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Cherishing peace and freedom

I was reading an article the other day that I found very interesting, if not upsetting. How to discuss the news with your children, rather, how and when to talk to them about the violence happening around the world. I'm sure there was a time when one could perhaps escape from the barbarisms if one was lucky enough to live in a peaceful place, but these days, with the barrage of media blitz, it's almost impossible not to be caught up in it.



I used to be employed by a man who read the tabloids every day and was constantly trying to dis-

cuss with me the horror story of the moment. When I tried to escape, he accused me of hiding from the realities of the world. I believed I was protecting my sanity.

With our children it is recommended that we let them be innocent as long as possible. It is highly recommended that the local news not be our dinner table background music. It is also recommended that we don't bring up the massacres and tragedies until we absolutely have to because they are old enough to be aware of it themselves.

In this issue we touch on some

very serious topics in, I trust, an intelligent way. We have an article by Tammy Scileppi about a young 8-year-old writer who has written a book about child refugees from Syria. We have a passionate but intelligent essay from our resident attorney, Alison Arden Besunder, about GUNS and their legal and constitutional right in New York State. Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman talks about parallels between child rearing and governing. All interesting and important conversations.

The Fourth of July is Independence Day, as we all know. It is also a time to celebrate the freedoms we have and the relative peace we enjoy here in our nation. So much of the planet remains in turmoil. The conversation will go on and

on about immigrants and immigration. Personally, I am the product of four grandparents from four different countries who all found freedom in this nation. I also married a foreign national and I have lived in other places and visit other countries often. In my opinion, we must protect our own freedom by cherishing it for all and offering it to all comers.

Have a Happy Fourth! Be safe. Courage.

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Freedom & parenting

Parallels between how we raise our children and govern our country

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

The wide stretch of beach is empty except for a small colony of seagulls. My 2-year-old son takes off after them as fast as his toddler legs will carry him. With dimpled, sun-kissed arms outstretched and damp, salty curls bouncing, he runs with total abandon, determined to catch one.

The embodiment of complete freedom. Is there such a thing?

Complete freedom implies the absence of constraints or consequences, an impossibility for any form of life on Earth. The apparent freedom reflected in the picture of my son running on the beach is merely an illusion.

This simple act is actually governed by multiple constraints. The law of gravity keeps his feet on the ground, laws of nature allow the seagulls to escape, physical limits allow him to run for only so long, local ordinances require him to stay on a public beach, and parental restrictions prevent him from getting too close to the water. Yet, he expresses utter delight in his quest.

Our country's founders, having been subject to oppression by a centuries-old monarchy, were anxious to establish freedom. So much so, they focused almost exclusively on outlining their rights. Yet, freedom without consequences does not exist. Perhaps they would have avoided confusion if they had written "The Bill of Rights and Responsibilities." The two go hand in hand.

The democracy they formed necessitates that both be accepted and protected, or freedom will be lost.

Democracy is a system of government by the whole population through elected representatives. A democratic government depends on the active, cooperative participation of its people and their ability to fully realize this responsibility. Searching online for the essential conditions of a successful democracy repeatedly gleaned these elements: an educated populace, vigilant protection of freedom, local self-government, civic-mindedness, tolerance, freedom of speech, a written constitution, and the absence of gross inequalities.

Since we are raising our children in a democracy, what are the implications of these conditions for our parenting?

Learning to think

Whereas monarchies and dictatorships thrive with a readily controlled, uneducated populace, democracies depend on people thinking for themselves.

Our children are living in an age of unprecedented access to information. As their first teachers, our role in guiding their informal education and overseeing their formal education is vital. In addition to nurturing their curiosity, we must teach them to distinguish between opinion and fact, and considering the credibility of sources. The ability to process information to formulate their own opinion is essential.

Protect and respect

As a cornerstone of democracy, freedom must be vigilantly protected. An effective method for protecting freedom is recognizing where my rights end and yours begin.

I have the right to drive, but I do

Democracies depend on people thinking for themselves. In addition to nurturing our children's curiosity, we must teach them to distinguish between opinion and fact, and considering the credibility of sources.

not have the right to jeopardize your safety.

If in the desire to protect my freedom, I neglect yours, freedom's future is compromised. Denial of freedom based on membership in a particular group, rather than behavior and actions, increases freedom's vulnerability. Who knows when the group in question may be mine?

Self-discipline

Before participating in the government of an entire population, one should first be capable of self-government. The way to avoid external constraints is to practice internal restraints.

By providing clearly stated, age-appropriate rules and expectations with reasonable consequences for failure to comply, parents assist children in acquiring self-discipline.

When participation in a rule or consequence setting and decision-making is increasingly allowed depending on age and maturity, children learn the skills necessary for taking on greater responsibility.

The inherent relationship between rights and responsibilities becomes apparent.

Social conscience

Empathy, the ability to imagine what life is like for others, is essential to developing civic-mindedness. Living by rules when expecting others to do so and considering the impact of personal decisions on others are practices that readily translate from an effective family to an effective society.

Tolerant spirit

Openly sharing ideas and participating in productive debate and discussion provides children the opportunity to practice expressing their thoughts while experiencing differences of opinion. Learning to maintain their integrity while accepting diversity is an invaluable accomplishment.

Free, not inflammatory, speech

Expressing one's ideas, beliefs, or complaints is possible without resorting to derogatory, maligning, character assassinations of others.

When we are confident of our position, we can accept the rights of others to hold different positions without feeling threatened or compelled to agree with, approve of, or adopt theirs.

Being able to respectfully disagree shows strength of character.

Written agreements

By creating and adopting a family constitution, we demonstrate to our children the value of establishing expectations for individual members that contribute to the well-being of the entire family.

Avoiding inequality

While there is clearly inequality between parents and children in terms of age, maturity, responsibility, and knowledge, they are equal in their fundamental value as human beings. Whenever access to rights or privileges is denied due to some arbitrary characteristic, the inevitable resentment threatens the viability of the whole group.

As a microcosm of society, the family provides an ideal place to learn the democratic process. Our children learn from us what it means to be conscientious citizens in a democracy.

Like a child chasing seagulls on the beach, the pursuit of happiness involves the freedom to make choices — hopefully responsible ones.

Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman is a resident of Lexington, Ky, 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, e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.

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Her hope is contagious

An 8-year-old from California creates a book to inspire Syrian refugees

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

No matter who they are or what their circumstances might be, children are children. It doesn't take much to make them smile — and don't they all love to play and learn?

Child refugees from Syria are like our kids in many ways. For, despite their lost childhoods and the terrible upheaval, destruction, and despair they face, they are still children first, and having fun should be their number-one priority.

And each has a story to tell — of her journey, homeland, and hopes and wishes.

A compassionate, smart-beyond-her-years fourth-grader has penned a unique book, that is beautifully written and illustrated from the heart. The inspiring tale encourages young readers to believe in themselves now and forever, no matter what. Trisha Rao, now 9, wrote "Believe in Yourself" last year, because she felt sorry for refugee children around the world. Through the light-hearted story she tells, her wish is to remind them to be brave, to laugh and dream, but most of all to always have hope.

After all, children are the ones who suffer most from wars and conflicts.

Trisha's best friend, her smiling

golden retriever Sunshine, became the main character of this wonderful, must-read book, which is filled with her awesome paintings and illustrations. The young author intends to donate it to as many Syrian refugee kids as possible, while she shares her universal message of peace, love, strength, and courage with youngsters everywhere. Everybody can use a good dose of hope and happiness in their lives.

The worst humanitarian crisis of our lifetime

It's hard to believe there are more than 60 million refugees in the world today, of which more than half are innocent children. The Syrian refugee crisis, which began in May 2011, is the largest displacement of people of our time, and you can't turn on the news without hearing about the ongoing Syrian conflict — the topic of hotly debated conversations here in the U.S. and abroad.

Most Syrian refugees fleeing violence have found themselves in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey, which is now the largest host of refugees in the region and also the largest host of refugees in the world. Turkey has taken a central role in the response to the Syria crisis, hosting close to 3 million Syrian refugees — more than

any other country. About half are children dealing with unimaginable turmoil and fear in their young lives.

Trisha feels their pain, and decided to give them a special story.

The start

An inquisitive student, she studied in a Montessori school in San Diego for the first six years of her life.

