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Spring is here

It seems that spring is finally here, although I'm never willing to bet that we won't have some final burst of winter in the form of either a series of cold days or a late snow fall. Too many times we've seen the blossoms burst forth on the trees and then a heavy wet snow come down and break all the branches and cut down the tulips. Hopefully, we'll dodge that bullet this year.

With the longer days and the warmer weather, the streets, parks, farmers' markets, stoop sales, and neighborhood celebrations are in high gear. With April being the month we celebrate Earth Day, make sure that your family gets into con-



now when there are so many bike lanes and rental bikes easily accessible in many areas of town.

And then there's the beaches. Personally, I love to visit the beach all year round. Each season has its own beatific offerings. Obviously, we still have to bundle up somewhat, but on a sunny day especially, the kids will love the beach at this time of year. It's a giant sand box and a great ball playing field. Also, the surfers are

tact with the natural wonders of this planet of ours. Visit your local botanic garden, take a walk along the waterways, visit a museum, shop at a flea market and get outdoors. Bicycle riding has always been popular, but never more in our city than

out there practically all year round and it's a great show to watch them "doing their thing."

Wonderful early spring vegetables are in season now, like artichokes (one of my favorites) and here's my favorite recipe for cooking them. (2-4 artichokes) This is Roman style and is a staple around Easter.

Clean your artichoke and then cut off the stem. Cut the top off and then trim the remaining leaves with a scissors to make them more manageable.

In a dutch oven or saucepot, saute three sliced garlic cloves in two tablespoons of olive oil.

Add a small can of organic chicken broth.

Add salt, pepper and pepper flakes to taste.

Put in the artichokes and add the

juice of half a lemon.

Cover and cook for 40 minutes or until the leaves pull off easily. If necessary, add a bit of water to your broth.

When ready, plate and eat. Make sure to add some of the broth to the bottom of your bowl for dipping. Crusty toasted bread and some good cheese like brie or herbed goat cheese make a good accompaniment.

Have a wonderful month. Happy Spring!

Thanks for reading.

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Everyday Earth Day

Getting your kids involved in the earth's future is getting them involved in their own

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

In many city schools, students and teachers are making a difference in their communities with programs that reduce waste, encourage recycling, save energy, and conserve resources. Environmental education helps kids understand the environmental challenges of the 21st century, as they learn to appreciate and respect the natural resources that Mother Earth provides for all of us.

Since its first official celebration on April 22, 1970 — when 20 million Americans, energized by their love of our planet, marched in the streets to protest against air and water pollution — the original spirit of Earth Day still echoes across city neighborhoods in 2016, as kids and families try to do their part to help the environment.

Earth Day and an eco-friendly attitude

It may have started with hippies, flower children, and anti-Vietnam War protestors as a grass roots movement that flowered into a ginormous nation-wide event. But over the decades, Earth Day — celebrated every year on April 22 — has evolved into an environmental celebration that focuses on teaching modern-

day tree-huggers, young and old, about going green, and the importance of sustainability and personal eco-responsibility. Some would call it an ecological trend that encourages each and every one of us to be mindful of the earth's limitations and to conserve — at home and at the workplace — through recycling, composting, backyard or micro gardening, and saving energy by turning off lights and unplugging unused appliances.

This no-waste sensibility goes hand in hand with a conservationist attitude on the part of local schools, organizations, and companies.

In schools that use Project Learning Tree's award-winning curriculum materials, like those covering all things energy, kids find out how we use it, and what we can do to conserve it. According to www.plt.org, the way America's youth learn about the environment will largely determine the future quality life for generations to come. Quality environmental education teaches students the skills they need to be informed decision makers, and provides critical tools for a 21st-century workforce faced with devising solutions to increasingly complex environmental issues, like climate change and energy.

By incorporating energy educa-

tion into elementary and middle school curricula, students will be engaged in real-world S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning, while they discover how individual and collective choices about energy use affect their lives and the whole planet.

How you can celebrate Earth Day

Younger kids can enjoy a hands-on nature and gardening adventure as they learn about sustainability with a fruit and vegetable garden, and four seasons garden at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. They can also check out plants and animals in a meadow, marsh, and woodland.

Though it don't have specific Earth Day programming, the garden offers a wide array of family-friendly public programs to explore the environment.

"For more than 100 years, Brooklyn Botanic Garden has encouraged children and their families to learn about and appreciate the world of plants and the environment," says Elizabeth Reina-Longoria, director of communications. "BBG's newest space — the Discovery Garden for children — allows kids to closely explore habitats and have fun in nature, inspiring future generations of environmental stewards."



...

An Environmental Protection Agency educational website features a Planet Protectors Club for kids and teens, whose mission is to improve the world around them by making less trash. Planet Protectors also help other people learn to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Kids can check out fun activities and games, while learning about reducing wastes and saving resources at: www3.epa.gov/epawaste/education/kids/planetprotectors/index.htm

Teens can get tips on daily choices they make that affect the environment, i.e. products, natural resources they use, etc.

The site lists eco-friendly tips:

- Use products made with recycled materials

- Use energy-efficient light bulbs and rechargeable batteries
- Shop with cloth bags
- Reuse plastic bags, cups, containers, etc.
- Repair items instead of throwing them away
- Compost your food and yard waste

How Earth Day changed the world

Forty-five years ago, industrial pollution was rampant. People were concerned about it and its negative effects on their health, but politicians, not so much. Surprisingly it took three proactive republicans to jump-start the new movement against environmental ignorance.

After witnessing the Santa Barbara oil spill that killed thousands

of birds and fish in 1970, Earth Day founder and then-Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin had a brainstorm: Why not organize a huge grass roots protest over what was happening to the environment. So he announced that there would be a nationwide demonstration on behalf of the environment and invited everyone to participate (no social media then!). Nelson later wrote, "We had neither the time nor resources to organize 20 million demonstrators and the thousands of schools and local communities that participated. That was the remarkable thing about Earth Day. It organized itself."

Eventually, he teamed up with Republican Congressman Pete McCloskey, as well as a young activist, to teach folks about their environment.

In a 1993 piece Nelson wrote, "I

was satisfied that if we could tap into the environmental concerns of the general public and infuse the student anti-war energy into the environmental cause, we could generate a demonstration that would force this issue onto the political agenda. It was a big gamble, but worth a try. The response was electric. It took off like gangbusters. The American people finally had a forum to express concern about what was happening to the land, rivers, lakes, and air — and they did so with spectacular exuberance."

President Richard Nixon proposed the Environmental Protection Agency (launched on Dec. 2, 1970) after he signed an executive order. Landmark environmental laws went into effect, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Estuary Protection Act.

Climate change is scary!

In an April 2015 huffingtonpost.com article, Californian Congresswoman Jackie Speier wrote, "Strange weather has made headlines around the world. We've seen polar vortexes and tornadoes in the Midwest, massive snowstorms on the East Coast, rapidly shrinking sea ice at the North and South poles, record hurricanes and cyclones over the Pacific and Indian Oceans, flooding in Asia, and extreme droughts in Africa and right here in the western states of the U.S. Scientists call this the 'new normal' — in a warming world we have to expect the unexpected."

But even in California, they didn't expect five consecutive years of unprecedented drought.

Speier cites "sea level rise, ocean acidification, species extinctions, erratic weather events, decreased agricultural yields, harm to human health and lower worker productivity" as real and costly consequences of climate change. While many folks believe global warming is man-made, others say these events are natural and cyclical.

For more on the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, visit www.bbg.org/learn/kids_and_families.

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



Time-outs vs. time-ins

Tips for fostering effective and connective discipline

BY JUDY M. MILLER

Time-ins versus time-outs. What's the difference? As it turns out, quite a bit.

Many adults are familiar with the concept of time-outs — the process of separating the child, often in another part of the house, if home, from his parents for the purpose of calming down, thinking about his behavior, and regrouping. Time-outs withhold attention, the highest motivator for any child. Overused, time-outs can quickly become ineffective, and both the parent and child can feel bad about the experience.

Time-ins are similar to time-outs in that they focus on teaching children to self-regulate their behavior. However, time-ins differ from time-outs, because they emphasize regaining peace and balance of the situation while the child is within close proximity to his parent. And this physical closeness while calming helps to foster connection and security between the child and parent.

There are several things a parent

needs to be on board with to effectively use time-ins. The first is that they should understand what discipline is: the training or teaching that reinforces the desired specific behavior (self-regulation) and ordered way of life compatible with family and societal expectations.

The second is that the parent should embrace a new attitude, that of being child-centered. The parent should focus on how to best address what her child needs.

The use of time-ins is well suited to any child, and can be used for a child of any age. Parents who are bonded with their child are the most effective in using time-ins because their child is attuned (emotionally connected) to them.

The parent can explain why the behavior was inappropriate after the child has calmed down, but only if she is also calm. Parents who are emotional cannot help their child or address a situation. To use time-ins effectively:

- Keep your child within proximity of where you are, be it in the

kitchen, gardening, or on your lap, if very young.

- Give your child some “distance” by avoiding direct eye contact.

- Eliminate conversation until your child has indicated he is ready to talk about the situation.

- Gently resume eye contact and positive non-verbal cues (nodding, smiling) as you discuss the situation (misbehavior).

- Be aware of your tone.

- Think about your word choices.

- Correct without shaming.

- Be specific about your expectations.

- Lower yourself to your child's level, if necessary — kneeling, for example.

