you see that your child studied for days and he failed a test, do not get angry at him. Instead, praise him for the effort and for trying. This kind of feedback can motivate him, and he can believe that he can succeed. If a parent reprimands him for failing or tells him to try harder, this can cause him to doubt his abilities and not try.

Build a positive relationship with your child. Your child needs to look at you as a positive role model. Help your child by looking at the mistake and evaluating what went wrong and what he can do differently next time. Have your child watch how you respond to failure. Share your disappointments with your child and what you learned from the situation. You can also read stories to your child about people he admires and how they learned to cope with failure.

Use humor. Laugh at the mistakes you make in front of your child. You do not want to curse or yell, because by doing so, you are setting an example that mistakes are bad and should not be made. Just laugh and have fun. Mistakes happen, right? It is not the end of the world! So teach that to your child!

It is helpful for your child to experience failure and learn from it at a young age rather than when he is in high school, when the stakes are much higher. Have your child gradually face his fear of failure. Slowly "expose" your child to making mistakes. Play games and randomly let him win and lose. Model positive attitude and play often enough, so your child can realize that it is okay to lose.

It is important to let your child do his personal best. In life, he will fail and he will succeed. Failing is a part of life, but we need to teach our children how to cope with failure and view it as an opportunity for growth.

Helen Nieves is a licensed mental health counselor, attention-deficit consultant specialist, and certified anger management specialist. She has a private practice in Brooklyn and works with adults and children with various emotional and behavioral issues. She is an instructor at the American Institute of Health Care Professionals. For more, visit www.counselingadhd.com.



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Telling their stories

How Day One helps teens trapped in dangerous relationships

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Every October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month is observed to shed light on a devastating issue that has become widespread in our communities, here in New York and beyond, in a staggering way. So it's comforting to know that organizations such as Manhattan-based Day One, www.dayoneny.org, are there to help young people who are experiencing the negative effects of unhealthy, abusive dating relationships.

More than 30,000 city youth have been educated about domestic violence since Day One's launch in 2003 and are feeling more empowered, thanks to the organization's multi-faceted resources and leadership programs and 6,000-plus trained professionals, who provide supportive, non-judgmental guidance.

Abusive behavior is all about control; it can be physical, verbal and emotional, or sexual. Silence, isolation, and shame are the hallmarks of this abuse.

Day One Program Director and social worker Michele Paoella appeared on WNYC's Brian Lehrer Show on Sept. 17 with three young

women who survived abuse at the hands of their partners and chose to share their stories.

"Crushed: Teens and Dating Abuse," a series of audio stories, explores the much-asked question, "Why do they stay?" It provides rare and intimate insight into a largely unknown phenomenon, revealing how silence, power, and control are dynamics that can permeate relationships, even when the partners don't live together; how such relationships can affect everything from self-esteem to friendships to school performance; and how parents and guardians rarely know how to talk about the distinction between healthy and abusive relationships.

To produce the series, WNYC's Radio Rookies program — a New York Public Radio initiative that provides teenagers with the tools and training to create radio stories about themselves, their communities, and their world — partnered with Day One to help illuminate the pressing issue of teen dating abuse and take listeners behind the scenes. Both Paoella and survivor Destiny Mabry — who has become an advocate on the issue — discussed how parents can spot the signs of teen dating

abuse and help prepare their kids for healthy relationships.

Mabry, 25, grew up in the Bronx and now lives in Harlem. She was one of the one in three city teens who report being verbally and emotionally abused by a romantic partner. The abuse left her depressed, and by the time she was in her early 20s, she was in counseling to heal from the relationship. Then in January 2014, Destiny's older sister, Kia, and her 1- and 3-year-old niece and nephew were murdered by her brother-in-law. In her story she interviews her mother and her grandmother, as she seeks to understand the cycles of abuse that go, "as far back as we can call it." She considers speaking out about abuse an important part of her healing.

Paoella, who had just returned from taping the show on Sept. 17, felt it was important to talk about Day One's services and the too-prevalent teen violence issue affecting the city's youth.

Tammy Scileppi: I understand that today's story centered around domestic violence and what one of your Youth Voices Network members, Destiny, went through.

Michele Paoella: Destiny, the young person who was interviewed with me, produced a Radio Rookies piece for this series. [You can see the entire interview from the Brian Lehrer show at: <http://www.wnyc.org/story/abusive-relationship-meets-fatal-end>.]

Youth Voices Network is an advocacy group of survivors that we work with. They do public speaking events, etc. Right now, they're hosting an art contest for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

TS: Discuss how Day One helps young people.

MP: We provide prevention education workshops to middle and high school students, as well as direct services to survivors of dating and intimate partner abuse, ages 24 and under. Most of our clients are young



Destiny Mabry (left) was one New York City teen to report being verbally and emotionally abused by a romantic partner. (Above) Mabry and Day One Program Director and social worker Michele Paoletta are interviewed on WNYC.

women, but we also work with young men and people in the LGBT community that have experienced or are experiencing abuse. The services we provide to survivors include free and confidential legal and counseling services.

One client was 15 and came in after her girlfriend viciously assaulted her; her school told her about our services. It had been going on for about one-and-a-half years. In the first two sessions, we created a detailed safety plan. She didn't want to call the police, so I went with her to family court and helped her petition for an order of protection.

I also helped her apply for a school safety transfer, since her girlfriend went to her school and was stalking

and threatening her, impacting her ability to participate meaningfully in school. After her physical safety had been established, she decided she wanted to join a support group and also started seeing me for counseling individually, because she was experiencing some symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and also felt very isolated from friends and family, and like no one understood her experience.

We worked together for about six months in counseling, overall. At the end of that time, she had transferred schools, felt safe, said she felt connected to the other survivors in the group, and her post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms had decreased.

Young people in our services are

welcomed and encouraged to include parents and guardians if they choose to.

TS: I read that Day One has become the primary voice of expertise in New York City on the issue of dating abuse and domestic violence among youth. Please explain.

MP: We work with all five boroughs and provide services that range from crisis intervention to long-term counseling. We're doing a lot of training with the NYPD right now to make sure their school safety agents and domestic violence officers are aware of the issue.

Many young people that we work with are referred to us by district attorneys, the police, school personnel, family members or friends,

and child protective service workers after they have experienced violence. Some of them want to get an order of protection, or want legal support for any number of abuse related issues, such as custody and visitation, sexual assault on campus, or immigration-related cases when abuse has been present. Others just want individual or support group counseling or assistance trying to find safe housing.

The cases are always driven by the survivor themselves. We work with young people up to age 24 and have no minimum age range; the youngest who's ever come through our doors is 13.

Look for Part 2 of this important topic, which will include the other survivors' stories and more information about teens and dating abuse, in the November issue of New York Parenting.

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



Arts education for every child

How ProjectArt opens doors to those in need

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Columbia University's Teachers College is teaming with arts organization ProjectArt to bring free arts education to students in underserved communities.

The partnership allows for graduate students in the college's Art and Art Education program (a total of 24 teachers in training) to teach visual arts classes to school-age children (ages 4 to 17) in a number of the New York City's public libraries.

Not only will Teachers College's students aid ProjectArt, but the college itself will offer training for all teaching artists working with the organization. The college will also spearhead developing a form of assessment to measure the impact of ProjectArt's services. This partnership will boost the efforts of Pro-

jectArt to offer cost-effective programming in its six partner libraries in Harlem, the south Bronx, central Brooklyn, and Queens.

I spoke to ProjectArt founder Adarsh Alphons to learn more about his organization, who it serves, and how to get kids involved in a program such as this.

Shnieka Johnson: What prompted the founding of ProjectArt?

Adarsh Alphons: In 2011, with little more than a bag full of art supplies and borrowed office space in Harlem, I began ProjectArt. There was one goal and one goal only: to put paintbrushes in the hands of as many children [as possible] that don't have adequate access to arts education.

Soon, friends became teachers, parents became volunteers, and kids became students. Over the last three

years, with the help of hundreds of people who have donated their time, money, and resources, ProjectArt has created a model of change that can confront the national arts education crisis, and impact youth on a large scale while keeping our costs low. The resulting model is infinitely scalable, while spurring excitement at one of our nation's oldest institutions — its libraries.

One of the incredible things about this journey has been the inspiring and generous people that ProjectArt has had the good fortune of working with. Having started with very little, ProjectArt has been lucky to have met [these volunteers] and is continually surprised by the generosity of others.

SJ: What is the demographic of the children involved?

AA: ProjectArt's participants are at-risk inner city youth ages 4 to 17 years old. We hold our programs in low socioeconomic-status neighborhoods with a high, discernible need for free after-school programs, during youth's most vulnerable hours, 3 to 6 pm. We target this specific population because of the extensive research that has been done demonstrating the positive impact arts education has on the development of socioeconomically disadvantaged youth.

SJ: How did the partnership with



ProjectArt brings arts education to students' classrooms.

the public libraries come to fruition?

AA: Since 2008, public libraries in New York City have faced a cumulative budget cut of \$68 million, which has directly affected the programming available to its communities, which has contributed to the library's inability to appeal to a wider audience. ProjectArt realized that these "failing institutions" would be the perfect place to offer our free, high-quality art classes — thus keeping our costs low and revitalizing these historic institutions with the classes that they desperately need in order to stay relevant within today's changing society.

Our pilot programming in conjunction with a library institution was first realized in 2013 as ProjectArt [when we] partnered with the Hamilton Grange Library in West Harlem.

SJ: What boroughs do you currently offer programming in?

AA: ProjectArt currently operates in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. By the end of the 2015 calendar year, ProjectArt will be operating out of 20 libraries throughout all five boroughs.

SJ: Is there a set curriculum or do the teaching artists design their own?

AA: ProjectArt does not have a set curriculum but rather includes art history surveys that are context-led to reflect the cultural sensitivities of the communities we serve. We strive to recognize and respond to the unique makeup of the communities in which we teach and therefore our teachers design their own curriculums, so that they can tailor lessons to their classes'

needs. This could mean anything from incorporating lessons on local folk culture to projects that give students the opportunity to share traditions with their classmates.

SJ: How often is the children's work exhibited?

AA: We believe that sharing children's art with society is an integral part of the child's growth as creative achievers. Furthermore, we believe that these artists deserve recognition for their work and the opportunity to develop insight about the artistic community. With the help of galleries, businesses, interior designers, and developers, our students' work is showcased three times a year, at the conclusion of each semester — spring, summer, and fall in highly visible and well-known art galleries in Chelsea. Additionally, at the conclusion of the gallery show, our students exhibit their artwork in library exhibitions where their work is shared and celebrated within the student's own community.

SJ: How can parents get their children involved?

AA: Parents can register their children by filling out our registration form at either the library branches or by contacting Tadia Lynch, ProjectArt's Head of Programs. Tadia can be reached at tadia@projectart.org or (212) 256-1947.

Visit www.projectart.org or www.tc.columbia.edu.

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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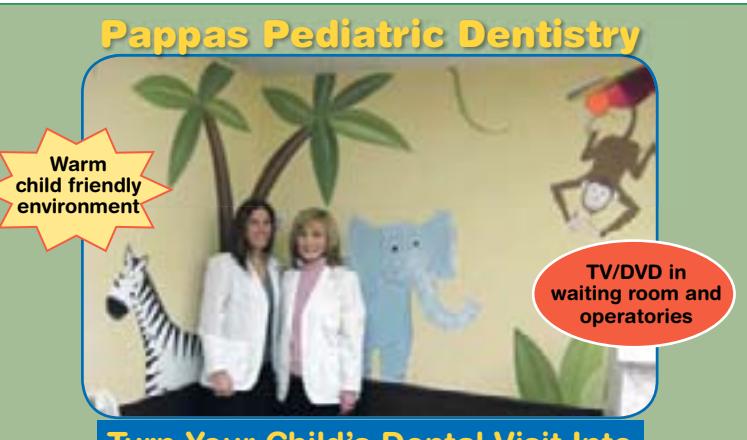
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Could this be bulimia?

Seven signs you don't want to miss

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

Jennifer had noticed a recent change in her daughter Kylie since she had turned 13. Kylie was once a rambunctious child, who loved rough-and-tumble games with her two big brothers and was seldom afraid to speak her mind. But lately, Kylie had become more withdrawn and touchy. Jennifer noticed that she was less and less interested in interacting with her brothers, and she did not bounce back from their little-sister taunts and teases as easily as she once had.

Kylie was reading a lot of articles online about dieting and fasting, and once, Jennifer had even found a package insert for over-the-counter diet pills in Kylie's bedroom trash can. Kylie was also spending less time with her childhood friends and more time staying home watching sitcom reruns on TV.

Jennifer was concerned, but she felt that Kylie was pushing her away. Should Jennifer follow conventional wisdom that advises parents to give teens space and respect their desire for more independence? Or should Jennifer pay closer attention

to Kylie's day-to-day behaviors, especially related to eating and dieting?

If you know the facts about an eating disorder called bulimia nervosa, then you know that Jennifer should calmly and quietly pay closer attention to Kylie's behavior around eating and dieting. Studies indicate that by their first year of college, 4.5 to 18 percent of women and 0.4 percent of men have a history of bulimia.