"My hobbies are painting, playing badminton, playing with my friends, reading books, listening to music, and dancing," said Trisha. And her favorite subjects include English, matter and astronomy, science, and physical geography.

Her mother Sumana says her daughter has been painting since age 2 and remarkably, has made more than 300 acrylic paintings! And the San Diego Museum of Art exhibited Trisha's works when she was just 2-and-a-half! Her paintings were also used to raise money for flood victims in Karnool, India, in 2010.

Trisha's literary journey began last summer. On a tranquil, day-dreaming kind of afternoon, the aspiring 8-year-old poet scribbled some truly profound prose in her notebook as she gazed out her window. She called it "Believe in Yourself." Her mom, who was surprised and deeply moved by what she wrote, already knew her daughter had a creative streak and that she was wise for her age.

"She has always been kind and compassionate," she said lovingly.

So, while her peers were enjoying summer past times, Trisha's mind went to matters beyond her safe, comfy California home. Shocked by media headlines about the war- and terror-stricken Syrian refugees, she expressed her sadness and concern about their plight to family and friends, who then helped her transform that heartfelt poem into a great children's book that conveyed a universal message. One which seems to reverberate across oceans, deserts, and rough Middle Eastern terrains: Believe in yourselves! Don't give up hope! I'm here for you!

Describing her poems, Trisha said, "I write from my heart about things that touch my heart — I write about nature, my pet dog Sunshine, my mom, my school, my friends, animals, trees, etc."

The story follows Sunshine the pup and Papa Dog, who travel through the jungles of the world learning valuable life lessons from their animal friends, like standing up for yourself and others, loving yourself deeply, attempting to over-

Syrian refugee kids in the news

If you want to get a glimpse of what life is like "over there," you and your kids should read Ali, Mustafa, and Amira's journeys: "School in refuge: the stories of three Syrian children in Turkey"

<http://blog.concern.net/school-in-refuge-the-stories-of-three-syrian-children-in-turkey>

You can also read how others are using creativity to help the young refugees:

Khaldiya Jibawi. This creative teen took a workshop in making videos after her family fled to a refugee camp. Her film about day-to-day life is now making the festival rounds.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/06/05/480611303/syrian-teens-9-minute-doc-hits-cannes-sundance-1-a-film-fest>

UNICEF. Three "Unfair Tales" is the The United Nations Children's Fund's new project that takes real-

life stories of Syrian refugee kids and turns them into short — and really intense — animated videos.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/04/12/473007477/watch-these-3-unfairy-tales-and-see-if-they-move-you>

Save the Children. This organization had Syrian refugee kids draw what they were feeling.

<http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/03/17/470809097/syrian-refugee-kids-were-told-to-draw-whatever-they-wanted>



come challenges, creating your own opportunities, working hard to make your wishes come true, being grateful to God (or any higher power), being kind to others, and staying united with friends and loved ones.

The story concludes with wonderful symbolism as Papa Dog offers unconditional love to Sunshine, who finds it comforting to know that Papa Dog will always be there to love and support him.

Trisha's journey to Istanbul

The young author and her family traveled to Istanbul, Turkey, in December 2015, and you can imagine what a truly memorable, life-altering journey it was. So she could share her important inspirational message of hope with Syrian refugee children living there, Trisha launched "Believe in Yourself" while visiting. She read it to a bevy of curious kids

Trisha Rao's puppy Sunshine is the main character in her book. (Left) Trisha launched her book to a group of Syrian refugee children in Istanbul last December.

who had gathered around her. Sadly, they had lost their homes, and sometimes, their families.

Trisha said the children loved hearing the words to the story, and especially liked her colorful pictures. Apparently, they felt an instant bond to the long-haired American girl, despite the language barrier. What a thrill it must have been to make new friends!

Her experience turned out to be the most amazing family vacation she had ever had. Trisha says she wants to encourage ALL kids to stay hopeful, no matter what.

"I turned my poem into a children's book to show that we all have great power within ourselves to make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of other people, too," she said. "I felt bad for the Syrian refugee children

because they lost their homes, homelands, and families at a young age."

Trisha said most of the children were with their parents, who were trying to get adjusted to a new country. They did not know the local language, so it was difficult for them to get good jobs.

"We met around 30 children — most between the ages of 5 and 10 — at the Support to Life community center in Istanbul. The refugee families lived far from the center, but the children came there every day to spend their day at the center," Trisha recalled. (Support to Life is a humanitarian agency working with disaster-stricken communities.)

"The hardest part was when I learned that they did not have money to buy lunch," the young writer said. "I felt bad that they had to walk several miles from where they were living to come to the center where they spent the whole day."

The Support to Life team met Trisha and her family during their trip and in a letter, the director later thanked them for being part of their cause in improving the life of refugees in Turkey.

"By reading her book to the children, Trisha did not only give them support and inspiration, but also was able to touch them with her sincerity. Your thoughtful visit at the Istanbul Center Support to Life House made a great mark in the children's lives since it was also a pathway for children to reconnect with their childhood," the letter stated.

Trisha's ultimate wish with her book is to reach every single child on the planet with her positive vibe. For every book she sells in 2016, she has pledged to donate one copy to refugee children around the globe.

And since those kids in Turkey loved the book so much, it was translated into Arabic. The books that have been donated so far — more than 110 — are in English. Once the Arabic books are printed, more can be sent to Syrian children. More than 500 copies have been sold.

"Believe in Yourself" has received the 2016 Gold Medal from the Independent Publishers Book Awards in the category of Best Children's eBook. It is for sale on Amazon and through the United Nations Stores: https://www.amazon.com/Believe-Yourself-Trisha-Rao/dp/B01A4S1FQ0/ref=sr_1_1_twi_kin_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1465909533&sr=8-1&keywords=trisha-rao

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer and journalist, parent, and regular contributor to New York Parenting.

Become a great parent

New book
offers training
for a very
important job

BY ALLISON PLITT

As a parent, have you ever wished for a training manual about raising kids — a book that would tell you what page to find information about disciplining your child or on which page there's advice on how to praise your child? Dr. Erica Reischer, a clinical psychologist and parent educator, has written just such a manual called, "What Great Parents Do: 75 Simple Strategies for Raising Fantastic Kids."

This manual of invaluable advice is broken down into 75 approaches to help parents work with their children and their behavior. Each strategy is contained in a two- to four-page chapter that can be skipped or skimmed over if you feel you've already grasped the concept. The book can be read in a day or two and can be referred to in any situation in which parents may not know how to handle their children.

"Underlying the parenting practices described in this book are three key principles that I call the ABCs of great parenting," explains Reischer. The A stands for Acceptance, which is about accepting your child for himself. For example, an athletic father may have trouble accepting his son is quiet and musically inclined. The child's self is separated from that of his behavior, which can be modified by parents by following the steps that Reischer provides.

The B stands for Boundaries.