- Touch your child. For example, a gentle hand on the shoulder.

- Offer a hug. Research shows that a 30-second hug releases oxytocin, the “bonding” hormone, and has another emotional and physical benefit — stress reduction.

Other dos and don'ts

- Avoid showing anger. Your child cannot calm down if you are angry. Model the behavior you want to see in your child.

- Avoid grabbing or jerking your child. Your goal is not punishment, but helping your child to calm and understand what behavior was inappropriate.

- Do not berate your child. Doing so can cause your child to “mute” you.

- Do not talk about your child's behavior within the hearing of others, especially peers; this causes shame and public humiliation.

- Do not give your child something to do or watch while in time-in. This time is for reflection.

- Speak calmly and firmly.

- If using a place for your child to sit, use the same place and same seat.

- If you have an older child (5 to 10 years of age), consider giving him something constructive to do, like a puzzle or craft. Talk to your child while he creates. This can help the older child process his feelings.

- Use a timer; this indicates you are committed to the time-in. If your child is not or does not feel calm or quiet when the timer goes off (ask), set it again.

- Remain calm and gentle after the time-in is over. This encourages self-regulation, which is your goal.

Judy M. Miller savors time with her kids. She is a certified Gottman Institute educator and the author of “What To Expect From Your Adopted Tween” and “Writing to Heal Adoption Grief: Making Connections & Moving Forward.”

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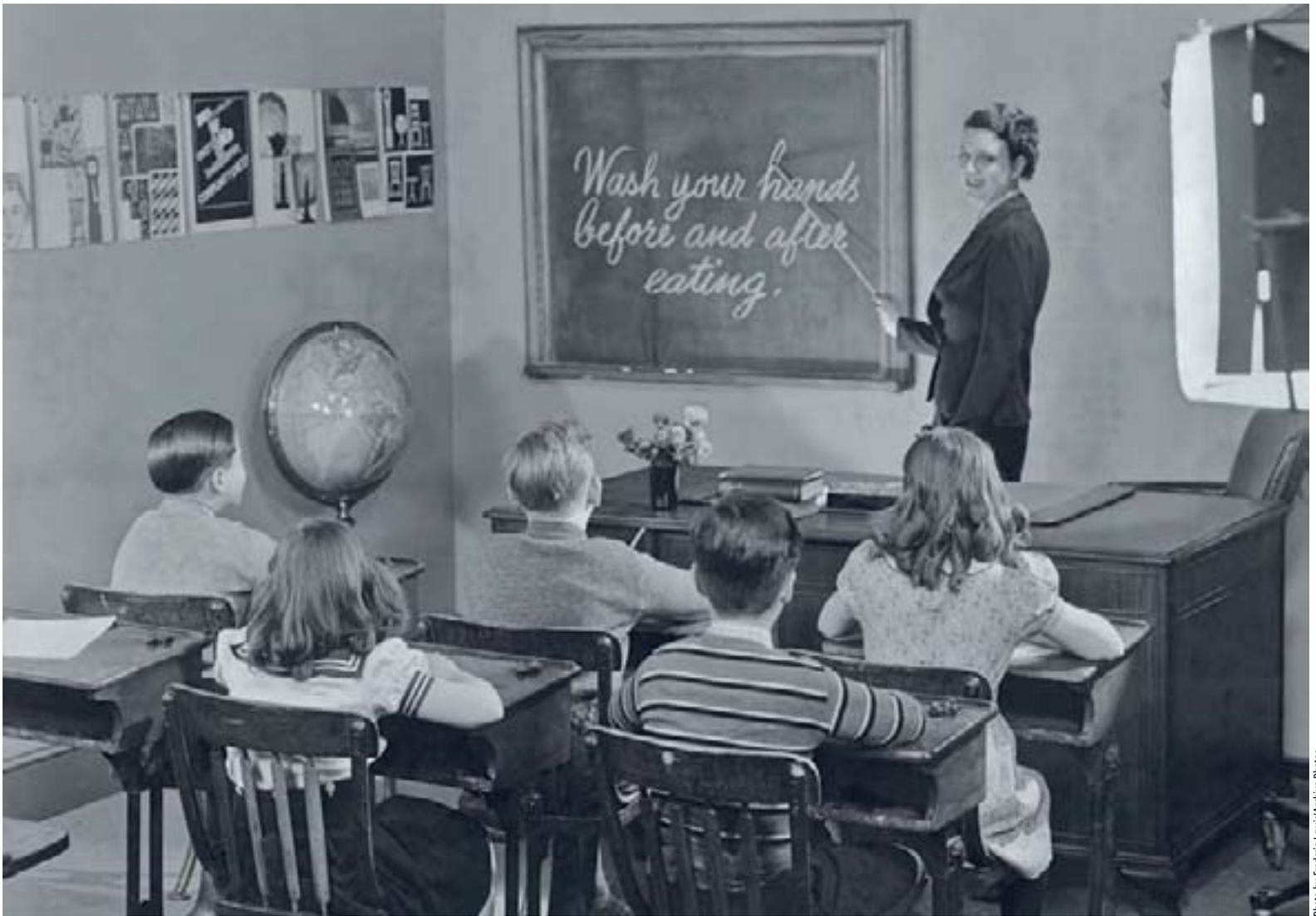


Photo by Frederic Lewis/Archive Photos

Good old days

As education changes, what we gain — and lose!

BY ALLISON PLITT

There I was in town the other day, running errands while listening to music on my iPhone with earphones plugged into my ears. The music, though, suddenly stopped, and I started hearing my 10-year-old daughter singing, “I love you. I love you. I love you.” Completely perplexed, I looked down at my playlist of songs and saw the words “Voice Memo.” Somehow, my daughter decided to create her own song and inserted it into my playlist.

I was astonished she could do this at 10 years of age, because I’m well into my 40s and cannot figure out how she managed to accomplish it. At her top-rated public elementary

school in Queens she learns about various websites in her technology class, which teaches students more about computers. A couple of the websites (www.code.org and www.scratch.mit.edu) have taught her to use blocks of code (a language that programs a computer to do something), which creates animation for a screen full of imaginative characters.

Now my daughter is in fourth grade and is in a STEM class — an acronym for “Science, technology, engineering, and math.” It is the first STEM class the school has ever had, and I had no idea she had been chosen for it until her first day of school. Because there are so few Americans, especially women, in these fields, STEM classes are now being created

in schools throughout the country.

Every few weeks, the kids are put into teams of four and asked to do a task: mail a potato chip in a package that will prevent it from breaking; balance a marshmallow on 20 vertical spaghetti sticks; drop an egg with a parachute to ensure it doesn’t break; create a survivor team to escape from any region of New York state with just a handful of tools; build a tower using index cards and tape; or construct an Iroquois Native American longhouse from a design plan and materials the children had to prepare and gather beforehand.

After every project, all the students are asked to write about their experiences working on these assigned tasks with their teammates. I read over my daughter’s summaries,

which usually start out with “We all had different ideas.” Then the essay gets juicy, because “two people disagreed and got into a fight.” Every paper, however, calmly ends with “In the end, we found out which of our designs worked best.”

There was quite a bit of drama with the interpersonal dynamics of the groups when these projects started in September. Now, many months into the school year, my daughter doesn’t come home complaining that no one listened to her ideas.

I am grateful towards this school for giving my daughter such a comprehensive education. I am also happy that with each passing year, my daughter becomes more and more eager to go to school in the mornings. I have just a few qualms with the curriculum — a result of my old-school background, when computers weren’t in classrooms, and we spent more time using pencils.

My first complaint, over which I hear many parents also grieve, is the loss of cursive writing. It’s still taught in some private schools in the third grade, but teaching cursive handwriting has been completely eliminated from the curriculum of public schools across the country. The sub-

My first complaint, over which I hear many parents also grieve, is the loss of cursive writing.

ject was brought up at a Parents Association meeting at our school and labeled a lost cause, as one parent, a Human Resources Director, recalled asking a teenage intern to sign her name on a document and all she wrote was the letter “X.”

My second criticism is that many New York City public schools stop spelling tests after second grade ends. I remember being in a spelling bee in sixth grade, when we still had to memorize 10 new spelling words a week. As other parents have spoken to me about their children’s problems with spelling, I asked at a Parents Association meeting that the idea of continuing the spelling tests past second grade be brought up at the School Leadership Team meeting, when a group of teachers, parents, and the principal of the school meet on a monthly basis.

When I asked my friend who sits on that team about my spelling test suggestion, he said the teachers didn’t think spelling tests were necessary, as spelling was already em-

bedded into the children’s curriculum. I still fume about this response, but I can still manage a hearty laugh at the end of the school year when some of the kids sign cards to each other saying, “Have a happy sumer.”

My last worry is that teachers are not given the respect that they deserve in the classroom. My daughter is not the top student in class, but she always gets high marks for her behavior. I have heard my daughter and her own teachers complain that students continue to talk after they have been told to be quiet. Even when the principal visited my daughter’s class to intervene, the students continued to talk.

Last year, my daughter came home from her third-grade classroom complaining that so many kids were talking, she could no longer hear the teacher speak. As the class parent, I sent an email to all the parents and instructed them to tell their kids to stop talking in the classroom. I also wrote in the email that I had a list of kids who were talking, and if they

wanted to know if their child was on the list, they could contact me.

Of course, I was punished by the teacher for making her look incompetent, and several of the parents complained about my interference in a job that was not mine to do. It had just gotten to the point for me where I had seen and had heard enough.