In the United States, five to 10 million adolescent girls and women struggle with eating disorders and borderline eating conditions. According to The Center For Mental Health Services, 90 percent of those who have eating disorders are women between the ages of 12 and 25.

Boys and young men are also at risk for eating disorders. And eating disorders in boys and men, even if less frequent, may be on the rise. Especially at risk, studies say, are boys on competitive sports teams, where members are under pressure to meet specific weights or stay physically fit, and also boys who are hypersensitive about physical appearance.

Bulimic behavior means binge eating and then attempting to rid the body of the food by purging (forcing yourself to throw up), by taking laxatives or diuretics, by fasting, or by compulsively exercising. Children who are overly concerned about their weight may take diet pills, smoke cigarettes, drink excessive amounts of diet soda, take stimulants, or try anything else that promises appetite suppression or rapid weight loss.

If you are wondering if your child is overly focused on body image and

weight, and might be at risk for bulimia nervosa, watch for these seven signals:

Large amounts of foods consumed in short amounts of time. Food disappears suddenly from your kitchen or pantry. Packaging and wrappers appear in indoor or outdoor trash and recycling containers without your awareness that food was eaten. You find food packaging or wrappers in funny places, such as in bedroom closets or hidden under or behind furniture after you've noticed food missing.

Purging behaviors. Your child retreats to a remote bathroom right after meals. You discover diet pills in your daughter's purse or diuretics in your son's sports bag. You find evidence of vomiting in the bathroom although no one in the house is sick. You notice bloodshot eyes or broken blood vessels in your child's face shortly after mealtime.

A fascination with fasting. You notice your child not eating for a day or even days at a time, possibly engaging in extreme behaviors like drinking large amounts of water or diet soda to suppress appetite. Your child exhibits dizziness or light-headedness from not eating.

Compulsive exercising. Your child often exercises right after eating, perhaps even early in the morning or late at night. You notice that periods of intense exercise come in fits and spurts rather than maintained sensibly over time. You notice a connection between the reward of food and the punishment of exercise afterwards.

Secretiveness around eating

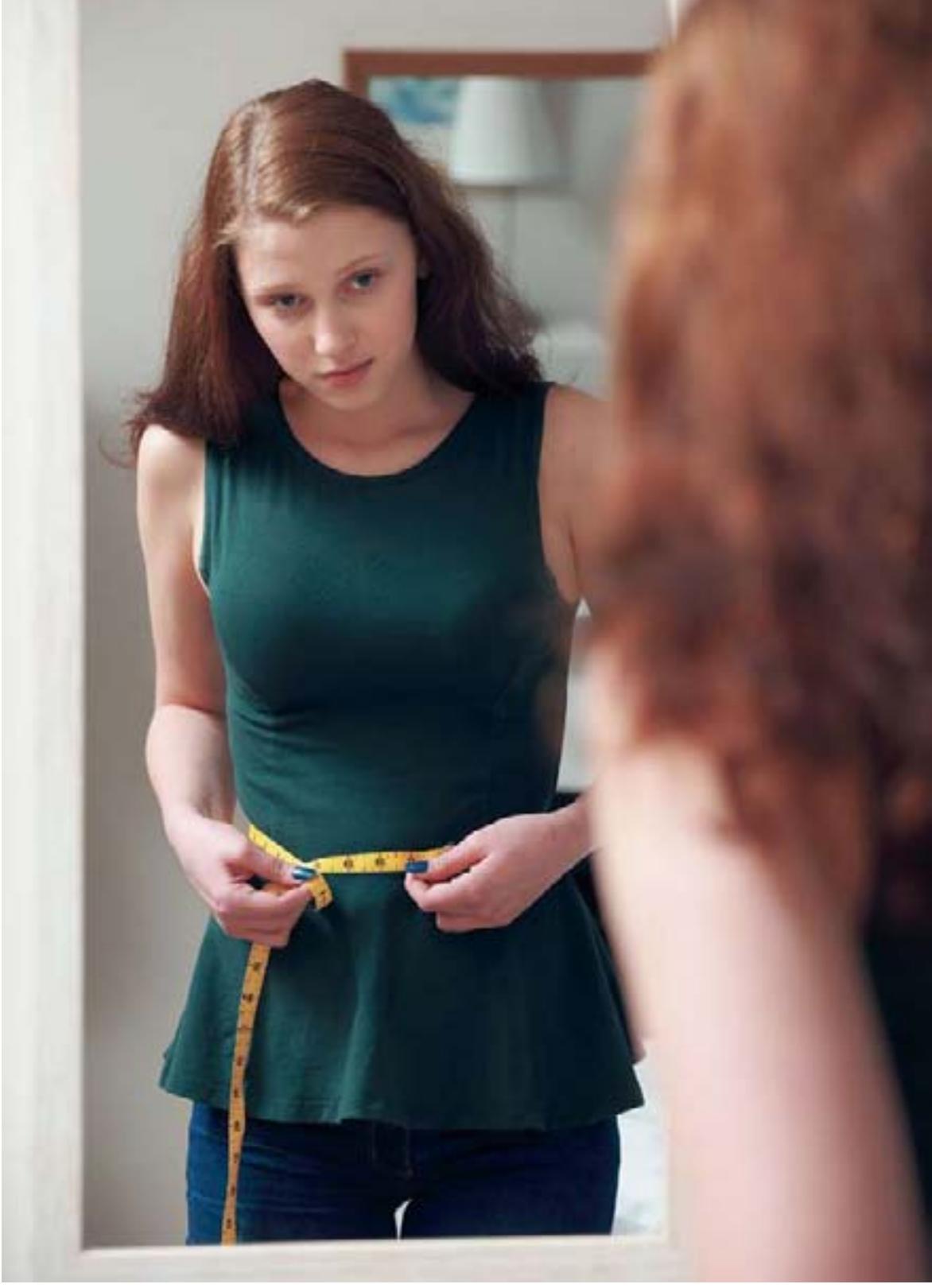
Online resources that can help

Helpguide: http://www.helpguide.org/mental/bulimia_signs_symptoms causes_treatment.htm

National Eating Disorders Association: <http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/bulimia-nervosa>

Office On Women's Health: <http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/bulimia-nervosa.html>

National Institutes Of Health: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000341.htm>



and food. You may find multiple candy bar wrappers in an outdoor trash container. You might hear your daughter awake at night rooting around in the kitchen cabinets. You notice that an ice cream container that was almost full yesterday is now almost empty.

Overeating. You suspect your child is eating emotionally or anxiously. He has a group of buddies who like to all "pig out" together after intense sports competitions.

You wonder how your child seems to be eating so much without gaining weight. You notice a pattern of bursts of overeating that did not exist before.

Mood changes and addictive behaviors. Does your child seem anxious, depressed, or excessively moody lately? Sometimes eating disorders and mood disorders go hand-in-hand, and those who suffer from eating disorders may also be at higher risk for addictions. If a typi-

cally cheery child suddenly turns sour and becomes distant and depressed along with several of these other signs, get ready to offer help.

There is often nothing visible on the surface that will tip you off to an eating disorder, so you may need to become a detective to determine whether or not your child is suffering from one. A bulimic child may work hard to keep up appearances. She may fall into a normal category of weight for her age, take care with

There is often nothing visible on the surface that will tip you off to an eating disorder, so you may need to become a detective to determine whether or not your child is suffering from one.

her appearance, and put a smile on her face to cover up behaviors she does not want you to notice. But pay attention, because by the time you notice concrete physical signs, like discolored teeth or calluses on fingers, the disorder will already be in advanced stages.

The best thing that can happen for a child with an eating disorder is early intervention and treatment, which is why it's important to try and catch patterns of bulimic behavior as soon as possible. Remember that eating disorders are painful and cause the sufferer to feel acute shame. If your child needs help, you want to be ready to provide it calmly and supportively without making a big fuss or taking the situation personally.

Do not try to treat eating disorders at home. Seek professional help. Do some homework and set up professional resources before you approach your child, so you can be ready to offer a course of helpful action. Contact your family doctor ahead of time, and get the name of specialists in your area. Keep in mind that the best choice for a child feeling vulnerable and ashamed may be to seek out a treatment professional of the same gender with a gentle manner.

Think of an eating disorder as a cry for help rather than a permanent condition. With early intervention and treatment, and love and support from family and friends, Kylie has a good chance of making a full recovery. Then she and Jennifer and the whole family can feel close once again.

Author and freelance journalist Christina Katz would like to live in a world without eating disorders, so she wrote this article to help parents notice signals they might otherwise miss. Her latest book is "The Art of Making Time for Yourself, A Collection of Advice for Moms."

Ghoulish gatherings

How to create
a Halloween
celebration to
remember

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

I was a witch every Oct. 31 throughout elementary school. My costumes got increasingly elaborate, and by the fifth grade, I was sculpting my own witch noses. I was fascinated with anything macabre, so Halloween night was something I started looking forward to months ahead of time. In high school, I would dress up to take my little sister from door to door. Sometimes I would talk a friend into creating a haunted house for the neighborhood kids.

Halloween never "got out of my blood." It takes several days to decorate our typical abode into a haunted

mansion that would rival the spook-o-meter of Dracula's castle. Trick-or-treaters are never surprised when a vampire or other specter opens the door to greet them.

My family wanted to share our passion for all things Halloween with more friends and family. Our annual celebration began as a simple gathering of like-minded Halloween fanatics who would always stop at Haskell's Haunted Mansion after a night of trick-or-treating to take photos together, grab a cookie, and regale each other about the excitement of the evening.

However, the party began to morph into something much more elaborate, with themes, costume contests, and engaging party games. Soon, we were hosting parties for 50 to 60 friends and neighbors. Once the kids were too old to trick-or-treat, the haunted bash still provided some much-needed fun for our teenagers — not to mention their parents!

Halloween parties are a great way for the generations to bond and enjoy some spooky fun together. There is something about becoming someone — or something else — that allows folks to let loose and find their inner child. So, get into the spirit of the season and ask your kids to assist with the preparations.

Themes

In the beginning, our party was a general celebration, but we quickly started to introduce themes, which increased the enthusiasm tenfold.

Incorporate your theme into all aspects of the party planning, including

the food, decorations, and invitations. For instance, framed portraits of our kids were turned into evil clowns or dancing werewolves, and activities were also modified to match the theme. We never required guests to dress in theme, but folks usually embraced the idea. So, plan to have a costume prize for "Best in Theme."

Think outside of the box. Here are some themes we used over the years:

- Scary circus (dressing up as a circus character with a creepy twist).
- Couple and family costumes (Adams Family, Santa and Mrs. Claus, Thing 1 & 2, etc.).
- Dead rock stars.
- "Walking Dead" decades (creatures of the night from '20s, '80s, etc.).

Food and table settings

It's all about the food, and a Halloween party encourages exceptional creativity. Label typical foods with creepy descriptions, such as werewolf eyeballs (meatballs) or barbecued bat wings (chicken wings). Print custom labels for soda and juice bottles (i.e. witches brew or skeleton juice). You can find these online or ask your kids to create some.

Of course, for the creative baker or cook, transforming your treats and snacks into ghoulish concoctions is always fun. We've had eyeball cupcakes, a graveyard cake, chilling punch with a floating frozen hand, pretzel candy bones, and worm-infested Jell-O, to name a few.

Convert table settings and sideboards into spine-tingling displays that capture the spirit and theme of the party. Rather than a store-bought Halloween tablecloth, stretch and tear fabric gauze over a plain, black linen or plastic tablecloth for a natural effect. If more



gore is desired, splatter red food coloring (or fake blood) on the gauze. Place plastic spider rings on your candlesticks and cobwebs on the backs of chairs. Carve out miniature pumpkins to use as dip bowls and create freaky faces by pinning cut veggies for the facial features. There is no limit to what you can do with the goodies and table settings to enhance your Halloween vibe.

For more Halloween table setting ideas visit: <http://www.hgtv.com/design/make-and-celebrate/entertaining/spooky-halloween-table-settings-and-decorations-pictures>

Games and contests

Halloween Majority Rules became one of our most popular games, enjoyed by all age groups. Divide guests into teams of three to four. To make things more interesting, create teams of teens vs. adults or boys vs. girls. The hostess reads a question, such as, "What is the most common facial or head accessory worn on Halloween?" Each team has one minute to come up with an answer together. Answers and team names are written on slips of paper and collected by the hostess to be read to the entire group. All teams who guessed the "most common" answer receive one point. We've also played Halloween charades, Halloween trivia, Halloween bingo, and guess the famous scary movie line or movie score.

We've found that holding costume contests inspires folks to find their creative gene. Surprisingly, many of the parents gave the younger crowd a run for their money in the "most creative costume" category. Our contests inspired mini parades. Contestants in the various categories would parade through the house and gather at a location so guests could vote for their favorites. Ties are broken by the host family.

Prize ideas:

- Craft store frame labeled "Best in Theme."
- Halloween dish towels for "Best Adult Female."
- Movie coupons and a tin of popcorn for "Best Teen Costume."

- Ghoulish back scratcher for "Best Adult Male."