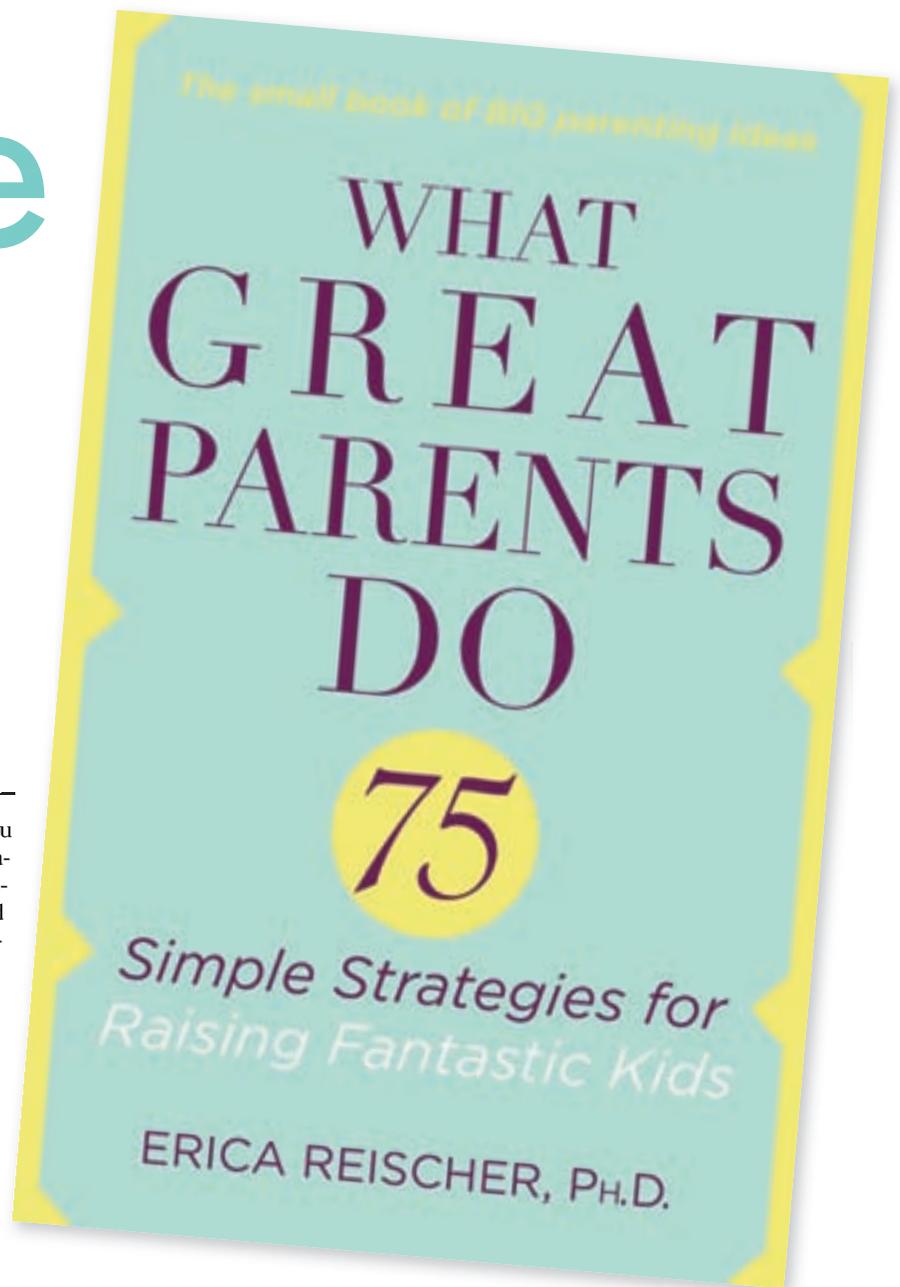
When parents communicate limits to their children, kids "ultimately feel safest in a family environment where expectations and rules are clear and reasonable." And C stands for Consistency, which means parents must follow through on what they say they will do. Parents are role models for children, who will copy their behavior, especially if the parents act in the same positive manner repeatedly.

Reischer devotes a lot of her book to discussing D for Discipline, and how to properly do it. She says it is not about punishing children, but rather teaching them to behave appropriately. Any form of physical punishment, including spanking or even holding a child's arm tightly, teaches children to handle problems with aggression and violence. Yelling at children is also portrayed as detrimental to a child's development.

"Research has also shown that yelling can have harmful effects on children comparable to physical punishment, such as hitting," Reischer observes. "Children whose parents are verbally aggressive also exhibit lower self-esteem, higher aggressiveness, and increased rates of depression."

Reischer advises disciplining children in private so as not to embarrass them in front of their peers. She also advises against disciplining children at inappropriate times, such as when the parents or children are tired and hungry.

One of the strategies for correcting children's behavior is to show empathy and assist him in identifying how he is feeling. For example, if a 6-year-old boy hits his 4-year-old brother for taking away his toy train, parents can say, "Son, I know how





Dr. Erica Reischer

frustrating and angry it can be to see your brother taking away your toy from you without asking, but hitting your brother is not going to solve the problem.”

Next, Reischer advises, you should talk to your son about other ways to teach his brother to respect his toys. You could give your older son different options to solve the problem, so he feels a sense of self-control and autonomy.

The most obvious option would be for the older brother to tell his younger brother that he must ask permission before playing with his toys. If the younger son still doesn't ask permission before using the toys, the older child can choose to get a parent involved.

Once both sons know the appropriate behavior for resolving the problem, those actions should be repeated if the dilemma should appear again. If you find the boys sharing the toys cooperatively, take the opportunity to praise them. Praise reinforces positive behavior.

But be careful how you bestow praise.

Reischer suggests that parents not label their children by saying, “You're so smart.” If a child believes he is smart, she says, he may do everything possible to look smart and not take risks at things that would be mentally challenging.

Praise should be given when children put forth effort. Parents are encouraged to give kids positive feedback for their hard work. For example, when a child's grade in math improves from a C to an A, it's better to say: “I saw how long you spent every day on your math homework, and I saw you study a lot for your math tests. Your hard

work in math has really paid off. I'm very proud of you.”

In addition, Reischer says, teach your children habits for being happy. According to the author, there are three types of happiness: pleasure, engagement, and meaning.

“The focus of pleasure,” the author writes, “is gratifying desires and preferences — for example, having delicious food, fun experiences, and beautiful things.”

Pleasure provides instant gratification for kids; however, it is really engagement and meaning that emotionally fulfill children. Engagement means that kids apply their skills to meet challenges. When these activities become complex, children learn to develop their “skills through practice and persistence.” This again reinforces the idea that through consistent effort and hard work, children can achieve goals that give them self-confidence and self-esteem.

Meaning is defined as “service” to contribute to the greater good. Great parents teach their children to be charitable. Acting charitably is not for putting on the college application but for kids to build self-confidence by using their skills to help others. When kids learn to be caring and compassionate, they learn about empathy, which will help them in their interpersonal relationships with other people.

Another key to happiness that great parents impart to their children is gratitude, the importance of being thankful for what they have. According to Robert Emmons, a prominent gratitude researcher, “Practicing gratitude alleviates anxiety and depression and improves mental, emotional, and physical health.”

Being a great parent all boils down to having a strong relationship with your children and treating them with respect. In reciprocity, kids should treat their parents in the same manner, which also means using the words “please” and “thank you.”

If you are reading her manual and feel overwhelmed by all of the advice, Reischer reminds parents that being great is not about being perfect, because no parent can do everything perfectly. When they make errors, great parents admit their mistakes to their kids and apologize for their behavior.

Allison Plitt is a frequent contributor to NY Parenting and lives in Queens with her 10-year-old daughter.

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OUR GUNS

A closer look at NY State's gun laws

BY ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER

During the past several years, it has seemed that every day, week, and month there is another tragedy as a result of guns in the hands of individuals who use them as tools of murder and terrorism.

The most recent massacre at a gay club in Orlando was one of 43 shootings on June 12. In 2016 so far, there have been 6,131 gun-related deaths, 141 mass shootings, and 259 children under 11 killed or injured (www.gunviolencearchive.org). These events have become horrifically commonplace.

Rather than my usual “Q&A” column, I thought that readers would like to know more about the gun laws applicable in New York State, which in and of itself has vastly different “gun cultures” between Upstate and Downstate.

New York gun licensing

New York has no separate constitutional gun protection, but Article 2, Section 4 of the New York Civil Rights Law provides “a well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms cannot be infringed.” That law has not prevented the state from imposing some of the strictest handgun regulations in the nation. New York’s 1911 Sullivan Law was one of the first in the country requiring a permit to own a handgun.

New York’s gun control is essentially two-tiered between state and local law. All handguns must be licensed. Outside New York City,

rifles and shotguns need not be licensed.

At the state level, a license may be granted to an applicant who:

- Is of good moral character.
- Over 21 years of age.
- Has not been convicted of a serious offense.
- States if and when he has ever been treated for mental illness, is not subject to a protective court order.
- To whom no good cause exists for the denial of the license.

The age requirement does not apply to persons honorably discharged from the military. Anyone between 18 and 21 can use a handgun at an indoor or outdoor pistol range or at a target pistol shooting competition under the auspices of or approved by the National Rifle Association (not exactly my first choice for supervisory authority). New York State does not perform its own background check, but rather forwards fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a search of criminal records. The failure or refusal of the Bureau to complete the fingerprint check in six months cannot be the sole basis for refusing to issue the permit.

Gun purchase in New York requires a license for that particular make, model, caliber, and serial number, and possession requires a valid license for that particular registered gun. Licenses are not issued to non-New York residents or part-time residents; out-of-state handguns are not permitted.