Surprisingly, there were quite a few parents supporting the fact that I had addressed the issue so openly. For the past two years, there have been 32 students in my daughter’s class, and even with a teacher and an assistant, it is still not enough supervision to get the kids to behave.

In retrospect, I still cling to the love letters my grandparents wrote to each other in cursive writing and sigh in exasperation as my daughter continues to incorrectly spell “February” — until she sees it auto-corrected on the computer. With all of this new technology and teaching techniques to encourage experiential learning in the classroom, we, as a country and a community, have forgotten to teach our children the thing that matters most — showing respect towards others.

Allison Plitt is a writer who lives in Queens with her daughter.

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f t i p

Tech-free at camp!

When kids
unplug, they
make lifelong
connections

BY ASHLEY TALMADGE

In our world of constant connectivity, some might argue that kids shouldn't be expected to "unplug" for weeks on end. And yet, most overnight summer camps are still tech-free zones. Why? Recent studies reveal there are good reasons for taking a tech break. And seasoned camp directors are privy to a little known fact: Kids actually enjoy it.

"Many of our campers actually thank us for the opportunity to put away their phones for a while," says Erec Hillis, boys' camp director at Camp Champions in Texas. "Some of them say that it is exhausting to try to keep up with all the demands of being available 24-7, and that camp is a welcome break."

Nonetheless, it can be daunting to think about letting the smartphone, iPad, and laptop go untouched for the camp session. And parents may feel just as anxious as their kids. After all, we're used to communicating with our children whenever and wherever the notion strikes. What to do?

First of all, it helps to know why most camps remain unplugged.

"Because the whole point of our camp is to enjoy nature, facilitate communication, and empower children by developing those skills. We don't allow cellphones or iPods, which diminish interpersonal interaction," says Kevin Gordon, director of Camp Kupugani outside of Chicago.

Gordon says there's solid evidence to support this view, and points to a recent study from University of California, Los Angeles in which a group of sixth graders unplugged for five days at an outdoor camp. This group showed marked improvement in their ability to accurately read non-verbal emotional cues when compared to a control group of same-age



students who hadn't yet been to camp.

While the researchers did not dismiss the value of technology as a communication and learning tool, they concluded that "digital screen time, even when used for social interaction, could reduce time spent developing skills in reading nonverbal cues of human emotion."

It is through face-to-face encounters that kids gain the ability to see another's perspective, and develop empathy. They learn to cooperate and contribute. All this is important in the cultivation of lasting friendships. In his book, "Home-sick and Happy: How Time Away from Parents Can Help a Child Grow," psychologist Michael Thompson contends it is because campers spend so much time together, that "camp friendships grow so quickly and deeply." The camp environment itself inspires face-to-face interaction. Campers eat, sleep, and play in proximity to one another.

"Kids want to interact with one another. Camp allows kids to be near enough to each other that they don't need their phones," Hillis says. "They can just walk over and start a conversation."



It is through face-to-face encounters that kids gain the ability to see another's perspective, and develop empathy.



more connected as people!"

He also suggests discussing how your camper can deal with homesickness, and how you'll keep in touch without devices. Many camps now offer one-way e-mail — parents send e-mail, which is then printed and delivered to campers by the staff. However, Gordon favors old-fashioned snail mail, and says e-mail, "though easier for the parent to send, is generally not as appreciated by the camper."

In fact, experts like Thompson recommend letter-writing as the primary form of communication between parent and camper. He writes that "the time spent between sending and receiving a letter is a valuable opportunity for both parent and child to think about one another without having to do anything with or for each other." He believes a child cannot become independent without spending time away from parents, and warns that "minute-by-minute contact with parents undermines the sense of separation." So don't be the parent who slips an extra phone into your child's duffel!

Gordon acknowledges that being disconnected from screens is more difficult for parents than for campers.

"It's also a different experience (and harder), since the parent is in their same world, while the camper is busy in a new environment," he says. Yet parents would do well to practice some tech "downtime" for the duration of the camp session.

Thompson writes, "My advice: Stop the e-mails. Just send one or two packages per summer, and give yourself a break from checking the camp's online photos. Go buy some stamps and write a long letter, or two, or 19."

During the weeks at summer camp, your child will make new friends. Everyday she'll eat, bunk, play, share adventures, and have heart-to-hearts with them. True, she may use social media to stay in touch with her camp friends throughout the year. But memories of the things they did together — tipping the canoe, singing by the fire, playing pranks on the counselors — will create the strongest of bonds. She'll yearn for next summer when she can ditch the smartphone and wrap her arms around her forever friends. Face-to-face.

Still, it's a good idea to prepare your child for the tech-free experience. You may simply inform him of the no electronics rule, and express your confidence in his ability to abide by it. Hillis reminds parents not to commiserate with a child who seems reluctant to give up his device. Just remind him that all campers will follow the same rules, and that the camp has good reasons for being tech-free.

"We simply want kids to be comfortable in knowing that they can turn the phone off for a period of time and perhaps enjoy life even more richly, rather than feeling that they are missing out on something," he says.

Gordon recommends experimenting with a tech break of a day or two, sometime before the start of camp.

"Do it as a family and recognize how it's actually fun, and you feel



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DIRECTORY

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Continued on page 16

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2016 Camp Choices

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 14

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Kimmy Ma Art Studio

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<http://www.kimmyma-artstudio.com>

Summer Art Clubs are designed for various age groups. Download & review curriculum calendar on the website

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Oasis Day Camp at Queensborough Community College

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<http://www.oasischildren.com>

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<http://www.queenscamp.com>

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Continued on page 18

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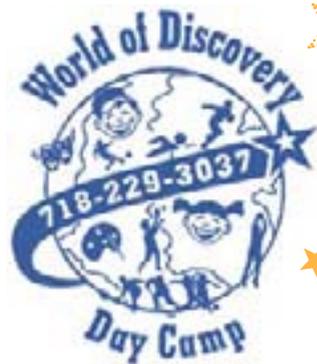
Summer PM - Fine Art (Advanced Beginners/Intermediate):

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Summer Weekend Beginners Programs (age 7.5+):

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Watercolor & Acrylics: 7/10-8/7, (5) Sundays, 1-3pm

Download curriculum: www.kimmyma-artstudio.com
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2016 Camp Choices

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 16

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"The Moodsters" help teach children the fundamentals of emotional intelligence.

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How does it feel?

Teaching children the important skills of emotional intelligence

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Pixar's Oscar-winning animated movie "Inside Out" has jumpstarted an important conversation, and is shining a spotlight on a topic that is near and dear to parenting and child development expert Denise Daniels's heart: emotional intelligence.

After years of research, and helping children and parents deal with disaster and grief here in the U.S. and abroad, she has developed a new groundbreaking brand for preschoolers. The Moodsters is based on curriculum from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.

Just like 11-year-old, hockey-playing, Minnesota student Riley Andersen, the adorable character in the animated movie, your young daughter or son may be experiencing various changes in his or her life and feeling emotions he or she

can't quite process. They may be feeling confused or overwhelmed — like Riley, when she is uprooted from her familiar, happy life and finds herself in a new, less-joyful situation, after moving to San Francisco. Suddenly, she's feeling sad and kind of angry.

The film's main setting takes place in Riley's mind, and the story is almost entirely told from the point of view of her five emotions: Fear, Sadness, Joy, Disgust, and Anger. It just so happens that The Moodsters (Coz, Lolly, Snorf, Razy and Quigly) are five lovable characters that also represent different emotions. According to Daniels, Moodsters use detective skills to solve emotional mysteries, and children learn through the adventures of the characters how to handle challenges and opportunities they may face in their everyday lives. There's even a feelings meter that kids can

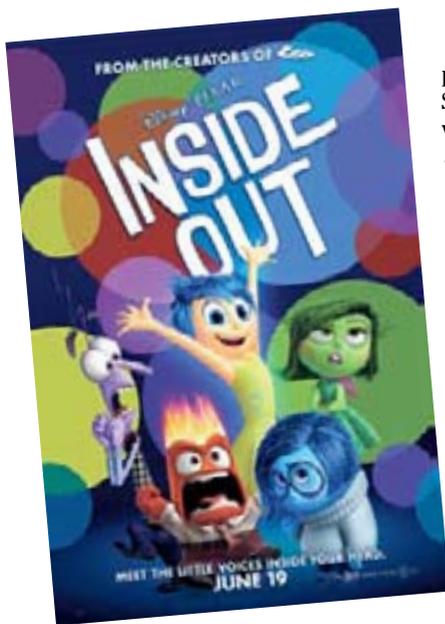
point to. For parents, Moodsters are learning tools that help teach children the fundamentals of emotional intelligence.

So, what is emotional intelligence?

It's the ability to recognize your own and others' emotions, to understand nonverbal cues, and to manage one's own feelings and emotions and express them appropriately.

Decades of scientific research reveal that sound emotional intelligence skills benefit children's physical and psychological health, and well-being.

"We know that kids that learn these skills are more successful in school, and test scores on standardized tests are higher; they do better socially and psychologically and have stronger, healthier relationships," Daniels notes. They're even better problem-solvers and



The recent Pixar film, "Inside Out" also explores the emotions of children.

have less depression.

Daniels says parents should start talking to their children about feelings during the day and especially at bedtime, when kids often experience fears and anxiety. She emphasizes that little ones should be encouraged to verbalize how they feel early in life — from 1 year old through pre-school and beyond.