Music

There are numerous Halloween mixes available with favorite soundtracks from scary movies or typical Halloween song titles, such as Michael Jackson's "Thriller." Another option: Eerie classical tunes, such as Johann Sebastian Bach's "Toccata and Fugue in D minor."

However, it's more fun to make your own soundtrack. Your kids will love this! Record ghostly sounds and simulate deadly storms, or ask your children to narrate spooky stories.

Favors

Guests love to have something to take home. If you choose to hand out favors, think of something interesting and affordable (preferably handmade by you and your kids). Here are some options:

- Individually wrapped iced sugar cookies with the year or theme.
- Bookmarks with party date or theme and adorned with dangling broom or ghost.
- Chocolate lollipops (grave-stone, pumpkin, skull, etc.).
- Glow bracelets and rings.
- Popcorn or trail mix hands (stuffed in transparent, plastic gloves with a candy corn for nails).
- Travel-size hand sanitizers with handmade Halloween labels.

For more chilling inspiration

There are a multitude of ideas on Pinterest, but the following URLs can help to jump-start the brainstorming process:

- Interesting snack and dessert options: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/holidays-and-parties/packages/halloween.html>
- Game suggestions for all ages: <http://www.partygameideas.com/halloween-games/games-list.php>
- General tips, decorations, costume ideas, etc.: <http://www.celebrations.com/c/halloween-party-ideas/all>
- Family theme costumes: <http://www.today.com/news/19-cutest-family-theme-costumes-halloween-2D80189605>



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ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
ESQ.

An inheritance for a college tuition

My mother-in-law recently passed away, naming my wife as a beneficiary of her annuity. Our oldest child is a junior in high school and preparing to apply for college — and financial aid to pay for it — next year. How will the inheritance impact his availability for financial aid? Should we wait to file the claim form for the annuity until after the financial aid package is awarded, which the annuity company says is possible? Or should my wife disclaim the inheritance entirely and let it pass to the other siblings?

This is an excellent question highlighting the intersection between estate planning and financial planning for college.

There are two basic types of financial aid: need-based and merit-based. This brief article focuses on need-based aid. Eligibility for this aid is based on a static formula: cost of attendance minus expected family contribution = need. This is the amount that the college expects the student's family to pay for school. The expected family contribution is calculated based on a snapshot of assets and income available for college.

Just like with real estate appraisals, there are three methods used to calculate expected family contribution. All three of them are based on the data of the income and assets of the student and parents, all of which must be reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

In Medicaid planning, the terminology is "exempt" and "non-exempt" resources. The concept applies in financial aid, too. Retirement accounts are exempt assets, as is a home. Non-retirement assets are included in the expected family contribution calculation. Home equity, small businesses, and non-qualified annuities are not counted in one



calculation, but they are in the other two. Annuities and life insurance contracts are not reported on the application, but annuities are counted on the CSS Profile, which is the other aid form used by many private colleges. Not only will the asset value of investments be reported, but the unearned income such as interest, dividends, and capital gains will also impact the income calculation.

Under one of the three Free Application for Federal Student Aid calculations, home equity is capped at 1.2 times the parent's adjusted gross income. Life insurance cash values and personal assets (household goods, cars, furniture, etc.) do not count under any of the three formulas.

The three aid formulas weigh in-

come more than assets to determine what families must contribute toward the cost — it effectively expects parents to use 47 percent of their net income after taxes and other items. In other words, income counts nine times more than assets do.

Parents are assigned a "savings allowance" to arrive at an available asset value. In other words, after yet another calculation, parents are expected to use up to 5.64 percent of the available assets as calculated on college costs annually. Students, however, are not given a "savings allowance," and 100 percent of the value of any asset in the student's name is counted and expected to be used toward the college cost. In other words, the money in the student's name is expected by the

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college to be used to pay tuition at a much higher rate than parents' own assets. This is counterproductive to a common estate planning technique of utilizing the annual exclusion gift amount to make annual gifts to children, either in an Uniform Transfers to Minors Act, an Uniform Gifts to Minors Act, or a trust. This fact undercuts the wisdom of placing money in one of these accounts for the child. The student's assets are calculated at about 20 percent for expected family contribution, while parents' assets are calculated at five percent. From that standpoint, the 529 Account or a Roth (or a Coverdell if the parents' income permits) is a better vehicle for stockpiling savings.

The 529 plans owned by the parent or student do not count toward the eligibility. The distributions might count toward income if someone owns the plan other than the parent or student, say, a grandparent, and distributions from a grandparent's account do count as income for the previous year for financial aid purposes. When the 529 plan is owned by the parent or student, however, the distributions are not reported as income when applying for financial aid. The distribution is tax-free (because it is paying for education), is not reported on the Form 1040, and does not get reported as "untaxed income" on the financial aid application.

One advisor recommends waiting to use a grandparents' 529 plan money until after the student's final eligibility for financial aid has been determined, or in the student's senior year, because the income will be reported for the prior year — the year the student graduates.

Trust distributions, on the other hand, are always counted as taxable or untaxed income and do count against eligibility for financial aid.

As for the second question on timing of estate distributions, one commentator suggests that the money is not reported as an asset on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid unless and until the estate is settled and the money is distributed.

Likewise, the commentator suggests, if ownership of the assets is contested (say, in a contested accounting in Surrogate's Court), and the ownership has not been resolved, then there is also no requirement to report the asset on

the application. Similarly, proceeds from life insurance would not be reported as an asset until received. Presumably this puts some level of control in the hands of the applicant or his parents as to when they submit the life insurance claim form, or perhaps coordinate with a friendly fiduciary (or contest an accounting) to control the timing for application purposes.

There is no "look back," however, and an account owner can simply change the name of the beneficiary if the 529 plan will interfere with the ability to obtain financial aid, and if the financial aid package is more attractive than the funds held in the 529 plan.

But before you start moving money around in the years leading up to your child's entry into college, consider the tax consequences of moving money around between owners. You will consume a portion of your federal lifetime credit, not to mention potential capital gains consequences. Selling appreciated investments will cause your income to spike, thus further disrupting the income calculations that will determine financial aid eligibility.

And, restructuring assets may be irrelevant if your and your spouse's income will disqualify your child from financial aid regardless of where and how your assets are titled. If your income is \$250,000, your expected family contribution will be approximately \$65,683 which means your child is not likely to qualify for any need-based aid.

On the other hand, if you have two children in college at the same time, your expected family contribution is split equally among the two (or more) students. Although the prospect of having not one but two children in college at the same time invokes terror in the hearts of most parents, perhaps it has a silver lining in the financial aid arena. With more than one child attending college simultaneously, they may be eligible for need-based aid even despite a high income level.

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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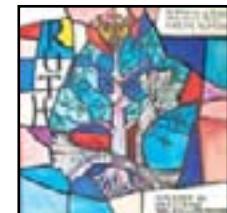
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Positively powerful role models

Survivors share their stories of strength and words of hope

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Across New York City and beyond, breast cancer survivors are standing strong and very often winning the fight against a disease that has become far too prevalent, even among women in their 30s.

Thanks to ads and commercials sponsored by organizations like Susan G. Komen, women have become more enlightened about breast cancer and have come to understand the importance of yearly mammograms and regular self-exams.

Alitheia Pena

Survivor Alitheia Pena is using her experience to help other moms battling breast cancer.

The Bronx grandmother's battle with breast cancer started in 2009, when she was a stay-at-home mom raising three girls. Her shocking diagnosis came after she found out that her two older daughters were pregnant. Suddenly, her life and her family's became super-challenging.

"But my partner was very supportive, and my entire family helped me with my kids and household chores; my mother cooked meals for me to

Other ways to heal

Medical advice and treatment from your doctor should always be followed, but there are plenty of other ways in which you can help yourself heal.

Keep your family and friends close and your pets even closer. Dogs and cats have extrasensory perception — they can sense when you're not feeling well and may help speed up your healing journey.

Rest. Meditate, do yoga, and keep breathing when you're stressed

out, sad, or feeling fearful.

Change your diet. Eliminate sugar, which feeds cancer cells, and "the whites" — white bread, white rice, etc. Get a Nutribullet.

Try a holistic route. Ask your doctor about keeping your pH levels at alkaline, check out other holistic options, but stick with your doctor's treatment plan.

Start a journal or blog. Putting your thoughts and feelings on paper or a screen can help you sort through your emotions.

Be proactive

Trust your gut instinct, if you suspect that something doesn't feel or look right (like a strange discharge or even some dimpling of the skin), talk to your doctor. Become your own health advocate and get that suspicious lump checked out as soon as possible. Early detection is key to surviving breast cancer!

You can learn about the four steps to breast cancer awareness here: www.komennyc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=breasthealth_awareness.

make sure I was eating healthy," recalled Pena, who is now in her 50s.

It all started back in 2008 when she told her doctor that her breasts felt sore. Since her mammograms kept coming back negative, she said an entire year went by before she was sent for a sonogram and was told that since many African-American women have dense breasts, mammos don't always pick up lumps.

That was the case with Pena.

"As soon as the ultrasound techni-

Try self-visualization. Close your eyes and imagine each cancer cell blowing up ... kaboom!

Repeat a mantra — and believe it. Think and say, "I'm healthy!" every day.

Remember to live in the moment. Enjoy the little things. Nobody knows what the future will bring.

Get plenty of hugs. Did you know that hugging raises dopamine levels in your brain?

Repeat every day.

cian saw my breast on the screen, I could tell by her expression that something was wrong," she recalled.

A mass was discovered deep in her left breast, and after five or six surgeries to clean it out, a mastectomy was performed. Then the battle continued when a spot was found in her right breast six months later. After that was cleaned out, she eventually lost part of that breast as well. Then both breasts were reconstructed. She was in the intensive care unit for a grueling month of pain.

Luckily, she never had chemotherapy or radiation, but said she took Tamoxifen, a prescription medication for treating advanced breast cancer in men and women, and early breast cancer in women.

"When I would come home after tests or surgeries, my kids were very clingy. I wouldn't let them see me in the hospital, hooked up with all that stuff, so we talked on the phone. But my partner was there all the time," she recalled.

It was a long and painful fight, both physically and emotionally.

"At home, I made sure not to show my girls how I was feeling, so they wouldn't get upset. I told them I would be fine. I made sure that I got all the support I needed outside, so my home life was peaceful, not stressful. I prayed a lot and meditated."

Despite another potentially devastating setback this September — Pena said she had just learned that a spot came up on a mammo in what was left of her right breast — the brave survivor still manages to hold on to hope. During our interview, her voice sounded calm and optimistic when she talked about her next six-month exam in February, and possibly needing another biopsy.

She knows that her daughters must get tested soon.

Despite her battle with breast can-

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



(Above) Bronx breast cancer survivor and grandmother Alantheia Pena with Jayden and Nimyah. (Right) Pena was featured in a Susan G. Komen ad in Ebony Magazine.

cer, Pena is a striking and healthy-looking African-American woman. You can see strength and compassion for others in her beautiful gray eyes.

And she has become an advocate for breast cancer awareness, helping other women who are battling the illness, while raising families and dealing with extreme hardship.

In 2012, the survivor made a TV commercial for Susan G. Komen and she was interviewed about her experience in a special that aired on CBS: <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/komen-greater-nyc-race-for-the-cure>.

Her image has appeared numerous times on Susan G. Komen's campaign ads, gracing the pages of several magazines, including Ebony, Essence, Country Cooking, Simplicity, and Cosmopolitan — and in 2014 she appeared on a huge Susan G. Komen poster at LaGuardia Airport.

"Other women show their cleavage, I show my scar," says Pena, who loves to shop at Victoria's Secret. "It shows that I fought for my life; it's my battle scar."

The scar reminds her and others that you can be strong, fight the good fight, and win!



Caryn Fernandez

A shocking Stage III breast cancer diagnosis turned a 40-something mother-of-two's life upside down. On that bitter cold afternoon in February 2011, an elderly woman who sat beside Caryn Fernandez at the treatment center seemed to feel her pain. Looking back, the three-year cancer survivor says she still recalls the stranger's soothing words and calm demeanor.

"If you believe in angels among us, that lady may have been one," she said.

Fernandez's battle started with a funny-feeling, pea-sized lump in her left breast that lit up like a Christmas light during a sonogram that followed a suspicious mammogram.

"I remember thinking: It was hard to believe how a little thing like that could change everything," said Fernandez. But it did, and a biopsy confirmed the worst. The aspiring artist knew she was facing the biggest challenge of her life and still recalls how the fear turned into rage, as she heard a voice in her head screaming, "Why me?"

She remembers how the dreary forecast that winter matched her mood. And seemingly endless days marked by gray skies made her feel hopeless and sad. She said she had a feeling of general malaise that worsened as she endured numerous chemotherapy treatments that made her feel weak and nauseous.

No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't shake that gloom-and-doom feeling.

"I was walking around like a zombie with a wrenching emotional ache in the pit of my stomach. But one day, I decided I'd had enough; the negativity had to stop! Hiding under the covers wasn't doing me any good."