There are two types of licenses: carry or premises-only. New York City rarely issues carry licenses

and only where self-defense is the proven primary reason for ownership (usually law enforcement and armed guards). A premises-only license does not permit carrying as a concealed weapon off-premises.

Oversight and enforcement

New York’s gun control and culture widely varies from county to county, especially between Downstate and Upstate.

Other than the city (three years) or Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester (five years), licenses in New York State are valid until revoked and need not be renewed. In other words, New York State — like most states — has no oversight of a gun owner after license.

Even with a permit, it is illegal to carry a weapon in schools (including child care), state parks, or mental health facilities. The penalty for carrying a concealed weapon without a permit is only a class A misdemeanor, carrying a penalty of a fine up to \$1,000 or up to 12 months in jail (or three years probation).

New York is a “May-Issue” state; the individual licensing official (a local police chief or sheriff) has discretion to issue a handgun license or concealed weapon permit and whether to impose conditions such as firearms training or education. The various licensing and permit authorities are not unified, the rules vary between counties, and the “gun laws” are therefore all over the map.

New York City, for example, is a “No Issue” jurisdiction. New York City is the only county where a



pistol licensee is restricted from carrying and must have an “uninterrupted trip” through the city with the ammunition and gun locked separately when traveling. Delaware County, on the other hand, is the only county to permit open carrying. The restrictions imposed on a carry license travel with the licensee as he or she travels from county to county within the state. Thus, a holder of a Delaware County license (unrestricted carry) can take his concealed handgun into Kotobuki, but his Suffolk County gun-licensee companion cannot.

New York State bans possession or sale of “assault weapons” or “large capacity ammunition feeding devices” manufactured after 1994. New York State law continues to enforce the same provisions as the (now expired) Federal Assault Weapons Ban, which bans rifle magazines in excess of 10 rounds in assault

weapons manufactured after 1994. This means that New York State bans as a felony the high capacity, quick-reload weapons such as the Sig Sauer MCX, which was reportedly used in the Orlando shooting.

However, the expiration of the federal ban undermined enforcement power, since the federal law had required that all “large capacity” magazine guns be stamped with the date of manufacture. That federal requirement is no longer in effect, hindering prosecutions of possession of post-2004 assault weapons. Gov. Cuomo’s 2013 proposals did not go as far as was originally hoped in reducing permitted magazines from 10 to seven rounds.

New York gun numbers

New York is sixth in the top 10 restrictive states on the purchase, possession, or carrying of handguns, and 48th in the “Gun Death

Rank” (in 2010 it was 24th). New York also elevated its rating to an A- from a B in 2010 from the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence (smartgunlaws.org/new-york-state-law-summary/). In 2008 New York had the fifth lowest number of gun deaths. And in December 2012, then-mayor Bloomberg announced that the city’s murder rates were the lowest in 50 years.

More gun-related deaths occur in states with less restrictive gun laws and a higher rate of gun ownership (smartgunlaws.org/gun-laws-matter-2012-understanding-the-link-between-weak-laws-and-gun-violence/).

Although New York has some of the strictest gun laws in the country, we can still do better. The federal government and the state need to require federal background checks of all gun sales, including private ones; the ban of high-capacity magazines; keeping guns from people who are

mentally ill; banning the direct internet sale of ammunition purchases. There should also be re-certification for gun ownership (just like drivers’ license renewal!) and monitoring of gun owners, together with continuing safety education courses for gun owners. It is not acceptable that it is harder to buy certain over-the-counter drugs in this country than it is to purchase a deadly weapon.

For more information on how to take action, visit the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence and the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence (www.bradycampaign.org).

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



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

On trying too hard

Taking a moment to see if you're overextended

It had been a long day. I had several meetings in various parts of the city. Getting to the Upper East Side from my section of Brooklyn can easily take an hour and a half. It wasn't a terrible commute that morning, but I saw a few snowflakes on my way in. One meeting uptown ran late, which made me hustle to my midtown appointment at noon. By then, a thin sheet of snow had blanketed the city streets, and I had left my boots at home.

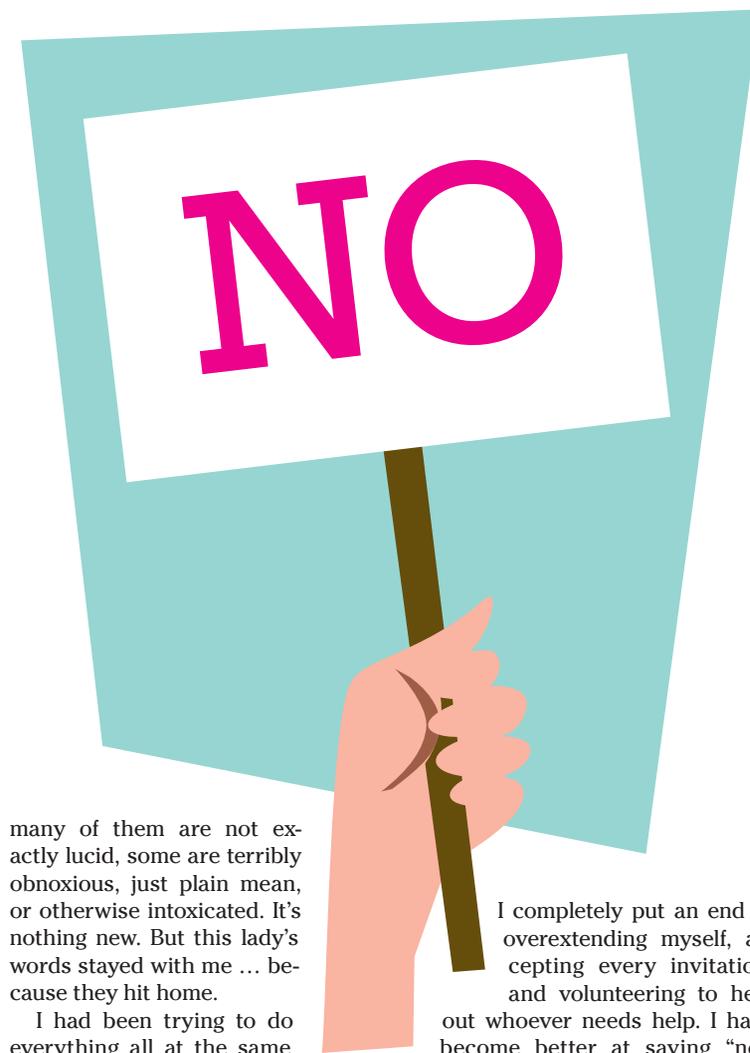
When I was done for the day and ready to come home, the train was not coming. Signals had rendered the B train frozen, and I stood along with several hundred other tired commuters for 45 minutes until we squeezed our way into the metal cars to head very slowly back to Brooklyn. Then, I had to wait for the bus to take me to my house. The bus had no intention of arriving on time, either.

Waiting at home for me was grocery shopping, planning a family get-together, taking my son to music practice, my dog to the vet, laundry, and a couple of deadlines.

While waiting for the bus, I saw an older woman walking with three large bags, slushing her way through the snow. She looked at the bus schedule and then shouted out to no one in particular, "Does the B2 stop here?" I answered, "No, it doesn't. It stops across the street," and I pointed to the opposite corner. She then told me where she had to go, and how she didn't know how to get there and in that short time, I realized she wasn't exactly coherent. But I tried to help her get where she was going. Then she proceeded to pace around and talk to herself as I remembered a faster way for her to reach her destination and walked over to tell her.

And that's when she screamed, "Honey, you're trying too hard. Just stop."

Startled, I didn't respond. She shuffled away. My bus finally came, and eventually I got home. As New Yorkers, we encounter all sorts of people every day and, unfortunately,



many of them are not exactly lucid, some are terribly obnoxious, just plain mean, or otherwise intoxicated. It's nothing new. But this lady's words stayed with me ... because they hit home.

I had been trying to do everything all at the same time, not let anything slip through the cracks, and control it all. Only, I couldn't. No one can. None of us can do it by ourselves, but I was one not accustomed to asking for help. And each "yes" I agreed to only stirred my anxiety. This lady was like the angels in the movies that only the lead character can see, although I'm fairly sure she was real. We all get signs, whether they are directly from friends and family, or an animal, or song, or even a word we keep encountering over and over again. When we see or hear something that makes us stop in our tracks, that's a good indication that it's something we need to give our attention to.