"Inside Out" has been shining a spotlight on a very relevant topic that has been the focus of Daniels's amazing work — how emotional intelligence affects every child's development, no matter his ethnicity, socioeconomic situation, or circumstances. Moodsters are multicultural. And Daniels says the idea first came about when she realized that all kids' feelings are universal.

Then when she and her children came down to Ground Zero after 9-11, Daniels knew she had a mission, as she sat down and talked to kids and parents who were dealing with devastating loss and grief. And a workbook she created helped so many kids deal with their emotions. Fifteen million copies were drop shipped across the U.S.

The Peabody Award-winning broadcast journalist said she also worked with children in refugee camps in Sri Lanka, and helped families cope after Hurricane Katrina. And when the economy tanked in 2008, Daniels was there to help kids who were losing their homes and whose parents were losing jobs.

"I was hearing from so many parents, so I called my friends at Scholastic and they asked me to write something for their website and create a workbook for these kids," she recalled.

Daniels, who lives in Minnesota, said she and her New York-based team send lots of toys to hospitals, and have been getting loads of letters and questions from parents and educators everywhere, even Africa, Germany, and South America. She is also hearing from social workers in New York and meeting with an educational company here. Last fall Daniels went to an amazing school in Harlem, where she talked to young, high-risk students. She said teachers did meditation with the kids and talked about their feelings. New York 1's camera crew was there.

After the Paris and San Bernardino tragedies, Daniels has been teaching parents how to talk to their kids about terrorism. For tips you can read her Guidelines for Grownups on her website.

The grandmother of three says she is thrilled the movie came out at this time. Daniels is helping lead the charge in that conversation about emotional intelligence and is exposing a common part of growing up that often children, as well as their parents, may have trouble grasping. Many teachers are reaching out to her and there is a growing movement to get The Moodsters into schools. "All this underscores that EQ is beginning to go mainstream," she says.

"We are our children's first teachers, and our home is their first school. There's been a revolution in child psychology, and that revolution is teaching kids EQ skills."

Find out more info. and where you can get The Moodsters toy and book packs, visit www.denisedanielsparenting.com.

For more on The Moodsters visit www.themoodsters.com. A Learn About Feelings app for iOS and Android is in the works.

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

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Practice, practice, practice!

Middle school
musicians to
perform at
Carnegie Hall

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

These young musicians are learning from the best.

Seventy-five middle school student musicians auditioned on Jan. 30 and 31 for a coveted spot in the New York Pops' Kids on Stage program. Only 20 chosen finalists will be trained by New York Pops teaching artists and will perform on stage for the orchestra's annual birthday gala at Carnegie Hall on May 2.

"Kids on Stage is an amazing opportunity for young musicians. In addition to the excitement of the culminating performance on stage at Carnegie Hall, students engage in a truly immersive learning experience throughout the audition and rehearsal process as they work closely with skilled educators, professional musicians, and Maestro Reineke," said Lisa Beth Vettoso, The New York Pops' director of education.

The program is part of the orchestra's PopsEd program, which is led by Music Director and Conductor Steven Reineke and provides an exciting learning environment for its students, showcasing tools like composition, lyric writing, performance, and mentorship to foster learning.

Before the gala, the young musicians will have five rehearsal sessions, including three with PopsEd teaching



Twenty middle school student musicians will play on stage at Carnegie Hall with the New York Pops orchestra.

artists, one led by Reineke, and a dress rehearsal at Carnegie Hall before the gala. Of the 20 participants, five students will be selected to receive a three-week scholarship to the French Woods Festival of the Performing Arts Summer Camp in Hancock, N.Y., to participate in the program for advanced musical studies.

The 20 finalists certainly proved their mettle at the auditions.

"The students are asked to prepare a piece of music, play basic scales, and sight read in a format similar to an orchestral audition," said Karen DiYanni, a current Kids on Stage judge as well as a New York Pops violinist and PopsEd Teaching Artist. "At the auditions, we met young musicians from all over the city, with varying levels of experience on their instrument. In addition to newcomers, we saw many that auditioned and/or were selected last year. This speaks volumes about what an incredible experience and opportunity Kids on Stage is for middle-school students."

Education is an essential part of The New York Pops' mission. Through its PopsEd programs, the

organization collaborates with public schools, community organizations, children's hospitals, and senior centers throughout the five boroughs, which affords thousands of New Yorkers the opportunity to participate in music programming.

"Kids on Stage helps fill the gap in today's music education system by giving students a truly unique, professional opportunity," said DiYanni.

To be considered for participation, the students filled out an application form and submitted two personal essays and a recommendation letter from a teacher. Student essays and recommendation letters were then reviewed by the director of education and New York Pops staff, who selected students and invited them to audition, said Vettoso.

The New York Pops 33rd Birthday Gala "Do You Hear the People Sing" at Carnegie Hall (881 Seventh Ave. between W. 56th and W. 57th streets in Midtown, www.newyorkpops.org) May 2, 7 pm. Tickets from \$31 to \$160.

Shnieka Johnson is a Manhattan-based education consultant and freelance writer. Contact her via her website: www.shniekajohnson.com.

The 2016 Kids on Stage students include:

- Ande-Marie Balla, flute, grade 8
- Eve Budd, clarinet, grade 7
- Quentin Chen, violin, grade 7
- Lukas Chin, horn, grade 7
- Philip Fletcher, euphonium, grade 8
- Pasquale Giusto, trumpet, grade 8
- Jeshua Kim, flute, grade 8
- William Lach, trumpet, grade 8
- Yong Ho Lee, clarinet, grade 8
- John Liu, euphonium, grade 7
- Victoria Lu, violin, grade 8
- Jessica Mandel, horn, grade 8
- Olivia Mangum-Lehmann, cello, grade 8
- Simone Martel, saxophone, grade 7
- Jordyn Pierre-Raphael, saxophone, grade 8
- Abigail Rodriguez, percussion, grade 8
- Meghan Stackhouse, clarinet, grade 6
- Adam Vidal, trumpet, grade 8
- Anna Wielgat, oboe, grade 8
- Shuran Xie, saxophone, grade 6

Dabney and Dad

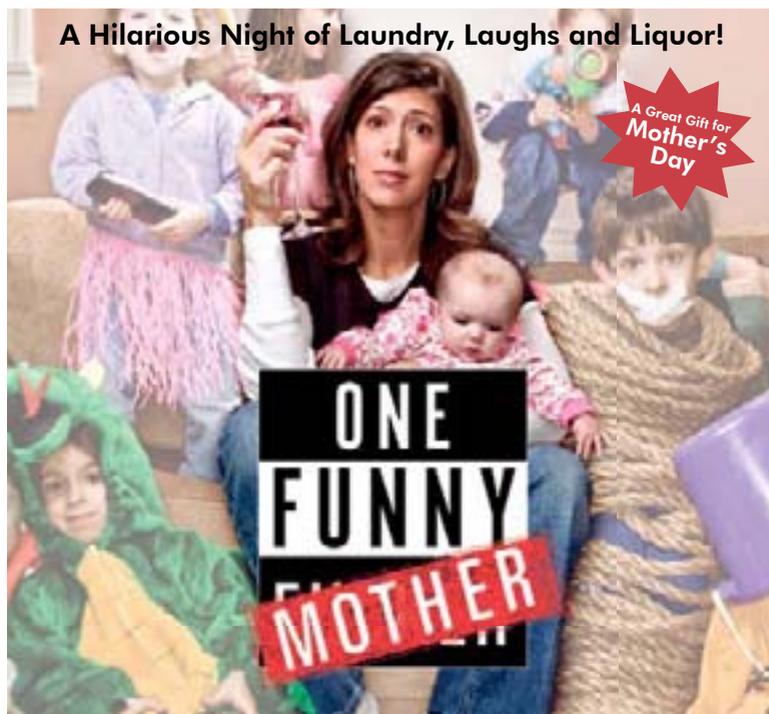
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Becoming yourself

Assisting our
children in
finding their
own way

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-
TIEMAN

Andre Pater, a renowned equine artist, conducted a tour of his work that my younger son and I attended. During the tour Pater was asked what advice he gives young artists on how to achieve success. He clarified that there are many ways to define success. He identified his greatest success as an artist being the feeling he gets when he creates something that deeply touches another person. He concluded by saying, "Above all, be yourself. After all, you cannot be anyone else anyway."

What simple, straightforward advice. Be yourself. I mean, it's two words. Yet, it presents a formidable challenge. For to be yourself, you have to know yourself. And the self you have to know changes over time. Recently I shared a related quote, "Becoming is superior to being." This statement suggests that while "being" denotes a static, unchanging state, "becoming" recognizes the active, evolving nature of the self. Therefore I altered Pater's advice to say, "Become yourself!"

"Become yourself" implies that we possess the power to choose who we are becoming. Last month

I explored the relevance of this notion to the lifelong process of becoming a parent. But what about the implications of this directive to "become yourself" for our children? How do we assist them in discovering the power to become themselves and guide them to exercise it conscientiously? How do we facilitate the process of our children becoming themselves?

Visualize them. We are our children's original mirrors. They come to know the earliest versions of themselves through their interactions with us. Create a vision of your child. Not a fixed vision, a flexible vision. A working vision of

“Become yourself” implies that we possess the power to choose who we are becoming. But what about the implications of this directive to “become yourself” for our children?

the kind of person you want her to become. Not the career you want her to pursue. We are raising people, not professions. A vision of the personal qualities and character you want your child to possess. Use this vision to direct your parental actions. What we reflect back to our children is what they come to believe about themselves.