Looking back, Fernandez remembers that just 24 hours after her diagnosis, her perspective about life made an 180-degree turn. Things that she had perceived as terrible before she got sick no longer carried much weight in light of her new situation. And her marriage grew stronger. She and her husband Manny forgot about all the stuff they had bickered about just days before.

"We refer to that time as our former lives," she said. "Suddenly, all the pettiness didn't matter anymore. I had to focus on healing and getting better. I was a mess, but Manny was my rock."

And they both learned how to pick their battles with the kids.

Their son Luke (then 12) and daughter Jasmine (then 7) soon realized that their usually upbeat and energetic mom wasn't the mommy they used to know.

"I was a shell of my former self. For a while, both kids started to act out in negative ways, because they couldn't deal with their feelings of insecurity and fear, but the more we reassured them and conveyed optimism, the more they felt comforted," Fernandez said.

Fast forward to 2015. As Fernandez's family and friends celebrate her wellness, the artist, activist, and lover of all things vintage says she wants to remind everyone that "the Big C" shouldn't define who you are.

Her story, like the stories of so many other survivors, is one of hope, and she sees her desire to share it as a personal tribute to her brave sisters everywhere. Now that she has embraced her experience with strength and positivity, Fernandez says she sees life in a whole new way. Her daily mantra?

"Don't sweat the small stuff. And even though it sounds corny, I say 'thank you' to the universe when I wake up each morning."

She believes that being grateful for the good in your life, despite the harsh realities, profoundly changes your outlook and energy. That, and a relaxing yoga routine followed by 20 minutes of meditation works wonders, she insists.

"Even when you're in pain and feeling nauseous and yucky, you've gotta stay focused and push past all that crap!"

Pena's and Fernandez's stories are echoed by so many other breast cancer survivors here in the city, many of whom take part in the Susan G. Komen Greater New York City Race for the Cure each year. Their collective wish? That they can look back and say: "The 25th Race for the Cure (held in Central Park on Sept. 13) was the last one ever, because a much-needed cure has finally been discovered."

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance journalist and mother of two sons.



Kids & vitamins

Part two of
our look at
the great
supplement
debate

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Justin Noble, a certified nutrition coach, co-creator of the fun wellness book series for kids, "My Body Village," and subject of last month's "The great vitamin debate," sat down with New York Parenting to discuss the importance of vitamins and balanced meals and the inspiration for his book series.

Tammy Scileppi: What are some helpful tips about multivitamins that parents should know?

Justin Noble: First and foremost, you should always do your best to meet all of your child's nutrition requirements from food. Taking a multivitamin will never make up for having a poor diet. A diet rich in a variety of whole, unprocessed, natural foods is the ideal place to get the wide array of nutrients your child's growing body requires.

The problem is that it can be a

challenge getting your child to consume a nice variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats. A lot of kids are very picky eaters. For some children, getting them to try new foods can be like pulling teeth — and they need those teeth to eat those Brussels sprouts!

TS: What do you recommend for kids who have limited food choices or weight issues?

JN: It's tricky when there is a food desert situation, and there are limited food choices. In these situations, the best approach is to do your best to eat as much whole, natural foods as possible and make up the difference with supplements. In a city like New York, there are food deserts, but if you make the effort to hop on a train and travel just a few stops away, you will find access to healthy food options. In all of the boroughs, there are so many good grocery stores, bodegas, and farmers' markets, that there is no excuse

for not eating well on any budget.

For issues with weight, I would recommend finding a nutrition coach in your area. Each situation is unique and requires a tailor-made approach. There is a normal trajectory for a child's growth, but there are always exceptions. Some children simply develop faster or slower than others, so sometimes what is perceived as a nutrition issue is simply a child who is developing outside the norm. This would need to be closely monitored, in case there is a bigger health issue at play.

For weight issues that are a result of lifestyle choices, you first need to get a nutrition evaluation, set goals, develop a plan for reaching those goals, and then monitor progress and make adjustments.

TS: What about picky eaters?

JN: When you have a picky eater, I certainly believe vitamins are an excellent insurance policy. There

are several nutrients a growing child needs to be healthy and develop properly. If your child isn't eating a variety of natural whole foods, then they aren't getting the nutrients their body needs. They need to get them somewhere. That's where a vitamin comes in.

I strongly believe you shouldn't give up on trying to get a picky eater to eat new foods. The best way to get them to try new things is to get them involved in the process.

When you are at the grocery store, have them help you select your fruits and vegetables. Have them smell, feel, listen to, and really look at the produce you are wanting to purchase.

Once you get their other senses involved, they'll be interested in discovering that fifth sense of taste. Have them help you prepare meals. They'll be much more interested in trying something they helped to create. Make eating exciting to them instead of just something they have to do before they can get back to playing.

TS: What fueled the idea for your "My Body Village" book series for kids? How does it benefit families?

JN: As a child, I had severe asthma and allergies. Whenever I would have a bad asthma attack, I would get very upset, and ask my mom, "Why do I have to go through this, and why does this only happen to me?" When I was about 7 years old, my parents gave me a book about asthma. The book explained what caused asthma and told me exactly what was happening inside my body. The things I learned from that book, I discovered, made coping with my asthma much easier.

Ever since childhood, the idea of books related to helping children understand their bodies and their own health has been an idea in the back of my head. Years later, as an adult, when I found myself in the vitamin section of my local drug store, I was hit with another idea. Looking at the word "vitamin," I thought to myself, "If you replace the second "i" with an "e," you get "vitamen." Thus, the idea for "Artie's Party Featuring

the Vita-Men!" — the first book in the series — was born.

There are relatively few books available to parents and their children that deal with health, and none that approach health topics the way "My Body Village" does. Through the personification of the body's organs, we establish a relationship between a child

and their body. The stomach or bladder is no longer some strange, mysterious thing inside of them, but a friend that plays a major role in their life. Once this relationship is established, it becomes easier to explain what is going on when the child doesn't feel well, or to explain why it's so important for them to eat vegetables.

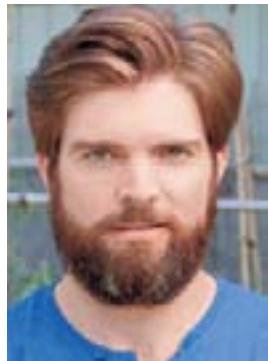
It takes complicated answers to questions, like "Why should I take vitamins?" "Why does my stomach feel sick?" and "Why did I wet the bed?" and simplifies them. The series gives parents a way to explain the science behind it to their children in a fun and entertaining way.

TS: Describe those cool characters you and your wife, Le-Anne, conjured up.

JN: Each book features a different character. The characters are all personified organs who live in a village called Body. Occasionally, guest characters visit from outside the body. [For example,] [my] book "Nurse Vaccine" helps children prepare for shots and explains why we sometimes have to get shots, even though we are not sick.

Le-Anne Noble: [Developmental editor for the series] What [could be a] better way to spark creativity and curiosity than to take a scientific subject, like health and wellness, which is often thought of as boring, and then bring it to life — literally? Thinking outside the box and encouraging imagination is what "My Body Village" is all about. Healthy brain, healthy body, happy people.

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based parent and a regular contributor to New York Parenting. Interviewing hundreds of New York City's movers and shakers has been an amazing adventure for this mother of two bright and talented sons.



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Let's talk

How to tackle tough topics with your tweens and teenagers

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

When it comes to discussing difficult topics with your kids, your natural inclination may be to try to avoid the job altogether. But remember, your children will pay for your hesitancy or embarrassment with a lack of awareness they will need to make good decisions. You don't want your child making emotion-fueled, spur-of-the-moment choices about alcohol, sex, or peer pressure to try and prove something to his friends. You want him to know in advance where he stands on crucial decisions before he gets caught in a slippery situation.

Sweet, innocent naiveté might be a preferable fantasy to parents in the short run, but protecting kids too much can cost them as they progress through rites of passage. How soon do your kids need to be ready to make good choices? Earlier than you may think — according to the National Institute On Alcohol Abuse And Alcoholism, 40 percent of adolescents report drinking by eighth grade, and 55 percent report being drunk at least once by 12th grade. Kids who head off to middle school with a solid understanding of how to make good choices about alcohol, sex, and peer pressure can worry

less and thrive more.

According to The Mayo Clinic, sex education is a parent's responsibility. And by reinforcing and supplementing what kids learn in school, parents can set the stage for a lifetime of healthy sexuality.

Kids rely on parents to help them make good choices. Eighty percent of teens feel that parents should have a say in whether they drink or not. Be optimistic about the positive impact you can have. Information is power.

It is uncommon for tweens to start having consensual sex before the age of 12, therefore conversations about sex need to start early — likely long before you think your child is considering the option. Ideally, you want to start presenting your child with basic information on alcohol, sex, and peer-pressure from a young age.

The Mayo Clinic also reports that peer pressure, curiosity, and loneliness can steer teenagers into early sexual activity. Therefore, do not delay. Start talking to your kids about the big three today. Here's how:

Start early. Don't wait until your child is facing challenges to start talking about tough topics. As soon as your child begins to read, arm her with books that tackle important topics. Girls start puberty between the ages of 8 and 13 and boys start puberty between the ages of 9 and

15. This means if you are going to get a jump on teaching kids about puberty, you will begin around the time they enter kindergarten. A little bit of information delivered gradually each year will seem much less intimidating, rather than waiting for middle school and dumping a lot of information on kids all at once.

Cover the basics. How well do you understand biology, chemistry, and sociology? When your child hits puberty, he is going to be affected physically, emotionally, and within his peer group. This is especially true if your child is the first or the last in a group of friends to hit puberty. You might need a refresher course before you feel confident holding your own in conversations with your child about challenging topics. When your child starts watching health and wellness videos in school, be sure you watch them too. You can even watch them together, if you think this will spark questions and discussion. Check in with your child's teacher for more information on her plans.

Be authoritative. Parents who have the best results getting through to teens are authoritative rather than authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful. So have thoughtful limits for your kids and express them to your kids frequently. Don't imagine they will know what you expect un-

Back to school for parents

Get the information you need first, so you won't be thrown by questions your child dreams up about alcohol, sex, and peer pressure. These sites can help:

- Kidshealth: <http://kidshealth.org>
- MedlinePlus: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/childrenandteenagers.html>
- NIAAA: <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>

Books about puberty

For girls:

- "The Care And Keeping Of You, The Body Book For Younger Girls, Revised Edition" by Valorie

Schaefer

- "The Care And Keeping Of You, The Body Book For Older Girls" by Carla Natterson
- "The Girl's Body Book, Everything You Need to Know for Growing Up You" by Kelli Dunham

- "What's Happening To My Body? A Girl's Guide" by Lynda Madaras and Area Madaras
- "Period. A Girl's Guide" by JoAnn Loulan and Bonnie Worthen
- "The Period Book, Updated Edition: Everything You Don't Want to Ask (But Need to Know)" by Karen Gravelle

For boys:

- "The Boy's Body Book: Everything You Need to Know for Growing Up You" by Kelli Dunham

- "What's Happening To My Body? A Boy's Guide" by Lynda Madaras and Area Madaras
- "What's Going On Down There? Answers To Questions Boys Find Hard To Ask" by Karen Gravelle

Watch media together

Television shows that tackle tween and teen issues:

- "The Wonder Years"
- "Freaks and Geeks"
- "My So-Called Life"

Movies about peer pressure:

For tweens:

- "The Mighty"
- "Stand By Me"
- "Now And Then"
- "August Rush"

- "The Sandlot"

For teens:

- "Pretty In Pink"
- "Freedom Writers"
- "Mean Girls"
- "The Man In The Moon"
- "Mystic Pizza"
- "Say Anything"
- "Perks Of Being A Wallflower"

Movies about pregnancy:

- "Riding In Cars With Boys"
- "Where The Heart Is"
- "Juno"
- "Quinceañera"

For parents:

- "American Teen" (documentary)
- "Secret Life of the American Teenager"



less you tell them.

Studies show that parents with a permissive attitude towards drinking, combined with poor communication and unhealthy modeling, lead teens into unhealthy relationships with alcohol.

Parents who provide a healthy and consistent balance of discipline and support are more likely to have teens respect their boundaries on drinking and other behaviors.

Cover new angles. Kids grow up and as they do, you will become aware of important details that you failed to cover. You talked about biological sex, but did you discuss when to have sex? Kids who know their parents discourage sex are more likely to wait. You broached the topic of alcohol, but did you get into the dangers of drugs? You don't want your child thinking drugs are any less dangerous than alcohol. You talked about peer pressure on the playground, but what about when there is a car involved? Make sure your child will call you rather than get in the car with a drunk driver.

The older kids get, the more contexts and social situations they will encounter. Keep reviewing possible scenarios with your kids so they will not be taken off guard. Teach them that it's not only okay to say "no," but that life requires us to say no sometimes in order to make the best choices for ourselves.

Keep circling back. You are never done discussing delicate topics. For example, 80 percent of kids will try alcohol in high school, but even if your child starts drinking in college or later, keep talking. She needs to know that you are consistently focused on her wellbeing no matter what her age.

Late elementary school and middle school are important times to talk about the negative effects of over-indulging in alcohol. By the time kids become teens, they should have an in-depth understanding of the negative effects of alcohol and should know you are willing to talk more any time.