I'd like to say that since that day,

I completely put an end to overextending myself, accepting every invitation, and volunteering to help out whoever needs help. I have become better at saying "no." Every now and then I hear that woman whisper, "You're trying too hard," particularly when I find myself too busy and stressed. I silently agree and then practice saying "no." We all should try our best to help our loved ones, and even those we don't know but can help, but not at our own expense. Only when we take care of ourselves can we truly impact others, and to do that, we must put ourselves on our own priority list.

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.

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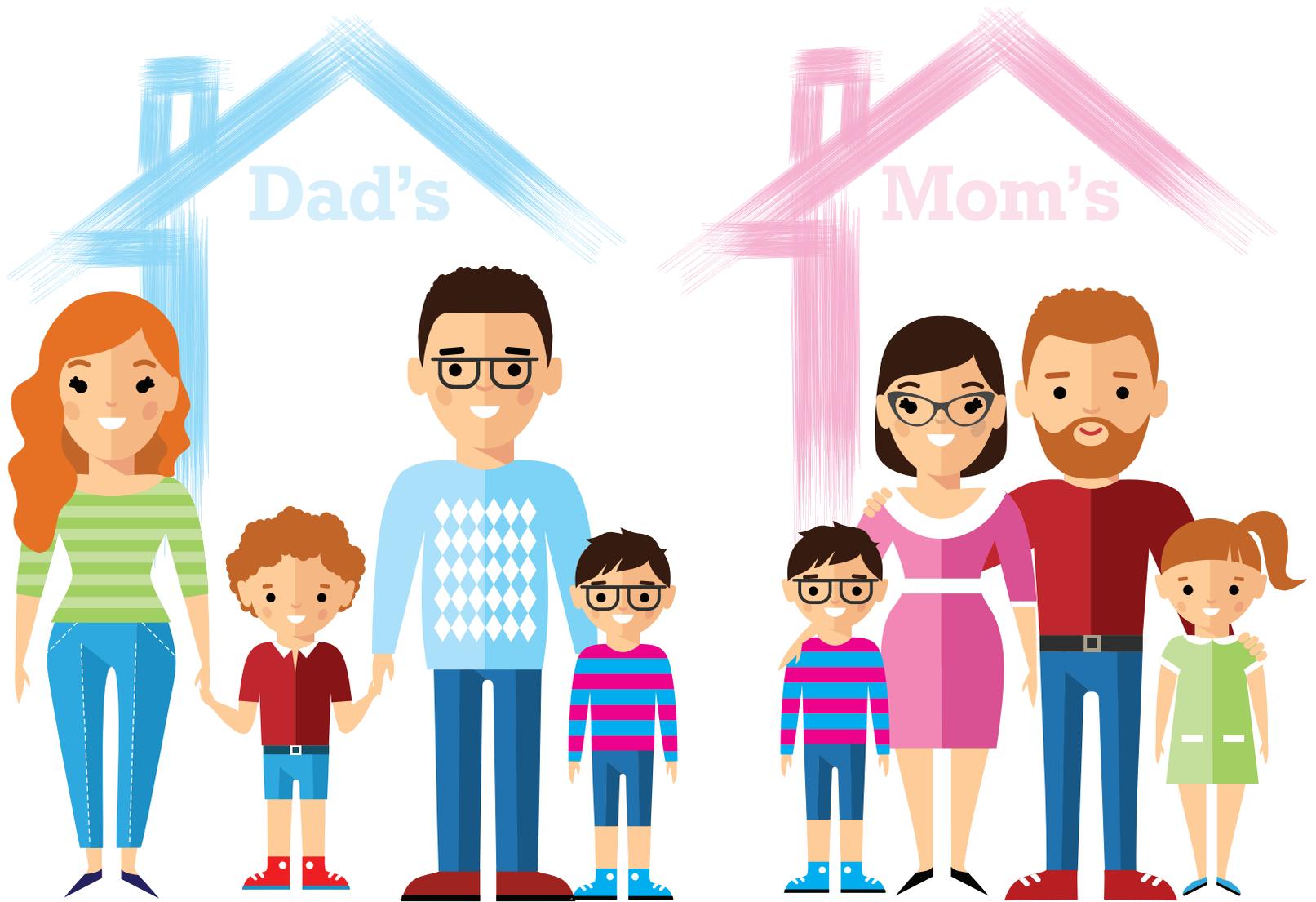
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Team family

After a divorce, working together when you live apart

BY GAYLA GRACE

“Although we don’t like each other, we maintain a friendly demeanor for the sake of our children.”

My friend’s comments confirmed what I already knew — her kids benefitted from her efforts toward a cordial relationship with her ex-spouse.

Children with a mom and dad in different homes often experience confusion, anxiety, and turmoil. They need a stable home environment, free of tension and chaos, to develop a healthy self-image and succeed in school. If you spend time

Seven tips to help:

- Don’t meddle in the affairs of the other home.
- Maintain a cooperative and flexible attitude with your ex when discussing the kids’ schedules.
- Keep conflict with your ex-spouse away from the ears of your children.
- Encourage your children to

be responsible with their belongings.

- As a stepparent, offer grace and understanding to your stepchildren.
- Consider the needs of your children and stepchildren as they transition.
- Commit to a new tomorrow when you fail.

at your child’s school, particularly middle and high schools, you’ll notice the pressure and demands they face. Minefields at home only create

more stress.

As parents and stepparents, what can we do to promote healthy interactions and positive self-esteem?

As parents and stepparents, one of the best ways to promote success is to commit to do your part in maintaining a friendly relationship with your ex.

One of the best ways to promote success is to commit to do your part in maintaining a friendly relationship with your ex.

I know you'd rather run a marathon than talk about how to live in harmony with your ex or your spouse's ex, but it's vital to the well-being of your children and stepchildren. That doesn't mean you have to be best friends with your ex-husband, or your stepson's mom, but you do have to commit to having a cordial relationship.

I will be the first to admit this hasn't come naturally. I maintained a contentious relationship with my ex too long after our divorce. Although I tried hard to not speak badly of him to our girls, I'm sure they could sense my disapproval of his lifestyle and critical spirit toward him when we negotiated visitation. It's important to remember that our children are half of their other parent, and when we speak badly of that parent, they turn the negative remarks inward, leading to a negative self-image.

As your children move between homes, help them learn responsibility by reminding them to stop and think about what they need to pack when they leave one home and move to the other. As a stepfamily coach, I often hear stepparents complain about their stepkids making multiple trips to their house on the off week because they left supplies, a uniform, a project, etc. Don't enable irresponsibility by allowing them to return multiple times to the other home for items they forgot.

As a stepparent, recognize the adjustment your stepchildren go through when they travel between homes. Allow extra time on transition days for kids to settle in, focus, and adjust to the routine of your home. Give them space if you sense they're struggling emotionally.

Don't maintain an overly am-

bitious schedule on weeks your stepchildren are there. Allow time to help with homework, run kids to ball practice, or sit down for a home-cooked meal. Stepfamily relationships are strengthened as family members spend time together in a relaxed environment.

Also, consider what it feels like to a biological parent to have someone else take part in raising her child. And be sensitive to how your stepchildren feel toward you and whether they want you at every back-to-school function or whether you should bow out and let the biological parents take the lead.

As a mom and stepmom to five children, I understand the challenges that accompany kids moving between homes. My husband and I spent years negotiating schedules and seeking to provide a safe environment in which our kids could thrive throughout the school year.

My stepchildren and two of my children have now completed school and exited the nest, leaving my husband and I with only an "ours" child left at home. Some days I think about what I would do differently if all of our kids were at home again.

I think I would offer a softer side toward my stepchildren when they've had a bad day at school. I'd be more understanding on transition days when they've just come back from their mom's house and need some time alone. I'd extend grace more freely when my own kids didn't do their chores to my satisfaction. And I would insist on fewer extracurricular activities to allow more time at home for relationships to grow and bond.

Our child-rearing season passes quickly and we're left with fond memories. Seek to enjoy the back-to-school hassles! Step back, take a deep breath, and snap a few pictures of your growing child as you head to meet-the-teacher night. Consider what you can do to sow peace. Will you commit to take the high road as often as possible? Will you do your part to co-parent in harmony?