Give them their story. Each of our children has a unique story. Tell your child her birth or adoption story. Tell her about all her “firsts” and early experiences. Share treasured memories. Keep a journal for her. Populate her story with people who love her. Tell her family history. If you don’t know her family history, research her culture and share its heritage. Our children need both roots and wings. The deeper the roots, the stronger the wings.

Prompt their vision. Encourage your child to create a personal vision of the individual she wants to become. Focus on personal qualities, problem-solving, and relationship skills that will serve her well throughout life. Emphasize the importance of self reflection and self correction.

Teach them to think before they speak. Teach your child to choose words that are more likely to be constructive than destructive. Use empathy-building questions, “How would you feel if that happened to you?” “What would you think if someone said that to you?” “What would you do in that situation?” Challenge her to consider, “If everyone said or did what you propose, would it be OK?” “What would that look like?” “If not, then should you?” “What might you do instead?” Discuss how she will know when

she’s being true to the vision. Identify what she is already doing that fits her vision. Assess those aspects that do not fit and explore how she might bring about desired change. Help her establish realistic short and long-term goals. Guide her in discovering the abundance of possibilities within herself.

Model the personal qualities you value. It is not enough to tell our children how to behave. We have to show them. Remember — they may not be listening to everything we say, but they are watching everything we do. Demonstrate the personal qualities and character you want them to exhibit. Notice when they are doing what is expected. Recognize and express appreciation for their efforts and accomplishments. Be more anxious to catch them being good than being bad. When discipline is necessary, make it relevant, reasonable, and respectful. Model qualities you would be proud for them to emulate.

Becoming yourself is not the same as expressing yourself. Our culture is obsessed with self-expression and individuality, albeit a superficial understanding of individuality. Individuality is not defined by appearance, possessions, and friends. Individuality is apparent in spite of, not because of, mere outward trappings. The expression of our thoughts and feelings through our words and actions is inherently and utterly unique.

Individuality is a birthright. You cannot become anyone but yourself. The challenge is to fully realize the potential of the person each of us is capable of becoming.

This is the essence of our individuality and becoming ourselves. And, it is a reciprocal process. While we are becoming the parents our children need, they are becoming themselves. May we acquire the wisdom to assist them in ways that allow each of us to make the most of the best of ourselves.

Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman is a resident of Lexington, Ky. She has been married for 29 years and has two sons. She spent 15 years in various agencies and clinics as a family therapist and parent educator, and has written extensively on the topic of parenting. To contact her, please e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.



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ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
ESQ.

What's an executor?

My cousin told me that she named me as her executor in her will. What does an executor do, and what are the duties and responsibilities? If I really do not want the responsibility or to take on the role, if and when the time comes, can I decline or resign from being executor?

As executor (thankfully, female fiduciaries are no longer referred to as an “executorix”) once appointed by the Surrogate’s Court, you would be obligated to carry out the provisions of the will and administer the estate. That means marshaling the assets of the decedent, paying her expenses, and distributing the remaining assets as she intended. It can also mean resolving any claims against the estate. Some (but certainly not all) of the duties of an executor may include the following:

- Locate and notify witnesses to the will.
- Notify post office to forward mail.
- Secure the decedent’s residence or home, as well as any firearms.
- Make sure house and other buildings have fuel during the winter months.
- Open a checking account or saving account for the estate.
- Discontinue unneeded utilities.
- Examine the contents of safe deposit box accompanied by the estate’s attorney.
- Search for valuable papers and assets.
- Inspect all real estate and locate mortgages, and leases affecting the property.
- Examine all life insurance, real estate, and personal property insurance policies.
- Select qualified appraisers for all property to be sold.
- Investigate possibility of profit-sharing or pension death benefits.
- Review income tax returns for the past three years.
- Make sure all tax returns are filed on time.



will be seriously offended, you can simply advise her that you do not wish to act as executor and suggest that she execute a revised will. Alternatively, upon the person’s death, you can renounce your rights as executor and decline to act. If the will nominates a successor executor, that individual would then have the right to seek to probate the will. You could also probate the will but ask that someone else be appointed. It is advisable to pursue one of these options rather than the option of seek-

ing to resign as executor once you have been appointed by the court.

If an executor who has already been appointed as such by the Surrogate’s Court wishes to resign, she must file a written application with the court seeking judicial permission to resign. In an application for permission to resign as executor, the applicant must demonstrate “good cause,” and the decision of whether the individual will be permitted to resign rests in the discretion of the court. Generally, the court will evaluate whether the executor’s request to resign is in the best interests of the estate. If the executor is unable to establish that the resignation is in the best interests of the estate, the court may deny the request. In addition, in order to resign, an executor must settle the estate account.

It is best to have an honest discussion with the person appointing you before she does so. That said, it is frequently the case that someone has the desire to serve when asked, but at the time she is needed, her circumstances have changed.

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.

• File the required inventory of decedent’s assets with the court within six months of the date of appointment.

• Prepare formal or informal accounting as the case may require, and distribute the assets of the estate to the person or persons entitled to them.

• Obtain receipts and releases or waiver of citation from beneficiaries, and submit decree settling account where format account and decree are necessary.

An executor is entitled to compensation in the form of commissions for her service. Commissions are usually paid out of the estate after the distributions have taken place and subject to approval of either the court or the beneficiaries of your estate. Commissions are based upon a statutory commission rate as follows: five percent on the first \$100,000 in the estate, four percent on the next \$200,000, three percent on the next \$700,000, two-and-a-half percent on the next \$4,000,000, and two percent on any amount above \$5,000,000.

Executors usually retain the services of trusts’ and estates’ counsel to help guide them through the process.

As for the second part of your question, just because you are nominated as executor in someone’s will does not mean that you must accept this responsibility. Unless you believe that the person appointing you

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

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JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

On un-boy-ing boys

I recently read an article titled “Why Are We Un-Boy-Ing Our Boys?” It discussed a typical scenario found in schools all over: A fidgety boy is disinterested in the classroom instruction, and couldn’t care less about the current phonics lesson. He is soon referred to a specialist who says he may be slightly delayed ... or he might simply not be interested.

The author goes on to say:

“I do not have a Ph.D. nor one of those satiny Technicolor sashes around my neck, but I know this much: he is not interested. I understand the teacher has a job to do, but the boy turned five in July. He cares about marshmallows and the Fresh Beat Band. He cares about chocolate and Halloween. He doesn’t care about vowel sounds.”

She then pointed out how many girls of the same age will sit down at a desk and follow directions, but asking young boys to do the same is trying to “un-boy them.”

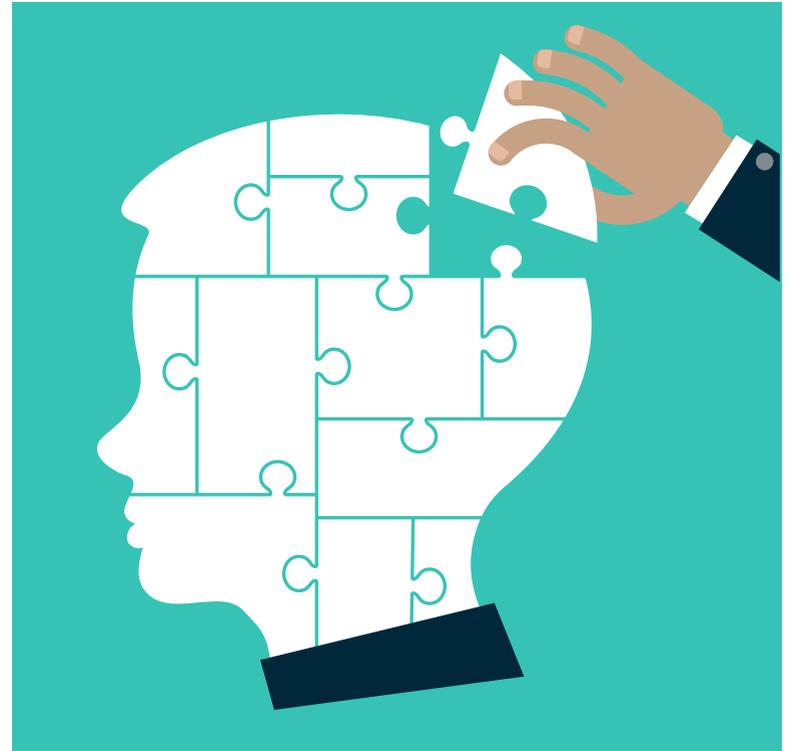
I agree ... but I disagree, too.

Boys are different, plain and simple, and most of them are more aggressive, more hands-on, and wilder than most girls. It’s true, by nature, that most boys act and react differently, find particular things interesting or boring, and think about the world in a way that is wholly incomparable to how most girls think.

I see this with my own son. Although he is a good student, there are so many things about school he finds utterly monotonous, and he does his best to sit through them while stifling his pure boy energy. Expecting every preschool boy in any given class to actually want to sit down at a desk and learn about grammar might be a tad unrealistic.

Yet, to take the debate a step beyond mere gender differences, I say we need to look at children in general. After all, the same behavior might also be said for a girl. In general, girls might tend to be quieter and better behaved than boys, but it’s certainly not a steadfast rule. I have known many girls who were just as fidgety, just as disinterested, and just as hyperactive.