Restrict media images of partying. A 2010 Dartmouth Medical

School study concluded that parents who steer kids clear of R-rated movies helped kids stay strong against peer-pressure to drink alcohol.

According to Dr. James A. Sargent, "The research to date suggests that keeping kids from R-rated movies can help keep them from drinking, smoking, and doing a lot of other things that parents don't want them to do."

In another study conducted the same year, Sargent concluded that children who watch R-rated movies become more prone to sensation-seeking and risk taking. Make sure your kids are mature enough for what they watch. If you are unsure, watch with them and set clear guidelines.

Create opportunities for discussion. Whatever you do, don't become so fanatical about your child making good choices that she will want to avoid these topics with you altogether. A relaxed, age-appropriate, multi-media approach can help keep the conversation going without you having to constantly bring up topics yourself.

For family movie night, choose a film that sparks discussion or take your child to see a movie in the theater and then discuss it over dinner afterwards. Studies have shown that parents who are concerned, engaged, and speak openly about expectations help their kids make more responsible choices. You want kids to know you care, but you don't want to drive them nuts. So don't ban films and media altogether, just try to take an active role.

Encourage questions. If your kids come to you with questions about alcohol, sex, and peer-pressure, then you know you are doing a good job keeping the doors to good communication open. Thank your child for asking questions. Resist the urge to make jokes or brush off your child's feelings. Respond to inquiries as thoughtfully as you can. You want to make sure the questions keep coming to you. Cast your vote in every potentially confusing situation. Better yet, turn the table and ask your teen what he thinks is the best choice in a situation. This is a good way to find out if he is listening or tuning you out.

Look in the mirror. Your child is going to pick up on the way you relate to your own body. Are you constantly on a diet? Typically complaining about weight you want to lose but not exercising? Do you drink soda, eat junk food, and hit the fast food drive-through when you are upset? Do you drink often or excessively on occasion? Kids are imitators. They will do what you do. They will act the way you act. If you say yes to every request for your time and don't take time to take care of yourself, then your children will not learn to say no, either. How's your sex life? How's your drinking? How's your ability to say no? If the answer is not good, get to work on making better choices yourself, since this is what you expect of your kids.

When is your job as a choice coach done? Never. The goal for both you and your child is thoughtful responsiveness.

Make sure your child has all the information she needs to get to the place where she can make conscious choices and you will sleep better tonight and every night.

Author and freelance journalist Christina Katz was a tween-teen once, and thank goodness. She draws on her memories — both happy and humiliating — to stay as far ahead of her tween daughter as she can. Her latest book is "The Art of Making Time for Yourself, A Collection of Advice for Moms."

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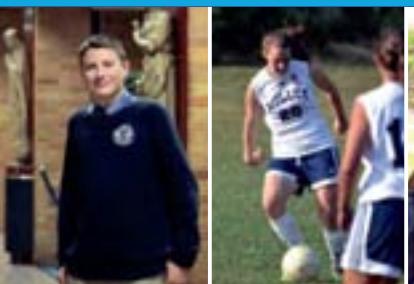


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Healthy harvest

How Farm-to-Preschool program makes a difference

BY AFIA BEDIAKO

Parenting can give us many opportunities to be proud of our little ones. When they can count to 10, say the alphabet, say "thank you," or when they share, we applaud those moments. But lately, I find myself most excited when my nearly 2 year old eats her veggies.

Having easy access to nutritious food and direct experiences with fresh-grown and unprocessed food is crucial for our young children. Fresh school meals, garden activities, farm field trips, and hands-on food lessons all promote early good nutrition and education.

Farm to Preschool programs include serving locally sourced food at school meals; providing hands-on activities such as gardening, farm visits, and cooking lessons; and engaging youngsters, their family, and the school community in fresh-food eating, growing, and learning activities.

These sorts of events are becoming more popular and more common citywide as well as here in Brooklyn. Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation's Health Initiative has been working with area preschools and Head Start programs for more than two years through the Farm to Preschool activities, in which we have improved access to healthy, fresh food for more than a thousand youngsters and their families.

Our efforts to improve school



food began with replacing canned fruits and veggies with fresh items at a single Head Start site. Farm-fresh items were later introduced.

Next, parents and area youth came together to repurpose donated materials and create school gardens and indoor planters, and fruit trees were donated to five area Head Start Centers. Volunteers offered gardening expertise to help train educators and others in the school. A winter pop-up market was offered to extend a regional farmer's selling season and make freshly picked fruits and veggies available to preschool families. Classroom lessons on planting and harvesting were offered as a way to teach science and math.

Now, families and staff have become further involved with school-based, healthy-food trainings and options to purchase weekly farm shares at school. Building upon these accomplishments, the programming has spread to three more communities and now includes 20 sites, 1,100 children, and many community and national partners.

Early nutrition has a huge impact on our children's ability to learn, grow, and thrive. One in four children in the city are food insecure, but many children consume the majority of their daily nutrients in child care centers (making school meals an important vehicle). A diet of high-quality ingredients known origins is crucial.



Fresh items are available at the Marcy Plaza farmer's market.

Early introductions to fresh foods can benefit children throughout their lifespan. Demand for foods that are minimally processed is increased when we have direct experience with fresh food and know where it comes from. Indeed, it's possible to get back to the farm, even here in Brooklyn.

Research shows Farm to Preschool activities support an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption among participants. Particular preferences for or against certain types of foods are common among preschoolers, and unfortunately, vegetable consumption is typically low.

In assessments at program sites, however, we've seen vegetables wasted during school meals decrease from 60 percent to 30 percent. I've seen first-hand, students referring to fresh spinach samples as "yummy" and eagerly requesting miniature apples as a snack.

Families benefit from programming as well. I've seen countless examples of parents and grandparents recounting fresh food experiences from their youth and discussing how they have reintegrated fresh food practices into their current habits through home gardens or cooking from scratch.

As a mother of a toddler, it's my great pleasure to be a part of efforts to improve access to and knowledge about fresh, nutritious foods for our littlest consumers.

If any of the above gets you excited, there are multiple opportunities to get involved. Administrators can start small and include garden lessons, obtain food from local markets or farm shares, or conduct visits to local food-producing gardens. Restoration's Health Initiative can provide program support.

Families of preschoolers might offer to volunteer for in-class activities or field trips. There are options to buy fresh produce through farm shares in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Brownsville (sign up at CorbinHillFoodProject.org). Local farmer's markets are open through November.

Ask your child's day care or preschool where it gets its produce, and if it is not getting it from local or regional farmers, encourage it to do so. For more information, visit Restorationplaza.org.

Afia Bediako is a community health advocate and manager of the Farm to Preschool program at Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation. She can be reached at abediako@restorationplaza.org.

Private/Independent School Guide



NYParenting.com



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Is ADHD really so overdiagnosed?

A new study from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finds that one third of children being diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are under the age of 6. Susanna Visser, a researcher at the U.S. National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, studied the diagnosis of more than 3,000 children. She found that about half of the children were diagnosed before the age of 7, and 31 percent were diagnosed before the age of 6. Researchers found that the first person to become concerned about the

child's behavior was the parent or a family member in three out of every four cases.

But is the disorder being over-diagnosed as suggested by numerous, recent headlines pointing at this study?

"Often, the most important questions are the hardest to answer. If we knew the physiological processes that result in the symptoms which we use to diagnose ADHD, then we could determine whether it is being over-diagnosed," says psychiatrist Dr. Francis Castellanos, of The Child Study Center at NYU Langone Medical Center. "On the other hand, it's always the case that both over- and under-diagnosis exist, and I strongly suspect that is also occurring in ADHD."

"We know the rate of diagnosis varies substantially by community — probably more than could be accounted by 'real' variation. We also know that minority families and families with low levels of economic resources have much lower rates of diagnosed ADHD — it's likely that many children in those communities are being under-diagnosed."

Another prominent find was that a little more than half of the children diagnosed received their diagnosis from the pediatrician or family doctor, instead of a psychiatrist.

"Many types of doctors are trained and qualified to diagnose ADHD in children. This includes medical doctors, such as pediatricians, child and adolescent psychiatrists, pediatric neurologists, and family physicians," says Castellanos. "Non-medical doctors include clinical child psychologists and neuropsychologists, who are also exceedingly well trained. However, just because someone

has one of those credentials does not mean they are necessarily the best person to evaluate complex cases.

"The Visser study showed that when children present with ADHD before age 6, child psychiatrists are more frequently involved, which is appropriate, since they are the specialty, which is the most focused on ADHD and similar conditions."

In addition, since there is no specific test to formally diagnose the disorder, a doctor must rely heavily on the parents' observations and opinions. This can be a positive or negative thing since the symptoms are also the very same typical behaviors that most preschoolers demonstrate: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsive behavior.

Children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are in constant motion, squirm and fidget, make careless mistakes, often lose things, are easily distracted and don't listen well, and do not complete tasks. Symptoms need to occur in multiple settings (at home, in school, at social functions, etc.) and last for at least six months.

Some parents who aren't quite used to the unrelenting demands and energy of very young children might object to their bursts of energy. Not all, or even most high-energy children actually have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. However, it does have a very strong genetic component, so if the parents have had problems with hyperactivity, it is even more likely that their child could have it. Researchers suggest that the number may be as high as 75 percent for a child born of both parents with the disorder.

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.





How to celebrate Halloween safely

For kids, this holiday should only be the good kind of scary

BY JAMIE LOBER

Halloween is just a few weeks away, and as the finishing touches are added to kids' costumes, they're looking forward to carving pumpkins, dressing up, and collecting candy as they walk their neighborhood with friends. It will be a fun evening, but it is important not to leave safety by the wayside.

"We have learned that many kids are injured when out trick-or-treating, so we have to talk about being safe trick-or-treaters," said Marjorie Marciano, coalition coordinator for Safe Kids NYC.

Something as basic as accompanying your child and discussing how to properly cross the street can be lifesaving.

"Look both ways, because there might be cars turning, and be aware that cars have the right to turn," said Marciano. You want to be alert and make sure the street is clear, because every driver or bicyclist on the road will not take the time to signal or stop when they should. Take advantage of crosswalks.

Even though you may believe that your child is mature for his age, it is still not a good idea for even the most independent and responsible child to be out by himself, particularly after dark.

"Kids under age 9 should not be

trick-or-treating on their own — even in daylight — and kids up to age 12 should always have an adult with them and stick to areas they know," said Marciano.

Of course, if your teenager is going out on his own or with friends, be sure that he has a cellphone with him and is able to call you and also knows how and when to use 911.

It's certainly fun to take pictures of the kids in their costumes, but don't be tempted while they're trick-or-treating in the dark.

"Kids and parents should put their phones down and not text when crossing the street, so they can pay attention to traffic. If they have headphones on with music, they should take them off," said Marciano.

It can be tempting for kids to run or gallop along, so hold your child's hand — especially as you cross the street.

"Remember that dusk [is a time when it's] hard for drivers to see, so costumes or trick-or-treat bags should have some reflective tape, or kids should carry glow sticks or flashlights and wear a light color that drivers can see," said Marciano.

Masks are popular and can make for great costumes, but they can hinder a child's ability to see where he is going — and that's the last thing you want on Halloween night.

"Masks can obscure kids' vision, so you want to have face paint or

makeup instead," said Marciano.

Also investigate the length of their costumes, and alter the hem so it does not drag on the ground, because kids can trip or fall. If purchasing a costume, make sure the label says flame resistant. And if an item like a sword or stick is part of the outfit, make sure it is not too long or sharp to avoid injuries.

By staying in groups in an area that is well-lit, kids can do a better job of looking out for one another. Stranger danger is an issue on Halloween more so than the rest of the year, because kids are interacting with strangers.

"They should not be getting into conversations with grown-ups that they do not know," said Marciano.

It's also time to prepare your home for trick-or-treaters who will come knocking at your door. To ensure that everyone stays safe, remove any lawn decorations, tools, or garden hoses from the porch that could be tripped over. Make sure all of your outdoor lightbulbs are working. Sweep away wet leaves from your sidewalk, so nobody slips and falls. If you have a pet, keep him away from the front door to prevent a child from getting bitten. And, as always, if you see any suspicious activity, report it to the local police, so they can make sure the rest of the night goes smoothly.

When your child comes home, be sure to inspect the candy and throw away anything that is unwrapped or looks suspicious. By taking precautions, your whole family is even more likely to have a Halloween that's memorable for all of the right reasons.

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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BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

Four ways to curb naughty behavior

Your child is amazing and unique. When you see him clean up or put his dish in the sink — without a reminder — you believe that every cell in his body is pure love.

Then there are the other moments. Last week, he pulled all the boxes off the shelf at CVS after biting his friend at the playground, and if that wasn't enough, today he declares, in front of his teacher, that he doesn't have to listen to you. Or he looks right at you as he pours his milk on his sister.

It's not the most flattering behavior, is it?

What to do?

You know that keeping your child within reach at all times is exhausting.

Not leaving the house is another option, but then, who will do the errands?

You can make excuses for the bad behavior: He's tired. Hungry. Coming down with something.