Your children and stepchildren deserve a fresh beginning at school, with minimal conflict at home. Yes, it's harder when kids move between homes, but it's not impossible to find peace.

Gayla Grace is an author and stepfamily coach with a his, hers, and ours family. She enjoys helping non-traditional families learn to thrive in their relationships.

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Shaky ground

Tracing the links between a family's stability and a child's success

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

The bonding process begins in the womb. Once born, infants thrive on the voice and touch of a consistent caregiver. So, from the start, stability and security provide an anchor for human growth and development.

As a child, I instinctively knew that if something bad happened — anything from catching chicken pox to navigating a personality clash with a classroom teacher — my parents would always be there to support me. I always had family to lean on and a home to escape to when the going got rough. At the time, I had no clue that this stable and loving environment would help shape me into a confident and grounded adult. However, I realize now that I subconsciously paid it forward when it came to raising my own children, providing a cushion when they stumbled and a safe haven filled with unconditional acceptance.

A stable environment provides nurturing caregivers, unconditional love, consistent discipline, and a dependable and safe living space. This secure and protective environment shapes a child's perspective of himself and the world around him. It is the springboard that sets in motion a path to hap-

piness and overall well-being. It is the bedrock to a child's future success.

Family stability in the new millennium

Family life throughout the decades has changed dramatically. Entertainment mimics culture, so we can see how the family has changed over the years just by examining family structures on television. Snapshots of the lives of the Cleavers, Bradys, Cosbys, and the Bravermans from NBC's "Parenthood," provide a good comparison.

Dr. Susan Kuczmariski, a family expert and author of several books including the award-winning "Becoming A Happy Family: Pathways to the Family Soul" (Book Ends Publishing, 2015), points to a 2014 Pew Research report that analyzed the state of the American family. The research showed that American families today are more complex and less traditional — fewer than 50 percent of American children live in a traditional family structure.

"It was this new model of the American family that I had in mind as I wrote my new book," she reports.

Family stability is not inherent in the number of family members or its various structures (i.e. traditional, single parent, blended family, foster family, etc.). Instead, it's about providing a consistent, safe, and loving environment for children, one in which they can lean on family members under all circumstances. Strong family bonds, unconditional support, and predictable safety nets are the keys to a stable upbringing.

According to an article written by Shannon Rudisill, associate deputy assistant secretary for early childhood development at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "The quality and stability of a child's relationships are the most critical factors in whether a child thrives developmentally and goes on to have success in school. Nurturing, long-lasting relationships are important for all children — but especially

for the youngest children — who are learning to form secure attachments that will be the foundation for future relationships."

Strong family bonds are crucial. "Bonding is the central component to a healthy child. A well-bonded child is secure and does better at everything," explains Dr. Gail Gross, a nationally recognized family and child development expert, author, and educator. If a child forms strong bonds, she "will have less anxiety and a higher threshold of security," Gross adds.

The child who has been raised in a secure and reliable environment has been given the tools for success.

"Your child will approach everything with a stronger sense of self and a strong central core," Gross says. "As a result, he will learn to depend on his own resources and capacities, which allows him to be independent and self-actualized."

Children should know that their accomplishments will be celebrated, but they should not be afraid to make mistakes, because they understand that they will learn from them and be accepted anyway. Encouragement and acceptance breed a positive self-esteem, a healthy outlook on future relationships, and confidence in oneself.

"Family protects from the noise of the outer world. It is here where we first discover and experience who we are and what we might become," Kuczmariski stresses. "It is where we learn to work with weakness, inadequacy, deficiency, inability, and even failure."

Kuczmariski explains that flaws and insecurity are the heart of the individual, but can also point the way to learning and growth if a child is raised in a stable and safe environment.

"Family can serve as a refuge for self-acceptance," she asserts.

The effects of growing up with instability

Instability can affect a child's self-worth and ability to achieve his greatest potential. It manifests in various situations. Frequent changes to the family structure and relation-

Additional help and resources for families

Military families:

- Information about Military Family Stability Act of 2015: www.militaryfamily.org/featured-news/the-military-family-stability.html

Stability when moving with kids:

- <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/move.html>
- <http://psychcentral.com/lib/moving-with-kids/>

Helping your child through divorce:

- <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/help-child-divorce.html>
- www.helpguide.org/articles/family-divorce/children-and-divorce.htm

Helping children and families with separation and loss:

- Multiple resources available at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: www.childwelfare.gov/topics/outofhome/casework/helping/



Family stability is not inherent in the number of family members or its various structures. Instead, it's about providing a consistent, safe, and loving environment for children, one in which they can lean on family members under all circumstances.

ration due to military service, or frequent career relocations can be disruptive to everyone, but especially to children, who sometimes feel the turmoil more deeply because they have no control.

Kuczarski recommends that families seek help from friends during difficult times.

"Friends extend the family boundary outward. When we are stuck in old patterns and habits, friends can help us climb out."

Divorced parents should not allow anger toward each other to overshadow the love that each of them has for their children. Instead, parents should try to create an amicable tone and remind their children that their unconditional love will not waiver during difficult times. Kuczarski advises parents to find it within themselves to forgive.

"Forgiving opens the door to positive energy and intention."

When family life is disrupted due to relocation, separation, or death, Kuczarski suggests finding activities that allow for renewal.

"Celebrations, getaways, and community service create occasions for renewal."

She also encourages finding silver linings during times of struggle.

"Struggle can strengthen or weaken a family soul. It can be episodic or enduring. Almost always, though, struggle can provide insight."

Myrna Beth Haskell is an award-winning author, columnist, and feature writer (www.myrnahaskell.com). She is also cofounder and senior editor of SANCTUARY Magazine (www.sanctuary-magazine.com).

ships, frequent changes to the physical environment (excessive relocations, etc.), a caregiver's unpredictable, emotional dysfunction or maltreatment of a child in the form of physical or emotional care, can all be catalysts to the decline of a child's socio-emotional and physical health. Family instability is often the result of emotionally absent, distant, or abusive caregivers, or when a child is insecure about her physical care (where she'll spend the night, for instance).

"A child who experiences instability at an early age of development is under stress," Gross explains. "Neuroscience tells us that when a child is stressed from consistent poverty, abuse, divorce, or insecurity that he overproduces cortisol. Cortisol changes brain architecture and impulse control. These stressors in a child's life can lead to unintended consequences, including behavior problems, loss of impulse control, academic problems, social problems, and problems with substance abuse."

Gross warns that a child under severe stress will present with changes in eating, sleeping, school performance, relationships, and motivation.

Instability can also cause health problems.

"Stress can be directly correlated to the onset of illness, not only the anxiety type of illnesses, such as stomach aches, headaches, nail biting and bed wetting, but also frequent colds and viruses," Gross points out. "Stress impacts immunities in the body, including lowering antigen levels and lymphocytes."

She says that children are more vulnerable to compromised immunity when they lack coping skills to deal with erratic pressures and behaviors at home.

How parents and caregivers can ensure stability

Parents can ensure stability by providing strong bonds, consistent discipline, unconditional love, and a safe environment.

"Bonding is the central component to a healthy child," Gross states. She also advocates consistent discipline. "You must work together with your mate as a team, rather than allowing yourself to be split by your partner or your child."

Kuczarski believes that family rituals and events provide a strong family foundation.

"Rituals act like glue that holds the family together. Any event the family enjoys and does regularly can be a ritual, such as a fancy Friday dinner or a Saturday morning walk. Events that feel special serve to provide stability and bring the group closer together." She suggests that children be allowed to have input on establishing family rituals because this helps them feel like their role in the family dynamic is important.

Kuczarski also counsels parents to be good communicators.

"Selfless, compassionate listening is a prerequisite for sharing ideas, feelings, and values and is critical to developing meaningful relationships. Close and healthy families are built through frequent, honest, two-way talk with one another."

Gross agrees.

"Making your child feel part of a family team, valued, and validated goes a long way to building self-esteem." She suggests that parents create a "safe space in which your child can express himself without defense."