I understand where the desire to start our children off on the right foot



and ahead of the competition comes from. I get it. I live in New York City, where if you’re pregnant, you better be holding headphones up to your belly with Mozart turned all the way up, because the second that baby is born, he needs to be ready for that entrance exam at a good preschool, lest his chances at an Ivy League education prove nonexistent.

Okay, an exaggeration, yes, but not by a whole lot. By age 5, most kids have already been in school for two or three years. The pressure grows with each passing day: standardized tests; near-perfect grades, so they can make it into a decent middle school; and thinking about college, starting on day-one of freshman year of high school. And every year, more of our kids are diagnosed with some learning disability, put on anxiety medication, and committing suicide.

Just when can kids actually be kids? I often wonder what exactly we are doing in trying to create the ideal academically gifted, athletically inclined child. We can’t create a perfect child out of sheer will or practice. And kids should be seen as so much more than their academic or athletic performance.

Here’s the honest truth: Not every child likes school or excels at it. Some children who are fabulously intelligent are also wholeheartedly bored by routine, drone-like rhetoric, and repetition. Some of these children have a curious mind that will take them to wonderful, innovative careers that will change the world in ways many Ivy League students could only imagine. Some kids will work with their hands, become artists, construction workers, chefs, actors, sanitation workers, etc, and have very full lives in which they are loved and make a difference in the world.

So I get it that we are under fierce competition in our global economy where the Chinese are kicking our butts, but in many cases, both boys and girls need to just be kids — get dirty, play, think, imagine, be silly, get in trouble, and yes, along the way learn grammar, math, and more.

Do they need to do it all by age 5? I highly doubt it.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, is a writer and editor living in New York City. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney’s Babble.com. Find Sullivan on her blog, Some Puppy To Love.

Calendar

APRIL



Photo by Andrew Kelly

Mini golf that's out of this world

Blast off to the best mini golf game ever at Rocket Park on the grounds of the New York Hall of Science, now through October.

The game reveals that the same laws of motion and gravity that guide the path of a spaceship control the motion of golf balls here on Earth. In this nine-hole miniature golf course, players will explore key science concepts such as propulsion, gravity, escape velocity, launch window, gravitational as-

ist, and more. Recommended for ages 6 and older.

Rocket Park Mini Golf, daily through October. Hours are Monday through Friday, 9:30 am to 5 pm, and Saturday and Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm. Tickets are \$6 (\$5 members) plus general admission to the hall.

New York Hall of Science [47-01 111th St. between 47th and 49th avenues in Corona, (718) 699-0005 X 353, www.nyscience.org]

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Calendar

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SAT, APRIL 2

IN QUEENS

Potato Planting: Edgemere Farm, 378 Beach 45th St.; (212) 602-5300; www.nycgovparks.org; Noon-1:30 pm; Free.

Spuds come in all shapes and colors. Learn the secrets to planting these underground wonders with an opportunity to dig in the dirt. RSVP required.

Hands on History: King Manor Museum, 150-03 Jamaica Ave.; (718) 206-0545, X 13; www.kingmanor.org; 1 pm to 4 pm; Free.

For the birds is a special storytime with Literacy Inc., where children learn about the many birds that visit the park. After storytime children make a bird feeder of their own.

Make It!: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 1 to 2 pm, 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm, and 4 pm to 5 pm; \$6 for adult and child (\$4 member pair) plus Hall admission.

Learn how to solder while creating a beautiful wire sculpture. Recommended for ages 7 and older.

FURTHER AFIELD

Operation slumber!: Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum, Pier 86 at W. 46th Street and 12th Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 245-0072; www.intrepid-museum.org; 6 pm to 8 am; \$120 (\$99 museum members).

Spend the night aboard the Intrepid. There will be educational activities, a visit inside the Space Shuttle Pavilion, a flashlight tour of the flight deck, a scavenger hunt, a ride in a flight simulator and meals (dinner, snacks and breakfast). Kids also receive a goodie bag with a T-shirt! It's perfect for children 8 to 12 years old. Individual cots provided. Bring your sleeping bag!

SUN, APRIL 3

IN QUEENS

Little Makers: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005



It's for the birds!

It's for the birds! Welcome to a special storytime with Literacy Inc. at King Manor Museum on April 2.

For the birds teaches children about the many birds that visit the park. Children first listen to stories about birds during a read-aloud session and then make bird feeders out of oranges for our winged friends

X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 (\$5 members) plus Hall admission.

Scrub a dub dub, make a soap to use in the tub! Mix and mold fun household ingredients to create a scented soap to take home. Recommended for children ages 18 months and older. Little makers can be messy, so wear appropriate clothing.

Gemini Journey: Voelker Orth Museum, 149-19 38th Ave.; (718) 359-6227; www.vomuseum.org; 2 pm; \$12 (\$10 members and students).

in King Park!

Rufus King planted hundreds of trees around King Manor, many of which still exist today and house various birds.

It's for the birds on April 2, from 1 pm to 4 pm. Free.

King Manor Museum [150-03 Jamaica Ave. between 150th and 153rd streets in Jamaica, (718) 206-0545, X 13, www.kingmanor.org].

Diane Block (violinist) and Terry Batts (cellist) aka "TJ and Di," are musical twins, happy to share their artistic and spiritual journey with you through tangos from the dance halls of Buenos Aires, spirited klezmer of Eastern Europe, to songs from our American heritage. A joyous musical voyage set in the parlor. Light refreshments served.

SAT, APRIL 9

IN QUEENS

Children's Carnival: Queens County

Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 11 am to 6 pm; \$12 all ages (includes rides) Free for members.

Join us for a kids' carnival in the apple orchard! Enjoy the spring weather at the farm with assorted carnival rides and children's entertainment. Midway games, hayrides, pony rides, and a seasonal petting zoo will also be available for an additional fee. Food vendors will be at the farm all day. Height rules apply at all rides.

Make It!: 1 to 2 pm; 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm and 4 pm to 5 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, April 2.

FURTHER AFIELD

Scout Day - Astronomy: Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum, Pier 86 - W. 46th Street and 12th Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 245-0072; www.intrepidmuseum.org; 11 am to 2:30 pm; call for tickets.

Scouts will learn the ins and outs of amateur astronomy from museum educators, as well as the important role the stars play for pilots and astronauts navigating through the sky. Cub Scouts will work on their Astronomy Belt Loops and Academics Pins while Boy Scouts will work toward their Astronomy Merit Badges.

SUN, APRIL 10

IN QUEENS

Little Makers: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 (\$5 members) plus NYSCI admission.

Practice fun ways of making unique prints, scribbles and doodles. Experiment with the Japanese printmaking technique known as Suminagashi, or floating ink, and make your mark on pieces of paper. Recommended for children ages 18 months and older. Sometimes creativity can get messy, so dress your little maker (and yourself) in old clothing that can be splattered with things like paint, ink and oobleck.

Children's Carnival: 11 am to 6 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Saturday, April 9.

Tinker it Sundays: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 1:30 pm to 3 pm and 3:30 pm to 5 pm; Free with NYSCI admission.

Build, explore and create with tinker-ing activities at this fun workshop.

FURTHER AFIELD

Science workshop: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; 11 am to 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Continued on page 30

Calendar

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

Continued from page 29

sion and members.

As part of the Milstein Science Series the museum offers Wild Antarctica, a fun science festival where children learn about Antarctica, the coldest and windiest place on Earth. Children will learn about new discoveries of amazing creatures and the unique geology beneath the ice. Meet live penguins, try hands-on activities, and experience dynamic performances.

Special Needs Expo: Long Island Hilton, 598 Broadhollow Rd., Long Island; (516) 279-3727; info@specialneedsexpos.com; www.specialneedsexpos.com; 11 am to 4 pm; Free.

Discover the special needs resources for children, adults, and professionals. Meet many service providers and obtain product information, attend seminars and view demonstrations. Fun for kids too!

TUES, APRIL 12

FURTHER AFIELD

Operation slumber! Girls Only:

Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum, Pier 86 at W. 46th Street and 12th Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 245-0072; www.intrepidmuseum.org; 6 pm to 8 am; \$120 (\$99 museum members).

Spend the night aboard the Intrepid. There will be educational activities, a visit inside the Space Shuttle Pavilion, a flashlight tour of the flight deck, a scavenger hunt, a ride in a flight simulator and meals (dinner, snacks and breakfast). Girls also receive a goodie bag with a T-shirt! It's perfect for girls 8 to 12 years old. Individual cots provided. Bring your sleeping bag.

SAT, APRIL 16

IN QUEENS

Children's Carnival: 11 am to 6 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Saturday, April 9.

Make It!: 1 to 2 pm; 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm and 4 pm to 5 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, April 2.

FURTHER AFIELD

Bird walks: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; 9 am, 11:30 am and 2 pm; \$12 (\$10 members).

Observe the birds of Central Park with museum naturalist Noah Burg. Young explorers will begin their adventure by learning the tools and skills of observation using museum specimens. Then we will head out to Central Park to identify the many bird species and habitats in our own backyard. Binoculars and bird guides are included. This program is recommended for families with children ages 4-10.



Musical history book

Go back to the days when swing was king with "Southeast Queens," running now through May 7 at the Roy Wilkins Park Theatre.