I've got some unfortunate news: When you make excuses or completely avoid a challenging situation, you do your child a disservice.

That means that the ultimate solution is to address the behavior.

I've seen children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder sit and focus on his homework, kids with oppositional defiant disorder listen to every direction given, and kiddos with autism navigate overwhelming social situations. If these kids can be successful, then so can your child.

The solution on how to make this happen comes in four parts:

Stop making excuses for your small beings. They are capable of learning anything, if you teach them in the right way. If you allow the problem behavior to be okay, then they learn that it is okay, and more likely, the behavior will happen again in the future. Your language alone can change this.

Look realistically at the challenging behavior. Decide if it really needs



to change. If it does, great! Then take one step towards the desired behavior and start celebrating the small progress your child makes. If it does not need to change, then stop commenting on it, and let it happen.

Teach your children rather than punish them. When problem behavior props up, we often react with our own frustration. Problem behavior is often repeated, so you may be able to predict when it is coming. Be proactive and get yourself ready to teach your child, rather than yell once he misbehaves.

Create teaching opportunities. We generally avoid things that we do not enjoy, so we often do not put children in situations that will be chal-

lenging. The best way to get them to practice is to put your child in situations that are mildly difficult and use small steps to build up successes!

I'll be your cheerleader here: Stop making excuses and start putting in the hard work to make behavior change happen!

For more help with behavior, please visit my page made exclusively for NY Parenting readers at: bit.ly/vid-nyp.

Dr. Marcie Beigel is a behavioral therapist based in Brooklyn. She has worked with thousands of families for more than 15 years and has condensed her observations into her practice and programs. For more on her, visit www.BehaviorAndBeyond.net.

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Home alone — ready or not?

How to know if your kid can handle it

BY DENISE YEARIAN

When adolescents stay home without adult supervision, it can be a positive growth experience. To navigate the sometimes unsettling decision surrounding this responsibility, consider these 10 tips:

Maturity level. Child development experts agree, most kids are ready to stay home alone somewhere between the ages of 12 and 13, but there is no magical age. Since kids mature at different rates, evaluate your child on an individual basis. How independent and self-directed is he with regard to responsibili-

ties such as getting homework and chores done, arriving at school on time, and asking for help when problems arise?

Desire to stay alone. Equally important is whether your child is willing to be home alone. If he expresses reservations or objections, hold off. Or, if there are other transitions going on in his life — a recent death, divorce, or relocation to a new home — wait until those adjustments have been made.

Safety suggestions. Consider your community's safety, neighbor relationships, and peer influences. Do you live in a safe setting with trusted neighbors your child can go to for help in the event of an emergency? Are there peer influences in the community that cause some concern? Also address basic safety rules, such as what to do in the event of an emergency; how to handle basic first-aid; and precautions with electrical outlets, appliances, heating equipment, etc.

Rest assured with rules. Think of your child as his own sitter and pass along the same instructions and information you would give to a caretaker. Discuss house rules, write them out, and post them in a visible location, along with important phone numbers. Don't assume he automatically knows your expectations. And remember, some rules when you are home, such as cooking and playing outside, will be significantly different when you are away.

Media guidelines. If you do not establish media guidelines, the television and computer may run con-

tinuously. Agree upon a time limit for TV and technology devices. Then, remind your child what is and isn't permissible to view. If needed, put on filters to protect your kids.

Alternative activities. If you will be gone for an extended period of time, collaborate with your child about activities he can do to alleviate boredom and occupy his time: "What do you plan to do while I'm away?" If your child says she doesn't know, suggest activities — art, music, creative writing, board games, etc. This may need to be an ongoing conversation to keep ideas fresh.

Ready him with role play. Play the "What if..." game to prepare your child for unexpected situations: "What if a delivery man comes to the door?" "There is a power outage?" "You come home from school and find a broken window?" Encourage him to come up with his own answers, but guide him to the right response if there's a better choice. This builds confidence, tests his responses, and may cause him to think about the gravity of this responsibility — that it isn't just fun and games.

Ease into it. If you have some reservations, start with 30-minute increments during the day while you run short errands or take a walk. As your child demonstrates readiness, stretch out the time. When you get home, talk about how things went.

Support from a distance. If your child is staying home alone every day due to your work schedule, lend emotional support. On occasion, leave notes and special surprises to reassure him of your love and concern, and remind him you trust things will go well and he can handle the responsibility. Also, call regularly to check in and say "hello."

Ongoing communication. If you have already established an open line of communication, your child will be more likely to talk about problems that come up, and you will get a sense if things aren't going well. If he is acting differently — not making eye contact, using a different tone of voice, or something seems to be bothering him — follow up until the issue is resolved.

At first, it may be hard to leave your child without adult supervision, but with time, it should get easier. And you may find that, just as with other steps toward independence, when you let them go, you see them grow.

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



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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.



'Best interests' left up to judges in NY

When a court decides what is in the best interest of the child, they could take into account 18 factors.

If you go to New York state's courts website, nycourts.gov, you can find the following:

"When there is a court case that affects a child, like custody, parental rights, or adoption, the court will consider the 'best interest' of the child when making its decision."

But what does "best interest" of the child mean? The website continues:

"There is no standard definition of 'best interest' of the child. In general, it refers to the factors that the judge considers when deciding what

will best serve the child and who is best suited to take care of the child. In New York, the 'child's health and safety shall be the paramount concerns' when making a decision."

To say that "There is no standard definition of 'best interest' of the child" is an understatement. In New York, there are about 18 factors that a judge may take into account, including:

Age of the child; health and special needs of the child; capability of each parent to provide for care; history of the care provided by each parent; health and physical condition of each parent (which includes damage done by drug or alcohol abuse); preference of the child, depending on the child's age; maintaining stability in the child's life; and so on.

In addition to these, there are about a dozen other factors; plus, a judge may consider any other factor that may have a bearing on the best interest of the child.

This, of course, is all according to New York state law. Other states have their own laws regarding what is in a child's best interest, and many of those laws are different from ours.

Across much of the country there are disagreements regarding whether and how to reform child-custody laws. Some issues that are being raised:

- How to balance what parents want and parental rights against the rights of children.

- Should there be a presumption of joint custody? (Meaning, essentially, that the court will rule that both parents will spend roughly the same amount of time with their child, unless one parent presents convincing evidence that only she or he should have custody in this case.)

- If a parent has been away from a child due to military service, is this circumstance to be considered?

- If a child has witnessed domestic violence against a parent, should there be a presumption that the other parent cannot be awarded custody?

- Is evidence of Parental Alien-

ation Syndrome, where one parent has manipulated a child to hate or fear the other, something a judge can look at?

- What role should mediation play? Do findings that mediation is a much quicker and less expensive process than litigation warrant "mandatory mediation," meaning that parents would be required to engage in what is generally thought of as a voluntary process when it comes to custody cases?

- Should judges and lawyers involved in custody cases be mandated to learn more about how "high conflict" affects children?

A few points on what New York law says about custody cases:

- New York does not presume that parents will share joint custody.

- Joint custody should not be granted to "warring" parents; and if parents are in court over custody, this fact indicates that they are unable to jointly make decisions for their child.

- Domestic violence is a mandatory factor — meaning the court must consider it — in determining custody.

- If one parent is deceased, there is a presumption that the surviving parent will be awarded custody.

You can expect that questions about what is really in the best interest of our children will continue to be asked; and as opinions change, New York's laws may change with them.

REFERENCE: "Best Interest of the Child: A Legislative Journey Still in Motion" by Erin Bajackson in the Journal of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Vol. 25, 2013 p. 311. (www.aaml.org/sites/default/files/MAT205_2.pdf)

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.



Asthma

What you need to know

Answers to
six common
questions

BY JOE CIAVARRO

Throughout the U.S., about 10 percent of children have asthma. For us New Yorkers, the rate is a shocking 30 percent! Being told your child has asthma can be a scary thing to hear, but it doesn't have to be. As a Certified Physician Assistant, I often hear questions about asthma. Here are some common questions about childhood asthma that parents ask in our practice:

My child was just diagnosed with asthma, does this mean she can't play sports?

Absolutely not. Asthma is a treatable disease, and its symptoms can be managed and prevented well

enough to play sports. Sit down with your child and together do an internet search for famous athletes with asthma. You may be surprised by what you find!

What are some factors that put my child at risk of asthma?

Babies who are born premature often develop asthma in early childhood, although many can outgrow it. There is some evidence that early infections with respiratory syncytial virus can lead to asthma later in childhood. Additionally, exposure to second-hand smoke, both during pregnancy and in early childhood, can alter lung structure and predispose a child to asthma.

How do you get asthma?

Asthma is not a contagious disease. Some cases are genetic, while

others may be acquired, such as in premature babies or with chronic exposure to second-hand smoke. It's best to be up front with your child's pediatrician about who in the family has asthma and what makes it better or worse.

How do I prevent an asthma attack?

The best way to prevent an asthma attack is to learn what triggers an exacerbation in your child. This is usually discovered while the doctor reviews symptoms with you, but can also be discovered with allergy testing. Be sure to adhere to your child's asthma medication regimen and follow instructions carefully. Call your pediatrician before stopping any of these medications.

Can allergies trigger my asthma?

Allergies can definitely trigger asthma symptoms. Inhalation of pollen is the most common, but it can also be triggered by dust mites, house dust, animal dander, and, of course, cigarette smoke inhalation.

What medications are used to treat asthma?

Asthma medications are divided into two categories: Rescue medication and controller medication. Rescue medications work in a way similar to adrenaline by relaxing thin muscles in the airways to help them open up. Controller medications work to prevent reactions, either by reducing inflammation in the lungs (such as with inhaled corticosteroids) or preventing an allergic response, like an antihistamine medication.

How do I prepare my child's school to treat an attack?

The best way to prepare your child's school for managing her asthma is to have an open discussion with your child's teacher or school nurse. Ask your child's school or day care nurse if she has been trained in asthma recognition and treatment. Most importantly, you should obtain an Asthma Action Plan from your pediatrician or asthma specialist. This will detail what triggers your child's asthma, what medications are being used, and how to manage an emergency situation.

If you think your child may have asthma, talk to her pediatrician about an asthma evaluation.



GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS



Dino, from
Cognitoy.

Should toys talk?

Having a toy that can talk is a persistent childhood fantasy. Adults have been trying to bring that fantasy to life ever since Thomas Edison installed miniature, hand-cranked phonographs in porcelain dolls. Over the years, toy manufacturers have experimented with toys that say prerecorded phrases or tell entire stories when a child pulls a string or presses a button.

More recently, toys have become truly interactive, equipped with software that makes them seem responsive to children. This fall, Mattel announced development of Hello Barbie, a new version of the iconic doll which, with the help of a wifi connection, analyzes what a child says so Barbie can respond with something appropriate. Cognitoy has introduced a talking dinosaur named Dino, which answers questions and responds to commands. Both toys are supposed to "learn" as a child uses them, so their responses become tailored to the child.

These toys join a crowd of other talking toys ranging from a baby doll that can "read" 70 words to a "talk back" doll that repeats what a child says in a squeaky voice, from programmable "pets" to radio-controlled robots. Some people think all of this responsiveness has educational potential. One intriguing study found that children who played with toys programmed to say their names and other personalized information were more attentive when the toy presented unfamiliar material.

At the same time, many experts continue to feel that young children in particular are better served by toys that allow the child to control the script. Playing is a way for children to work out their own ideas about the world, and it may be better for them to be the ones putting words in the mouths of their

favorite stuffed animals, dolls, and action figures. Some toys that seem amusing to adults may actually limit a child's imagination.

In short, parents will want to think carefully before purchasing the season's most seductive talking toys. Here are some questions worth asking:

Will the toy work?

Nothing is more frustrating than a new gadget that doesn't do what it's supposed to do. Before choosing a talking toy, be sure your child is developmentally ready to manage the controls. Think about whether the toy will challenge or frustrate your child. Will it be too difficult to use without adult assistance? Consider durability, too. Some talking toys are fragile. A toy that breaks down or has technical glitches will interrupt the flow of play.

Does the toy gather info about child?

Whenever a toy connects to the cloud, parents have to assume that anything a child says in its presence is being recorded. What use will companies make of those recordings? The Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood worries that Hello Barbie will "eavesdrop" on children.

"It's creepy," says Executive Director Dr. Susan Linn, "and it creates a host of dangers for children and families."

Others are concerned that toys which depend on wifi will become targets for hackers who have already demonstrated that they can manipulate talking dolls, baby monitors, and other household equipment.

To minimize security risks, parents should turn off toys when they aren't in use and take advantage of any safeguards provided by the manufacturer. The makers of Dino, for example, allow parents to set up an account so they can monitor, and if necessary, delete what a child says to the toy.

Is the toy a good role model?

If a toy is going to have regular conversations with your child, you'll want to be sure that what it says is consistent with what you want your

child to hear. Some toys are surprisingly sassy. How will you feel if your child mimics the toy?

Other toys embody exaggerated ideas about gender — hyper-muscular action figures or heavily made up dolls. If a toy is going to function as a child's friend, it should be a positive influence.

Does the toy stimulate imaginative play?