Finding stability in tumultuous situations

There are times when instability is unavoidable. Divorce, death, separa-



TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

CHEF JOANNA DEVITA

Summer meal plans

As the summer heats up and the days are stretched, finding the time or motivation to enter the hot kitchen to prepare a meal gets harder. I like to do my summer cooking in blocks of time, once or twice a week. This way, when it comes time to eat or pack a meal, I have prepared food items to repurpose into flavorful, healthful meals. This is a great way to cook if you have a community-supported agriculture share, or if you pick up a beautiful bounty of produce at the farmers' market.

Another bonus for July: batch cooking is a great way to cook if you are sharing space on vacation with other families. Put the work in, and you can enjoy the freedom of no-cook dinners throughout the week.

Break down all of your veggies in one shot. This is the only way I make it through my weekly community-supported agriculture share. I devote an hour or two to cleaning and prepping my veggies. Wash greens in deep water and spin dry. Store clean salad or sauté-ready greens in Ziploc bags with a paper towel inside. Greens will last longer this way, plus they are ready to use on a whim.

Cook pasta, grains, and legumes in a big batch and use for simple assembled dishes throughout the week. Some examples of dishes you can assemble using pre-cooked grains and legumes are: quinoa lentil salad, baked ziti, couscous salad, and Thai rice salad. These pack well for a picnic, or you can add a piece of grilled meat, fish, or soft-boiled, pasture-raised eggs to



make an elegant weeknight supper in minutes.

Cook extra meat on the grill when you have it going for meals later on. Chicken salad, steak tacos, and sausage-topped flatbread pizza are great meals that are easy to throw together with pre-cooked meats. Just make sure the meats are cooled properly after cooking and wrapped tightly in the fridge.

Stock the freezer with wholesome, nutritious snacks and side dishes for dinners on the go. Frozen cheese sticks, individual thaw-and-serve edamame packets, and yogurt squeezers all can help keep the cooler bag cold and are great for a Fourth of July fireworks picnic. Freeze single-serve homemade salad dressings in bags or contain-

ers, too, for a quick flavor boost on your picnic salad.

Don't forget dessert! While you are busy in the kitchen on your cooking day, make sure to blend up some fresh fruit and simple flavorings for homemade ice pops. Ice pop molds are widely available online and at various retailers. No time to blend fruit? Simply freeze your family's favorite juice or coconut water in the molds for a refreshing summer cooler!

Joanna DeVita is executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School, and she's the mother of two (ages 5 and 2). DeVita loves nothing more than spending time outdoors with her children, and sharing with them her love and respect for nature, good ingredients, and the joy of cooking.

Sour cherry ice pops

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS:

2 pints sour cherries, sweet cherries, or a mix of both, cleaned and pitted
 ¼ cup sugar
 ¼ cup water
 Small pinch of salt
 ¼ tsp vanilla extract

Sanitized ice pop molds

DIRECTIONS: Heat water and sugar in a small saucepan until sugar dissolves and liquid is clear. This is simple syrup. Add the vanilla and let cool. Puree the pitted cherries in a blender or food processor until desired consistency. (I like chunks, my kids do not!) Mix cherry puree with simple syrup. Pour into ice pop molds and freeze. Enjoy when frozen solid!



HEALTHY
LIVING
DANIELLE SULLIVAN



Child Mind Institute

Triumphing over dyslexia

When most people hear the word “dyslexia,” they immediately associate it with a reading problem. The disorder does cause problems with reading from left to right, reversing letters and words, spelling words, reading quickly, writing words, “sounding out” words in the head, pronouncing words when reading aloud, and reading comprehension, but the issue involves much more than reading.

The brains of people with dyslexia are wired differently. The Dyslexia Association explains that the two most important contributors to dyslexia are an underutilized left hemisphere, and an out-of-whack central bridge of tissue in the brain, called the corpus callosum. According to the National Institutes of Health, up to 15 percent of the U.S. population has significant difficulty learning to read.

“People with a learning difference like dyslexia may have trouble with reading, writing, spelling, math, and sometimes, music,” says the institute.

Three times as many boys as girls

have dyslexia.

In preschool-aged children, symptoms include late talking, difficulty in learning nursery rhymes, and rhyming games. In school-aged children, a student may have difficulty following quick instructions, reading at age level, comprehending what is said to him, and problems remembering the sequence of things.

In teens, the symptoms may be the same as in younger children, and also include difficulty summarizing a story, learning a foreign language, memorizing, and understanding jokes and idioms.

Recently, The Child Mind Institute hosted the 13th annual Adam Katz Memorial Conversation and featured a candid conversation between award-winning comedian, actress, and host of “The View” Whoopi Goldberg and Child Mind Institute President Dr. Harold Koplewicz at the Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College. They shared an in-depth discussion about Goldberg’s struggles and victories surrounding living with dyslexia.

“What I remember about being a

Whoopi Goldberg, award-winning comedian, actress, human rights advocate, and host of “The View,” spoke to president of the Child Mind Institute, Dr. Harold Koplewicz, about living and succeeding with dyslexia.

kid was that I felt pretty protected, I wasn’t afraid, and I had a mother who understood — after a while — that there was something different about the way I learned things,” she explained. “It takes people a little while to accept that something’s going on, and it’s not that you’re being lazy. It’s not that you’re not trying.”

Many people with dyslexia, like Goldberg, thrive as highly visual learners and creative thinkers who excel in the arts. She says she’s discovered along the way useful methods to overcome her dyslexia while learning scripts. Whenever she’s required to learn a new script, she enlists someone to read the lines out loud with her, so she can memorize them. Similarly, when she wrote her recent book, she dictated each word to an assistant and then afterward, had it read back to her for editing.

“The advantage of dyslexia is that my brain puts information in my head in a different way,” says Goldberg.

One website working to promote the positive aspects of the condition, *Dyslexia The Gift*, writes, “Our visual and holistic learning style means that we learn best through the creative process, with methods that focus on mastery of the meanings of words and symbols. The true gift of dyslexia is the gift of mastery.”

To learn more about dyslexia, visit:

- International Dyslexia Association, dyslexiaida.org
- The Dyslexia Foundation, dyslexiafoundation.org
- Everyone Reading, everyonereading.org
- National Center For Learning Disabilities, nclcd.org
- Decoding Dyslexia – NY, decodingdyslexiany.org

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.



Have a New York City staycation

There's plenty
to experience
this summer
without ever
leaving the
five boroughs

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

School's out and summer is officially here! Historically, family vacations and summer are a perfect pairing, but sometimes getaways can be hard to schedule around work demands or budget constraints. As a result, more families are seeking alternatives to the traditional road trip, and are vacationing locally. With New York at your fingertips, the “staycation” (a stay-at-home vacation) is a wonderful option. Millions of tourists visit the New York metro area annually, and you're already here — so start planning!

Take advantage of access to world-renowned sights and attractions. Whether it is art, science, or New York history that interests your family, go visit a local museum. Seek-

ing an indoor escape from the summer heat? Consider local attractions, architectural gems, shopping, or a Broadway show.

Or, for some fresh air, visit a botanical garden, aquarium, or zoo. Governors Island is the perfect place to spend the day. Just take the ferry to the 172-acre island where you can ride bikes and have a picnic. On July 19, the newest development on the island, “The Hills,” will open for exploration and play.

Sporting events are always a fun activity to enjoy with kids. The summer offers professional baseball games by four teams: Major League Baseball's New York Mets and New York Yankees, and the NY-Penn League's Brooklyn Cyclones and the Staten Island Yankees. Take in a game played by the Women's National Basketball Association's

New York Liberty, or a match at the United States Tennis Association's grand-slam tournament, the U.S. Open (including Arthur Ashe Kids Day on Aug. 27).

A cost-effective way to see attractions in the city is to purchase a CityPass, which boasts a 40 percent discount on standard ticket prices. This is the perfect way to make the most of your staycation. You could even take it a step further by staying at a hotel overnight, where you can swim in the pool and order room service with the kiddos!

Here are a few of the city's most popular museums and attractions. Pretend you're a tourist and go visit!

Museums

9-11 Memorial and Museum [180 Greenwich St. between Fulton and Liberty streets at World Trade Cen-

ter, (212) 266-5211, 911memorial.org]

Pay your respects to the victims of the 9-11 attacks and observe a moment of silence at the twin reflecting pools, where the names of every person who died are inscribed. Hours are Sunday through Thursday, 9 am-8 pm; Friday through Saturday, 9 am-9 pm. Last entry two hours prior to close. Not valid on 9-11. Memorial hours are daily from 7:30 am to 9 pm.