The play, directed by Passion, and written by Carl Clay and Jacqueline Wade, takes you on a musical journey to the past, when innocence reigned in Southeast Queens, when you only paid a quarter to hop on the bus, families gathered at house parties and backyard barbecues, and the sounds of Motown and Count Basie

and James Brown hailed Queens as home. "Southeast Queens" will have you reminiscing about old friends and places. It's not just a show — it's a musical history book. Suitable for older teens.

Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays now through May 7. Show times are Friday and Saturday at 8 pm and Sundays at 4 pm. Tickets are \$25.

Roy Wilkins Park Theatre [177th Street and Baisley Boulevard in Saint Albans, (718) 723-1800, www.BlackSpectrum.com]

Green Festival Expo: Jacob Javits Convention Center, 655 W. 34th St. and 11th Avenue, Manhattan; greenfestivals.org; 10 am to 5 pm; \$10 per day (\$19 weekend pass).

Join Mother Nature to celebrate Earth Day at the biggest greenest festival. There will be dozens of experts and presenters providing materials on how you can live a better greener life. Loads of children's activities including an interactive sustainability learning game and Growums Captain Eggplant teaching gardening tips to kids. Dr. Oz's Health Corps will provide lessons on sugary drinks and the Swim Strong Foundation hosts water activities, plus other kid-friendly games.

SUN, APRIL 17

IN QUEENS

Little Makers: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am

to 12:30 pm; \$8 (\$5 members) plus NY-SCI admission.

Invent your own flavor as you shake up a small batch of healthy, homemade ice cream. Recommended for children ages 18 months and older. Sometimes creativity can get messy, so dress your little maker (and yourself) in old clothing that can be splattered with things like paint, ink and oobleck.

Children's Carnival: 11 am to 6 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Saturday, April 9.

Tinker it Sundays: 1:30 pm to 3 pm and 3:30 pm to 5 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Sunday, April 10.

FURTHER AFIELD

Walk MS NYC: Pier 26, West and N. Moore streets, Manhattan; (855) 372-1331; www.walkmsnyc.org; 9 am – 1:30 pm; Registration fees.

Fundraising to support MS research. Musician David Osmond performs. Walkers meet at Pier 26 and walk

along the park, enjoying views of the Hudson and New Jersey. Walk begins at 10:15 am.

Green Festival Expo: 10 am to 5 pm. Jacob Javits Convention Center. See Saturday, April 16.

MON, APRIL 18

FURTHER AFIELD

Frontiers lecture: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; 7:30 pm; \$15 (\$13.50 seniors/students) \$12 members.

Older teens enjoy this lecture series on Gravitational Waves – Messengers from the Warped Universe, which discusses some of the most violent events in the universe warp space-time and create gravitational waves. Physicist Nergis Mavalvala discusses how we search for these ripples in space-time and decode the information they carry about events as far back in time as the first moments after the Big Bang. Held in the Hayden Planetarium Space Theatre.

FRI, APRIL 22

IN QUEENS

Go Green Family Movie Night: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 6 pm to 8 pm; Free.

Children ages 5 and up Celebrate Earth Day with a screening of Dr. Seuss's classic tale "The Lorax." A prize will be awarded for the Best Dressed Lorax Costume! Raffle tickets will be sold to win great baskets with the book and other great items. Tasty snacks will also be sold. This is a family event, so children must be accompanied by an adult. Space is limited. Advance online registration is required. Program limited to 40 participants.

FURTHER AFIELD

Light Station: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road, Long Island; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; 2 pm; \$3 with museum admission (\$2 members).

About 70 percent of the Earth is covered by water that we have discovered many ways to explore. But long before the invention of modern navigation, how did sailors come to shore safely when the Earth shook and the ocean waves rolled through storms and fog? Come discover the use of lighthouses throughout history and make a lighthouse craft to celebrate this maritime symbol. For children 5 and older.

SUN, APRIL 24

IN QUEENS

Little Makers: New York Hall of Sci-

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ence, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 (\$5 members) plus Hall admission.

Explore light and color while experimenting with prisms, flashlights and filters. Then, create your own catcher to take home. Recommended for children ages 18 months and older. Little makers can be messy, so wear appropriate clothing.

Saltwater fishing: Beach, Beach 54th Street and Almeda Avenue; www.nycgoparks.org; 11 am and 12:30 pm; Free.

Experienced rangers teach the catch-and-release method to avid anglers 8 years and older.

Short stories by Teatro Hugo & Ines: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm; \$7 (\$4 children; members free) \$13 for performance (\$10 members, \$8 children, \$6 child members).

The interactive workshop is followed by a performance at 2:15 pm featuring the Peruvian duo combining mime, dance, and puppetry. Just prior to the performance, explore the wordless world of mime and learn how to build unique characters with your hands and other parts of your body. Space is limited. For ages 8 and up.

Tinker it Sundays: 1:30 pm to 3 pm and 3:30 pm to 5 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Sunday, April 10.

MON, APRIL 25

FURTHER AFIELD

Environmental workshop: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road, Long Island; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm; \$3 with museum admission (\$2 members).

Children will bring their creativity outdoors to truly be inspired by the natural environment. Using a variety of natural objects, children will create their own miniature still lifes, learning to observe the small details of the world around them. Using a limited palette reflecting their environment, they will experiment with abstraction and scale to create a painting that reflects the emotions of the environment with the influence of Willem de Kooning's unique approach to painting. In case of inclement weather, the workshop will be held indoors. Artwork created during these workshops will be displayed at our annual "Dedicated to de Kooning" exhibition. This program is funded by The Willem de Kooning Foundation.

Cherry Blossom time: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road, Long Island; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; 1 pm to 4 pm;



Photo by Paula Lobo

Discover Latin dance

Ballet Hispanico is celebrating its 45th season of performing with a special children's matinee on April 9 at the Joyce Theater.

The premier Latino dance company presents "En Familia Matinee," featuring excerpts from "Asuka," "Flabbergast," "Tito on Timables," "Sombreisimo," "Bury Me Standing," "Club Havana," and an interactive production of a fun-filled journey through Latin-

American dance and culture featuring Artistic Director Eduardo Vilaro and Education Director AnaMaria Correa as co-hosts, and a question-and-answer with the dancers.

"En Familia Matinee," April 9 at 2 pm; tickets range from \$10 to \$25.

The Joyce Theater [175 Eighth Ave. at 19th Street in Chelsea, (212) 242-0800, www.joyce.org]

Free with museum admission.

Children 3 and older create a blooming spring tree filled with bright cherry blossoms! Ages 3 and up.

TUES, APRIL 26

IN QUEENS

Puppet Phactory: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10 am to 3:30 pm; Free with NYSCI admission unless otherwise noted.

Puppet Phactory is dedicated to creating works of puppetry and sculpture from forgotten junk, and performing narratives that promote a sustainable future, while being fun and entertaining.

Green garden - Green planet:

Voelker Orth Museum, 149-19 38th Ave.; (718) 359-6227; www.vomuseum.org; 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm; \$4 (\$3 members and students).

Come get into the nitty-gritty of a cleaner and greener environment. Join us in a celebration of Earth Day. It is an afternoon of art and science of a greener environment with hands-on workshops and take-away information. Learn about recycling, composting, and other earth-friendly resources in our community. Light refreshments will be served.

FURTHER AFIELD

Environmental workshop: 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

Cherry Blossom time: 1 pm to 4 pm. Long Island Children's Museum.

See Monday, April 25.

Astronomy Live: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; 7 pm; \$15 (\$13.50 seniors/students) \$12 members.

The Force Fields Around Spaceship Earth, presents the invisible force fields all around us that make life on Earth possible. Join Jana Grcevich and Irene Pease as they explore the various dangers of space that could destroy us, and how Earth's magnetic and gravitational fields keep us safe. Held in the Hayden Planetarium Space Theatre.

WED, APRIL 27

IN QUEENS

Puppet Phactory: 10 am to 3:30 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Tuesday, April 26.

FURTHER AFIELD

Environmental workshop: 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

Cherry Blossom time: 1 pm to 4 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

THURS, APRIL 28

IN QUEENS

Creature workshop: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Noon-4 pm; Free with hall admission.

Visitors discover odd animals like blobfish, elephant shrews, Chinese giant salamanders, and other bizarre beasts in projected images and videos, with music by author and composer Michael Hearst. Hearst takes the audience on a fun, interactive investigation of the strangeness of the animal kingdom using a variety of quirky instruments, alongside NYSCI's most recent exhibition, Connected Worlds, which immerses visitors in a fantastical animated world where your actions — gestures, movements, and decisions — impact how well the world is kept in balance.

FURTHER AFIELD

Environmental workshop: 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

Cherry Blossom time: 1 pm to 4 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

FRI, APRIL 29

IN QUEENS

Concert: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 1 pm and 3 pm;

Continued on page 32

Continued from page 31

Free with hall admission.

Songs for Unusual Creatures features the music by author and composer Michael Hearst and his band. Hearst takes the audience on a fun, interactive investigation through the kingdom of weird animals with the help of his band mates and a variety of quirky instruments. Advanced registration required.

FURTHER AFIELD

Environmental workshop: 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

Cherry Blossom time: 1 pm to 4 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

SAT, APRIL 30

IN QUEENS

Making a gift for mom: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtowhall.org; 10 am and 1 pm; \$10 (\$8 members) supplies included.