Talking toys are often one-trick ponies. The toy does the work, so your child becomes a passive consumer of entertainment. Once the novelty wears off, your child is likely to be bored, a sure-fire indication that the toy isn't giving your child room to think and grow.

Many child development experts believe that children benefit most from simple toys that give them open-ended opportunities to experiment and explore. If you decide to invest in interactive toys, be sure young children also have access to basics like blocks, puppets, puzzles, and art supplies.

School-age children are often inspired by interactive toys, but not necessarily in the way that manufacturer intended. Some kids try to manipulate the toy to see if they can make it do outrageous things. If your child has that kind of inventive spirit, he might benefit more from a toy like Ozobot that puts programming power in the child's hands.

Finally, it's important to understand the limitations of talking toys. Children need to become skilled with language because it's the best way to share information, express feelings, and build a sense of closeness with other people. Toys that talk may be clever and amusing but they cannot help a child develop understanding and empathy. That's something he can learn only in the company of living, breathing, caring people.

Carolyn Jabs raised three computer-savvy kids, including one with special needs. She has been writing Growing Up Online for 10 years and is working on a book about constructive responses to conflict. Visit www.growing-up-online.com to read more columns.

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Calendar

OCTOBER



Celebrate the harvest

Fall comes to the King Manor Museum with a fun autumn festival on Oct. 17.

Have you ever wondered how food was made before modern-day electric stoves were invented? Kick off the harvest season at King Manor Museum as you watch an early American cooking demon-

stration, churn butter, create apple cider, and make crafts inspired by autumn. The Fall Festival is suitable for all ages.

Fall Festival, Oct. 17 from noon to 4 pm; free.

King Manor Museum [150-03 Jamaica Ave. in Jamaica, (718) 206-0545 X 13; www.kingmanor.org]

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Calendar

Submit a listing

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

Send your listing request to 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!

FRI, OCT. 2

IN QUEENS

"American Promise": Travers Park, 34th Ave. and 77th Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm to 9 pm; Free.

Movies under the stars presents this powerful film about African-American families seeking the American dream for their children. For older teens and students.

SAT, OCT. 3

IN QUEENS

Raptor fest: Unisphere at Corona Park, Grand Central Parkway; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org; Noon–3 pm; Free.

Rangers host the 18th annual event featuring birds of prey and skyhunting demonstrations.

FURTHER AFIELD

Science Festival: Pier 26 at N. Moore Street, Manhattan; 11 am–4 pm; Free.

The New York Hall of Science and Hudson River park present this event to bring attention to the current state of our coastal waters. More than 40 research labs, schools, non-profits and community groups will offer marine-related hands-on activities, including build your own ROV, robotics, touch tanks, live animals, underwater video cams, catch-and-release fishing, kayaking, sustainable seafood, water sampling, citizen science and more. The day also includes live music, sea-storytelling, interviews with scientists.

SUN, OCT. 4

IN QUEENS

Little Makers: NYSCI New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th Street; (718) 699-0005; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 per family (\$5 members).

Children explore the properties of mass, force and motion in Ball Run Fun, by using cardboard, tubes and



Happy howl-ween

Halloween is for the dogs at Socrates Sculpture Park on Oct. 24.

Don't miss the annual canine contest and Halloween festival — featuring live music, a special art-making workshop with Free Style Arts Association, and face painting by Agostino Arts. There will also be a canine contest for the best costumed pooch, and foods from local

restaurants. The Urban Shaman Mama Donna will be on hand to offer a special blessing to our four-legged friends.

Halloween Festival on Oct. 24 from 11 am to 3 pm. Admission is free admission.

Socrates Sculpture Park [32-01 Vernon Blvd. in Astoria, (718) 956-1819; www.socratessculpturepark.org].

other household materials to create an exciting ball run. Recommended for children ages 18 months and older.

Sheep shearing: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 11 am to 4 pm; Free.

Long Island Livestock Company's Tabbethia Haubold will be on the farm today demonstrating sheep shearing with our Cotswold sheep.

FURTHER AFIELD

Heart and Seoul: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10 am to 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

The new exhibit is filled with Korean arts and culture, featuring Vong Pak's Korean Drum and Dance Troupe.

Medieval festival: Fort Tyron Park, Margaret Corbin Drive and lawns,

Henry Hudson Parkway and W. 190th Street, Manhattan; (212) 795-1388; www.nycgovparks.org; 11:30 am – 6 pm; Free.

Get ready to joust, see jugglers and jesters, and enjoy a ye old good time in the Middle Ages. Costumed vendors are on hand to sell a wide variety of period items as well as food and drink. Food, clothing, and crafts are available for purchase.

TUES, OCT. 6

FURTHER AFIELD

Give peace a chance: Central Park at East Meadow, E. 99th St. and Fifth Avenue, Manhattan; imaginepeace.eventbrite.com; 10 am to 1 pm; Free.

Yoko Ono, Juniper Network, and The John Lennon Educational tour bus will attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the World's Largest Human Peace Sign. To celebrate John Lennon's 75th birthday individuals will arrive at Central Park

to attempt this feat. There will be musical performances and a special surprise guest. Pre-registration is required.

FRI, OCT. 9

IN QUEENS

"Frozen": Frank Principe Park, Benders Ave. and 61st St.; (718) 393-7370; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm to 9 pm; free.

Movies Under the Stars presents Elsa and the whole gang.

SAT, OCT. 10

FURTHER AFIELD

The Draconids Meteor Showers: Inwood Hill Park, Seaman Ave. and Isham Street, Manhattan; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm to 8:30 pm; Free.

Urban Rangers are your guide to the universe and this meteor shower, which often appears at the mouth of the Draco the Dragon constellation. Best observed on a clear moon-less night.

SUN, OCT. 11

IN QUEENS

Little Makers: NYSCI New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th Street; (718) 699-0005; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 per family (\$5 members).

Kids smash and stir seasonal fruit into yummy batches of homemade jam. Recommended for children ages 18 months and older.

SAT, OCT. 17

IN QUEENS

Birding migration: Cunningham Park, 73rd Ave. and Francis Lewis Boulevard; 10 am – 11:30 am; Free.

Join with rangers to explore how our fine-feathered friends make winter preparation.

Borough wide school fair: Francis Lewis High School, 58-20 Utopia Parkway; schools.nyc.gov/choice; 11 am – 3 pm; Free.

Learn all about programs, the new school year and what each school has to offer.

Fall festival: Victory Field at Forest Park, Myrtle Ave. and Woodhaven Blvd.; 311; www.nycgovparks.org; Noon–3 pm; Free.

Jump into the pumpkin patch, enjoy games, do crafts, listen to music and shows.

Fall festival: King Manor Museum, 150-03 Jamaica Ave.; (718) 206-0545, X 13; www.kingmanor.org; Noon–4 pm; Free.

Continued on page 42

Calendar

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

Continued from page 41

Have you ever wondered how food was made before modern-day electric stoves were invented? Kick off the fall season at King Manor Museum as you watch an early American cooking demonstration, churn butter, create apple cider, and make crafts inspired by autumn. Families with children of all ages are welcome!

Little Makers: NYSCI New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th Street; (718) 699-0005; 1:30-3 pm, and 3:30-5 pm; \$10 per family (\$8 members).

Kids can create their own Halloween costume at this drop-in workshop. Ages 5 and older can make, sew and glue with an array of tools and fun materials. Recommended for ages 5 and older.

SUN, OCT. 18

IN QUEENS

Little Makers: NYSCI New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th Street; (718) 699-0005; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 (\$5 family members).

Children discover the fun of paper making by transforming recycled paper scraps and found objects into their own handmade paper. Recommended for children ages 18 months and older.

Harvest fair and pumpkin patch:

Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main Street; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org; 11 am - 6 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

Enjoy a fun filled day with music, games, nature and garden walks, petting zoo, pumpkin patch and live demonstrations. Pumpkin prices and activities fee extra.

Borough wide school fair:

11 am - 3 pm. Francis Lewis High School. See Saturday, Oct. 17.

Fall festival: Rockway Beach, Bay 32nd St. and Beach 35th Street; (718) 318-4000; www.nycgovparks.org; Noon-3 pm; Free.

Come to the beach and enjoy a day of pony rides, hayrides and entertainment.

Tinker it Sundays: NYSCI New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th Street; (718) 699-0005; 1:30-3 pm, and 3:30-5 pm; \$2 per adult/child pair (members free).

ages 6 and older and their families can tinker, build, explore and create together in this drop-in workshop. Recommended for ages 6 and older.



Improv fun for kids

Ahoy matey! The Story Pirates lands at Symphony Space for two shows on Oct. 3.

The group is renowned for creating hilarious sketch comedy inspired by children's narratives, and is launching the Just Kidding season at Symphony Space.

The Story Pirates group includes top talent from comedy hubs including Upright Citizens Brigade, Second City, the Groundlings (and more), who faithfully bring to life the unfiltered world of kids' imaginations. When the

curtain rises, cats can fly, hot dogs save the world, and fried foods battle dairy foods. The characters you're likely to meet are Captain Waffles, Moneyhead Alan, Snufflepants, and anybody or anything a child can cook up.

"Story Pirates," Oct. 3, 11 am and 2 pm. Tickets are \$13 for members and \$15 for non-members,

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

FRI, OCT. 23

IN QUEENS

Science adventures: NYSCI New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th Street; (718) 699-0005; 3:30 pm to 5 pm; \$60 per adult child pair (\$50 member pair) \$15 each additional sibling.

Presented by HabiTots families conduct experiments and create nature inspired art. Participants will investigate trees, insects, birds and other furry city dwellers. Recommended for ages 3 - 5 years old. Limited capacity. Register online at nysci.org.

Haunted Lantern Tour: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Rd. at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org

www.nycgovparks.org; 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm; Free.

Join with rangers for this bootiful tour of the fourt.

FURTHER AFIELD

Candlelight Ghost Tours: Merchant's House Museum, 29 East Fourth St. at Lafayette Street, Manhattan; (212) 777-1089; www.nycgovparks.org; 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm; \$25-\$35 (\$15 museum members).

Older teens will enjoy this venture into the ghostly halls of history by hearing chilling tales of phantoms, ghosts and ghouls while touring the Merchant House mansion. Reservations required.

SAT, OCT. 24

IN QUEENS

Halloween Harvest festival:

Socrates Sculpture Park, 32-01 Vernon Blvd.; 718-956-1819; www.socratessculpturepark.org; 11 am to 3 pm; Free.

Discover your Spirit Animal at this year's annual. Join us for this day and take the chance to make their own Halloween costume, get their face painted, watch a story unfold during a shadow puppet performance by Midnight Radio Show, see a harvest festival dance, and enter their dog in the ever-popular Annual Juried Canine Costume Contest.

Halloween festival: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Rd. at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org; Noon to 3 pm; Free.

Highlights include rides, games, crafts, costume contest, goodie bags and a pumpkin patch. Rain date Oct. 25.

Haunted House: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 4 pm to 7 pm; \$4 per person.

Visit our Haunted House for thrills and chills! Hayrides, Halloween treats, mulled cider, pumpkins and apples will be sold. This event is recommended for children age 6-12. Adults will find it creepy too!

Haunted Lantern Tour: 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Fort Totten Visitor's Center. See Friday, Oct. 23.

FURTHER AFIELD

Candlelight Ghost Tours: 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Merchant's House Museum. See Friday, Oct. 23.

SUN, OCT. 25

IN QUEENS

Little Makers: NYSCI New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th Street; (718) 699-0005; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 (\$5 member family).

Kids transform socks, buttons, fabrics and everyday household materials into spook-tacular monsters. in Monster Making - Recommended for children ages 18 months and older.

Fall festival: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 11 am to 4 pm; \$5 per person.

A festival of Halloween fun for children of all ages; everyone is invited to wear their costume! Free children's games and bounces and professional character look-alikes will add to the excitement. Don't miss out on pig races, kids' pony rides, food, live country music, and the ConEdison

Calendar

Ecology Booth. Our Haunted House and Amazing Maize Maze will be open as well (see event descriptions for hours). This is a popular event, so if crowds aren't your thing we recommend arriving early.

Tinker it Sundays: 1:30–3 pm and 3:30–5 pm. NYSCI New York Hall of Science. See Sunday, Oct. 18.

Haunted House: 4 pm to 7 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 24.

WED, OCT. 28

FURTHER AFIELD

Candlelight Ghost Tours: Merchant's House Museum, 29 East Fourth St. at Lafayette Street, Manhattan; (212) 777–1089; www.nyccgovparks.org; 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm; \$30–\$40 (\$15 museum members).

Older teens will enjoy this venture into the ghostly halls of history by hearing chilling tales of phantoms, ghosts and ghouls while touring the Merchant House mansion. Reservations required.

THURS, OCT. 29

FURTHER AFIELD

Candlelight Ghost Tours: 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Merchant's House Museum. See Wednesday, Oct. 28.

FRI, OCT. 30

IN QUEENS

Science adventures: 3:30 pm to 5 pm. NYSCI New York Hall of Science. See Friday, Oct. 23.

FURTHER AFIELD

Candlelight Ghost Tours: 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Merchant's House Museum. See Wednesday, Oct. 28.