Choose your workshop and make something for mom! At 10:30 am, design and create a clay teacup or bowl using the pinch pot method, and then paint it! Best for children 12 and under. At 1 pm, Korean Minhwa Folk paintings are created by those who are not professional artists, and are given as gifts on special occasions. The traditional peony decoration means a happy life and marriage. Best for children 12 and up.

Book Launch! New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Noon to 3 pm; Free with NYSCI admission.

Part of Scrapkin's 2016 "Junk Re-Think" Book Tour! Learn about Scrapkin's awesome new activity book from the author Brian Yanish, make a project, and get your book signed!

Maker Space: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 1 pm to 2 pm; 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm and 4 pm to 5 pm; \$3 (\$1 members) plus admission to the Hall.

Linkage allows children to explore simple machines with linkages while creating mechanical cardboard toys that move and dance.

FURTHER AFIELD

Run for the Wild: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; www.wcsrnf-forthewild.org; 8 am; Registration fee.

Runners/walkers of the 5K run/walk can run on behalf of any species that inspires them. New fund-raising prizes include a chance to win a South Pacific cruise and Yankees tickets. Activities include a beer garden for the adults, rock



Operetta in El Barrio

The Blue Hill Troupe presents Gilbert & Sullivan's operetta "Iolanthe" on April 9, 10, and 16 at El Teatro of El Museo del Barrio.

This is the tale of the fairy Iolanthe, who, returning after a 25-year banishment for marrying a mortal, seeks protection for her son, who is half-mortal and half-fairy. The queen grants him a title in the House of Lords, but when he falls in love with the young ward of the Lord Chancellor,

Fairyland and Parliament fall to pieces.

The Blue Hill Troupe donates its entire net proceeds to benefit the Children's Cancer and Blood Foundation.

"Iolanthe" on April 9 and 16 at 2 pm and April 10 at 3 pm. Tickets range from \$28 to \$100.

El Teatro of El Museo del Barrio [1230 Fifth Ave. at 104th Street in East Harlem, (212) 988-2012; <http://tinyurl.com/iolanthe2016>]

climbing wall, silent disco, face painting, and so much more.

Sakura Matsuri: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10 am; \$20 - \$25 (Free for children 12 and younger).

The 35th annual Cherry Blossom festival, features traditional and contemporary Japanese dances, performances and customs.

SUN, MAY 1

FURTHER AFIELD

Sakura Matsuri: 10 am. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, April 30.

LONG-RUNNING

IN QUEENS

Rocket Park Mini Golf: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Mondays and Wednesdays - Fridays, 9:30 am to 5 pm, Tuesdays, 9:30 am to 5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to

6 pm; \$6 (\$5 children) plus admission to the Hall.

Blast off to the best mini golf ever — it reveals that the same laws of motion and gravity that guide the path of a spaceship control the motion of golf balls here on Earth. Recommended for ages 6 and older.

"Southeast Queens": Roy Wilkins Park, 177th St. and Baisley Blvd.; (718) 723-1800; www.BlackSpectrum.com; Fridays and Saturdays, 8 pm, Sundays, 4 pm, Now - Sat, May 7; \$25.

The play with music takes one back to the days of innocence in Southeast Queens when bus rides cost a quarter, house parties and backyard barbecues were filled with the sounds of Motown, and Count Basie and James Brown hailed Queens as home. "Southeast Queens" will have you reminiscing about old friends and places. It's not just a show — it's a musical history book!

Family Workshop: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Sat-

urday, April 2, 12 pm; Saturday, April 9, 12 pm; Saturday, April 16, 12 pm; Saturday, April 23, 12 pm; Saturday, May 7, 12 pm; Saturday, May 14, 12 pm; Saturday, May 21, 12 pm; Free with museum admission.

Drop-in space where visitors of all ages can create media and other projects. Stop by for a fun-filled afternoon of play and game design activities inspired by the museum's collection of classic video games. Activities include animating classic arcade characters, making your own mini arcade cabinet, and more. Recommended for ages 6 and up, accompanied by an adult.

FURTHER AFIELD

Dinosaurs Among Us: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am to 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

The exhibit feature ancient, rarely seen fossils, and life-like models, including a 23-foot-long feathered tyrannosaur (Yutyrannus huali) and a small four-winged dromeosaur (Anchiornis huxleyi) with a 22-inch wingspan and vivid, patterned plumage. Visitors will encounter a tiny dinosaur whose sleeping posture precisely echoes that of a living bird, an extinct-dinosaur nest containing remains of the adult that guarded the hatchlings, and the fossil cast of a relative of Triceratops that had simple feathers on its body.

The Titanosaur: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 11 am to 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

The cast of the largest dinosaur that ever walked the earth is now on exhibit. The 122-foot long dino is residing on the fourth floor. This giant herbivore belongs to a group known as titanosaurs, and weighed about 70 tons.

Gracie Mansion tours: Gracie Mansion at Carl Schurz Park, 88th Street and E. End Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 676-3060; gracieinfo@cityhall.nyc.gov; www.on.nyc.gov/gracietour; Tuesdays, 10 am to 10:50 am, Now - Tues, April 12; Free.

Mayor DeBlasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray have introduced a new art installation, titled "Windows on the City: Looking Out at Gracie's New York." The installation consists of previously and newly acquired works, all from the original Gracie Mansion period, which have been curated to create a more historically accurate picture of life in New York City during the time of Gracie Mansion's construction. RSVP required. Photo ID required for entrance. No photography permitted in the interior. At the present time, tours are available in English only.

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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

When money matters

Consulting a certified divorce financial analyst

Getting through a divorce may “take a village.” That is, different professionals may be needed while going through the process. As a mediator I help divorcing spouses (and others in conflict) reach their own agreements and stay out of court. I may suggest that clients meet with another professional, depending on their needs. One such professional is a certified divorce financial analyst.

Haven’t heard of certified divorce financial analysts? Less well known than accountants and tax attorneys, they offer services that can benefit almost anyone. Jamie Wolff, a vice president with UBS Financial Services’ Bell and Levitt Wealth Management Group, is a certified divorce financial analyst who offered the following tips when asked about the most important things divorcing couples should know:

The earlier the better

A certified divorce financial analyst can assist someone who is already divorced, but Wolff recom-

mends meeting with one before the divorce begins. Then, or even during the divorce, money-saving plans can be developed that may be unavailable once the divorce is final.

“I have seen blunders” that could have been avoided if planning had started earlier, she says. These analysts can review proposed settlements to see if financial needs will be met, and develop alternative proposals.

Financial decisions now will affect your future

This point may be obvious, but I mention it because many of us find money confusing, stressful, and even overwhelming. Mediation clients tell me, “I want the divorce over with. I don’t care about the money. It doesn’t matter.”

But money does matter, and having the right professional work with you will make the process more manageable.

Understand what you have — and what you will need

Certified divorce financial analysts (like mediators) help clients with budgeting so that they can understand where they are financially.

“Understand your spending. Really,” Wolff emphasizes. “Understand future earning potential and consider what will you need to be happy and comfortable in the future.”

Learning about clients as individuals, certified divorce financial analysts can help create a plan for both the near and long-term future. Divorce is largely about “turning one lifestyle into two, and you need numbers for that.”

A dollar doesn’t equal a dollar when dividing assets

“A common mistake that occurs while filing for divorce is made when people think a dollar equals a dollar in distributing assets,” says Wolff. “Financial specialists in the field of divorce may be needed in order to assess the future value of particular assets (such as a pension or a business), which helps make the process

of dividing assets equitably more likely. Splitting up assets by the dollar amount fails to consider the potential growth and tax ramifications of that asset. The more complex the sum of assets, the more difficult the process of dividing becomes.”

‘Equitable’ and ‘equal’ are not the same thing

Equitable means fair, whereas equal means the same amount. For example: Spouses have \$10,000 in the bank. Each takes \$5,000 (an equal amount).

Example (from a famous mediator, John Haynes): Husband and wife own a boat. Husband wants something in exchange for the boat. Wife says essentially that “You had an affair. You have your girlfriend. I want the boat.” Husband agrees. Both feel that wife getting the boat is fair, though it’s not a financially equal arrangement.

Decide what is most important to you in a settlement

In happier days a couple purchased a painting for \$50. They have been arguing for weeks over who will keep it.

While property may have sentimental value — and how you feel about property can be a legitimate measure of its value — is that what such arguments are really about? Occasionally. But often we argue to argue, and the objects we fight over have little meaning in themselves.

Whether you mediate or litigate, a certified divorce financial analyst can be helpful in thinking through the financial issues.

Jamie Wolff can be reached at (212) 309-3086 or jamie.wolff@ubs.com.

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.

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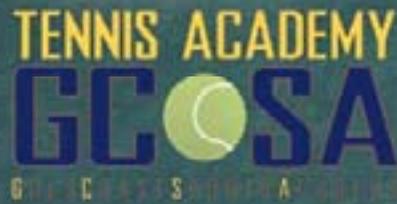
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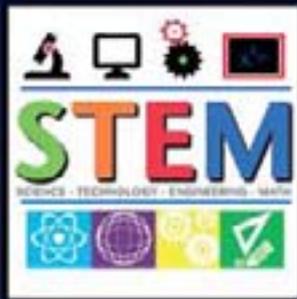
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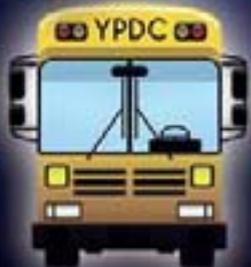
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