SAT, OCT. 31

IN QUEENS

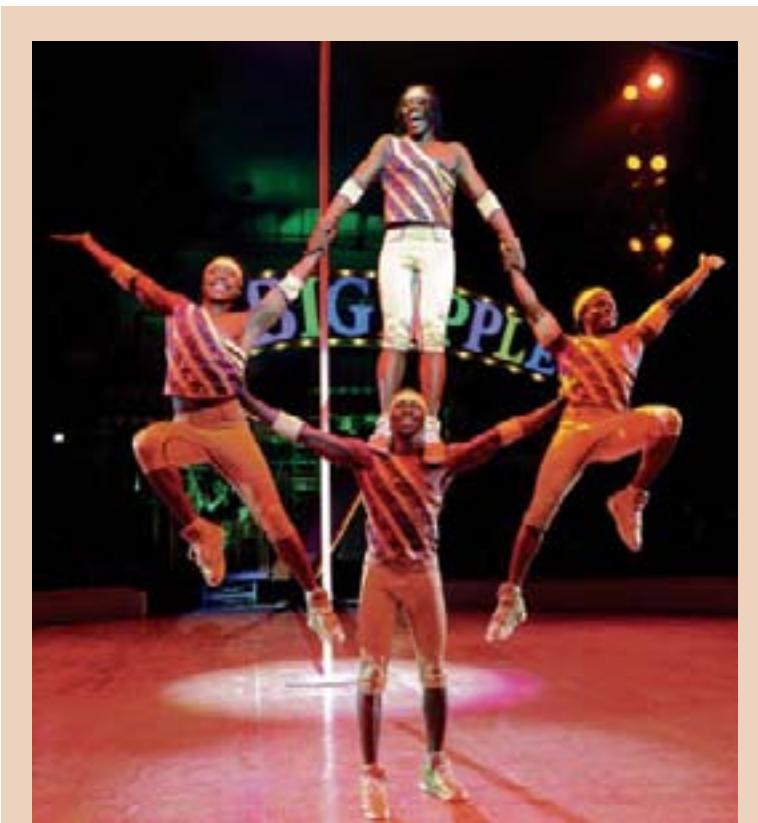
Canine carnival: Rockaway Freeway, Beach 34th St. and Beach Channel Drive; www.nyccgovparks.org; 11 am – 1 pm; Free.

Dress up your pooch, play carnival games, face painting and a photo booth.

Halloween Parade: Queens Botanical Garden, 43–50 Main Street; (718) 539–5296; www.queensbotanical.org; Noon to 4 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

It's the first ever children's halloween parade. Kids between 3 and 10 years old dress up and enjoy a ghoulishly good time. Trick or treat!

Knot tying: Forest Park Visitors Center, Woodhaven Blvd. and Forest



Circus is coming!

The Big Apple Circus is returning to Lincoln Center with brand-new show "The Grand Tour," running from Oct. 21 to Jan. 10, 2016.

"The Grand Tour" opens the 38th season of the Big Apple Circus, and transports the audience to the Roaring '20s, the dawn of the modern travel age.

With every seat less than 50 feet from the stage, audiences will be awed by the world-class entertainers as they perform breathtaking acts. Clowns, jugglers, acrobats, and aerialists from Africa, Asia, Australia,

Europe, and North and South America appear with ponies, puppies and more. The troupe sets off on its own whirlwind adventure, accompanied by the live, seven-piece Big Apple Circus Band at each performance.

Big Apple Circus "The Grand Tour," Tuesday through Sunday, Oct. 21 to Jan. 10, 2016. Show times are scheduled from 11 am through 6:30 pm and tickets prices start at \$25.

Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts [10 Lincoln Center Plaza on the Upper West Side, (212) 875–5374, www.bigapplecircus.org].

Park Drive; (718) 3512–1769; www.nyccgovparks.org; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Rangers teach tips and tricks about tying knots. For children 8 years and older.

Make it Day of the Dead: NYSCI New York Hall of Science, 47–01 111th Street; (718) 699–0005; 1:30–3 pm and 3:30–5 pm; Free with admission to the hall.

Kids can celebrate the Day of the

Dead by creating ghastly hot glue jewelry, tiny sugar skull key chains, and more. Recommended for ages 6 and older.

FURTHER AFIELD

Monster mash: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735–4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10 am to 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Calling all ghosts and goblins, come dressed to impress and celebrate Halloween! Join in for a spooky good time complete with a performance by Mariachi Tapatio de Alvaro Paulino and a ghoulish glowing dance party.

Annual Village Halloween Parade: Kick off, Sixth Ave. and Canal Street, Manhattan; 6 pm to 8 pm; Free.

Calling all ghosts, goblins, and ghouls for the greatest parade in town. Come in costume and walk the miracle mile of halloween.

Tales from the Crypt: Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. Fourth St. at Lafayette Street, Manhattan; (212) 777–1089; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm to 8 pm; \$25 (\$15 museum members).

Horror on Halloween. Join a dramatic reading from the 19th century Gothic literature stories. Reservations required. For older teens.

LONG-RUNNING

IN QUEENS

Farmer's Market: Queens Botanical Garden, 43–50 Main Street; (718) 539–5296; www.queensbotanical.org; Fridays, 8:30 am to 4pm, Now – Fri, Nov. 20; Free.

Fresh fruits and veggies have returned for another season where families can stock up on nutritious foods.

Socrates Sculpture Park Greenmarket: Socrates Sculpture Park, 32–01 Vernon Blvd.; 718–956–1819; info@socratessculpturepark.org; www.socratessculpturepark.org; Saturdays, 8 am – 4 pm, Now – Sat, Nov. 21; FREE.

Located inside Socrates Sculpture Park, this farmers market is at the center of a favorite destination for neighboring communities. Alongside the Park's workshops, yoga classes, sculpture exhibitions and stunning views, the Socrates Sculpture Park Greenmarket is a great place to spend a Saturday morning. Free cooking demonstrations are held weekly featuring seasonal items from the market and family-friendly activities take place throughout the season. Food Stamps, Debit and credit, and WIC & Senior FMNP Checks accepted until 3 pm.

The Amazing Maize Maze: Queens County Farm Museum, 73–50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347–3276; www.queensfarm.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am – 4:30 pm pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 25; \$9 (\$5 child 12 and under).

Ready to find your way out? Kids

Continued on page 44

Calendar

Continued from page 43

and adults have fun exploring the maze and solving the puzzle of the maze.

The Pumpkin Patch: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am – 4:30 pm pm, Sat, Oct. 3 – Sun, Oct. 25; \$5 (fair grounds on Oct. 25).

October is pumpkin month. Enjoy wandering through the patch to find your perfect pumpkin. A great farm adventure for the whole family! Pumpkin prices - based on size.

Drop in workshop: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Saturday, Sept. 26, 12 pm; Saturday, Oct. 3, 12 pm; Saturday, Oct. 10, 12 pm; Saturday, Oct. 17, 12 pm; Saturday, Oct. 24, 12 pm; Saturday, Oct. 31, 12 pm; Free with museum admission.

Families, with children 7 years and older are invited to make their own media projects.

Maker space: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Sat-

urdays and Sundays, 1:30–3 pm and 3:30–5 pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 15; Free with museum admission.

Use everyday materials in exciting ways; from woodworking to plaster casting. This workshop is a fun way to explore your creativity — be prepared to get messy.

Alley Pond Park Adventure

Course: Alley Pond Park, Cross Island Pkwy & Grand Central Pkwy; (718) 217-4685; www.nycgovparks.org; Sundays, 9:30 am to noon, Now – Sun, Nov. 1; Free.

Test your mettle against the two-hour course, zip lines, low and high elements and obstacles. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

FURTHER AFIELD

Mario Batali's Kitchen Gardens: New York Botanical Garden, 200th St. and Kazimiroff Blvd., The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Mondays and Tuesdays, 5 pm to 7:30 pm, Wednesdays – Sundays, 1:30 pm to 6 pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 1; Included with an All Garden Pass.

Children explore the "Dinner del Giorno" garden beds with classic Italian ingredients; Have fun with Mario's mystery menu game and hear

Kitchen tales from the staff at Batali & Bastianich Hospitality group.

Heart and Seoul: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm, Sat, Oct. 3 – Sun, Jan. 3, 2016; Free with museum admission.

The Brooklyn Children's Museum will ride Hallyu (the Korean Wave) with a new exhibit that brings modern-day South Korea to New York City.

Activity Trail: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 am – 3pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 1; Free with zoo admission.

Starting at the Dancing Crane Cafe, you will balance like a flamingo, run like an ostrich and crawl like a crocodile.

Flight quest: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am – 3 pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 1; Free with zoo admission.

Take part in the World of Birds

quest and check them off your list, then examine an African bee eater.

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, Now – Mon, Dec. 28; \$3.

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

Big Apple Circus: Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts, 10 Lincoln Center Plaza, Manhattan; (212) 875-5374; www.bigapplecircus.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, Various times between 11 am and 6:30 pm, Wed, Oct. 21 – Sun, Jan. 10, 2016; \$25 and up.

Pitch the tents, the Big Apple Circus is returning for the 38th season. "The Grand Tour" transports audiences to the Roaring 1920s, the advent of the modern travel era. With every seat less than 50 feet from the stage, audiences will be awed by the world-class entertainers as they perform breathtaking acts. Clowns, jugglers, acrobats, and aerialists from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America appear with ponies, puppies and more.

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Saving food means saving more money

How much food did you throw away today?

The average U.S. family of four spends \$640 each year on food that ends up in the garbage, according to a new survey by the American Chemistry Council. Vegetables — think about the slimy lettuce in your fridge drawer — are the most commonly wasted food.

We're sensitive to price while grocery shopping — where saving a quarter may sway our decision to buy a particular brand — but we throw out much of our hard-earned money when food goes to waste.

The top causes of food waste include buying or preparing too much, unwillingness to consume leftovers, and improper food stor-

age, according to research from the Cornell Food and Brand Lab. And strategies that are intended to save money — such as buying in bulk and shopping only monthly — actually contributed to food waste and didn't save money after all.

Ready to reduce your waste? Here are some tips:

Stock up only on food you're sure your family can eat at its peak. Will you really consume the package of six hearts of romaine lettuce, double package of fresh mozzarella, or crate of oranges found at a club store?

Shop as if you have a small refrigerator. Our fridges tend to be too large, and it's easy to load them up with more than we can eat.



Buy smaller amounts of the highest quality foods you can. This way, you're more likely to eat them.

Elevate scraps and leaves. Turn stems, peels, and leaves into ingredients rather than waste. Carrot tops, parsley, and asparagus can be pulsed into pesto. Broccoli stems can go into a stir fry. Fruit and veggies that are bruised or will soon be overripe can be blended into a smoothie.

Save and eat the tiny amounts. Wrap up the uneaten half-sandwich from lunch or the small amount of leftover casserole. Either can become a kid-sized portion for dinner.

Eat down your fridge. Rediscover the art of making soup, frittatas, salads, or stews using what you already have. Dedicate one day a week to using up any leftovers.

Try composting. It's the perfect way to turn food scraps into free fertilizer. Instead of putting potato peels, moldy berries, or coffee grounds down the garbage disposal, throw them in a ventilated, covered bin in your yard. Occasionally toss some black dirt into it.

Christine Palumbo, registered dietitian, is a happy composter in Naperville, Ill. Find her at Christine Palumbo Nutrition on Facebook, @PalumboRD on Twitter, or ChristinePalumbo.com.

Southwestern smoky ranchero burger with grilled avocado

Makes four servings
Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 12 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

LIME MAYONNAISE:

- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1 package McCormick® Grill Mates® Smoky Ranchero Marinade, divided

STUFFED AVOCADO:

- 2 ripe avocados
- 1/4 cup crumbled Cotija cheese (may substitute shredded Mexican cheese blend or Monterey Jack cheese)

BURGERS:

- 1 pound 80 percent lean ground beef
- 4 Kaiser rolls
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced

DIRECTIONS: For the lime mayonnaise, mix mayonnaise, lime juice, and 1 teaspoon of the marinade mix in small bowl until well blended. Cover. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

For the stuffed avocado, halve and



seed avocados. Carefully remove peel, leaving each half intact. Lightly season with salt and pepper. Mix cheese and tomato. Set aside.

For the burgers, mix ground beef and remaining marinade mix until well blended. Shape into four patties. Grill over medium heat four to six minutes per side or until burgers are cooked through (internal temperature of 160-degrees Fahrenheit). Grill avocado halves, cut-sides down, for 30 seconds. Turn over avocados. Place 2 tablespoons of cheese mixture into each

avocado half. Drizzle with hot sauce, if desired. Grill four to five minutes. Toast rolls on the grill, open-side down, about 30 seconds.

Serve burgers on rolls topped with stuffed avocados and onion slices. Press roll gently to smash the stuffed avocado. Serve with lime mayonnaise.

NUTRITION FACTS: 650 calories, 45 g carbohydrates, 30 g protein, 39 g fat (10 g saturated), 82 mg cholesterol, 1323 mg sodium, 8 g fiber.

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