American Museum of Natural History [Central Park West at 79th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 769-5100, amnh.org]

Explore human cultures, the natural world, and the universe, world-renowned dioramas, the 94-foot-long blue whale, and incredible dinosaur halls. Don't miss Hayden Planetarium's Space Show. Open daily, 10 am-5:45 pm. Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum [1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street on the Upper East Side, (212) 423-3500, Guggenheim.org]

See Frank Lloyd Wright's modern architecture and enjoy one of the world's finest collections of 20th century art. Open Sunday through Wednesday and Fridays, 10 am-5:45 pm; Saturdays, 10 am-7:45 pm. Closed Thursdays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum [Pier 86 at W. 46th Street and 12th Avenue in Hell's Kitchen, (877) 957-SHIP, intrepidmuseum.org]

Explore history, science, and service aboard the former aircraft carrier USS Intrepid, a National Historic Landmark. Open Nov. 1 through March 31, daily 10 am-5 pm; April 1 through Oct. 31: Monday through Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-6 pm; holidays 10 am-6 pm. Last entry one hour prior to close. Closed Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

Metropolitan Museum [1000 Fifth Ave. at 82nd Street on the Upper East Side, (212) 535-7710, metmuseum.org]

One of the most visited museums and attractions in the city, admission includes same-day admission to The Met Breuer and The Met Cloisters. Sunday

through Thursday 10 am-5:30 pm; Friday through Saturday, 10 am-9 pm. Galleries are cleared 15 minutes before closing. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and the first Monday in May.

Other sights

Empire State Building [350 Fifth Ave. at 34th Street in Midtown, (877) 692-8439, esbnyc.com]

Enjoy 360-degree open-air views during the day or a late-night view of the world's most dazzling city skyline. Open daily 8 am-2 am. Last elevator leaves 45 minutes before close. Special holiday hours apply.

Top of the Rock Observation Deck [30 Rockefeller Pl. between Fifth and Sixth avenues, (877) 692-7625, topoftherocknyc.com]

Experience panoramic views from interior and exterior decks on the top three floors of this legendary art deco skyscraper. Open daily, 8 am-midnight. Last elevator ascends at 11 pm. Hours may vary on holidays.

Tours

Circle Line (Pier 83, West 42nd Street at 12th Avenue in Midtown, circleline42.com)

Experience magnificent views of the Statue of Liberty, Wall Street, The United Nations, and much more. The Beast speedboat ride available May through September. Special schedule Thanksgiving, New Year's Day and July 4. Closed Christmas Day.

Other links:

Arthur Ashe Kids Day: Arthurashekidsday.com

Brooklyn Cyclones: www.brooklyncyclones.com

CityPass: Citypass.com

Governors Island: Govisland.com

New York Liberty: Liberty.wnba.com

New York Mets: NewYork.Mets.mlb.com

New York Yankees: Yankees.mlb.com

Staten Island Yankees: www.siyanks.com

U.S. Open: Usta.usopen.org

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.

QUEENS

Family

Where Every Child Matters

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staycation

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after a divorce

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for better
parenting

Linking family
stability to a
child's success

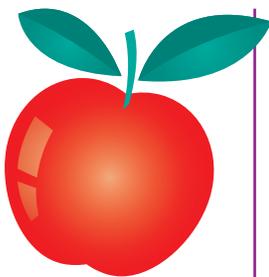
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where New York parents find help,
info and support.



DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

Summer is the time for social studies fun

Dear parents,

Summer is increasingly becoming a more academic time. Many students are now assigned homework over the summer. This is largely happening because teachers know that young children may forget as much as 25 percent of what they learned during the school year.

This summer, we have selected a number of social studies activities that should make that subject come alive and will be fun for your children to do. They can find even more activities on the Dear Teacher website under “Social Studies Activities.”

Social studies online

Since today’s children spend so much time online, have your children visit outstanding social studies websites and choose several activities to do. Besides being able to make virtual visits to historic spots, from the White House to Mount Vernon, they will find endless games that will increase their knowledge. Here are two excellent free websites to visit (you can easily use search engines to find others):

Exploring Government for Kids (kids.gov) should be first. Besides being a safe site for kids to visit, it offers content on government, history, and social studies, as well as games and videos. Plus, from there you can go to your state’s website and usually find many state-related activities in the social studies arena.

Since schools often provide limited instruction in geography, visit the student pages on Education. NationalGeographic.com for many map, weather and other activities.

Learn about presidents

Most children like to watch movies. This is an easy and enjoyable way to help them learn about the people who have led our country. The majority of these movies are best for children in middle school and beyond. Avoid showing your children movies about the presidents that are largely fictional.

You may wish to preview or read



reviews of the movies before showing any of them to your children. Here are a few suggestions of movies that will acquaint your children with our presidents:

- Dwight Eisenhower: “Ike: Countdown to D-Day.”
- John F. Kennedy: “Thirteen Days,” “PT 109.”
- Abraham Lincoln: “Lincoln.”
- Richard Nixon: “Nixon,” “Frost/Nixon.”
- Franklin D. Roosevelt: “Sunrise at Campobello,” “Warm Springs.”

Several television series have documentaries of our presidents that you can find online, such as the American Experience series “The Presidents,” on pbs.org.

You can also let them watch virtual tours of presidents’ homes and sites related to their lives. More can be learned about every president, from Washington through Bush, on the National Park Service’s website at www.nps.gov/nr/travel/presidents. Click on “List of Sites” to enjoy tours related to presidents as well as stories about these places.

Making a time capsule

A time capsule is a way to give people in the future an idea of what life was like when the capsule was made. It can be opened in a year or hundreds of years later. Today, more than 10,000 time capsules exist, excluding personal ones. Most are in the cornerstones of new buildings.

Explain to your children that they will fill a container with things that

are important to them right now. The container can be placed somewhere in your home, such as a closet or filing cabinet. If buried somewhere, the container should be so tight that it will not let in either air or moisture. Point out that these capsules will be a lot of fun for them to open as adults. For example, it would give their children an idea of what their parents’ lives were like. They could even open the time capsule next summer to see what they thought was truly important this year. It might not be so next year.

Here are some suggestions of things that children might want to put into a time capsule: newspapers, books, toys, clothing, personal notes about their current activities, predictions about the future, pictures, a video, or anything that the children currently use or is of value to them.

Learn about the census

Fact Finder at factfinder.census.gov (community facts) and Wikipedia.org (2010 census) are both good online sources for census information. Children can begin learning about the census by finding out how many children between 5 and 9 and 10 and 14 lived in their zip code in 2010. Then they should break this information down into the number of boys and girls in each age group. Next, they should determine what age group has the most people in their zip code. Before they start, have them guess whether there will be more people over or under 21.

Older children can look at the census figures for 2000 and 2010 to determine if their state’s population is increasing or decreasing.

They can also expand their investigation of census reports to earlier censuses to see how the population of our nation changed between 1900 and 2000.

Parents should send questions and comments to dearteacher@dearteacher.com or ask them on the columnists’ website at www.dearteacher.com.

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Day care 101

Choosing a place that works for your child and you

BY JUDY M. MILLER

One of the toughest first decisions I had to make as a new parent-to-be was finding exceptional day care for my newborn. I had to go back to work six weeks after giving birth, so I began my day-care search long before my son was born.

I was thankful I did. Many day cares were full and had waiting lists. A number were simply not in our budget. Others did not take such a young infant.

Here's how to find the best day care for your family:

Begin early

Begin your quest for a day care as soon as you realize that you will need it. Many day cares require a deposit to hold a place for your child.

If your child has special needs that will need to be addressed, inquire if the day care can support you in this and whether you will be comfortable. You may want to explore hiring a nanny or an in-home provider.

Ask those who know

I asked day-care-seasoned parents about the day cares they used before I began exploring options. Their input helped me to decide the environment I wanted my child to be in.

Determine what your parame-

ters are: location, cost, hours, and days needed, and in-home versus a church-based or commercial day-care center. Schedule a tour of any day care that has made it on to your final list of options. Be sure to bring your list of questions with you.

Look for a nurturing environment

Children require nurturing to grow healthy minds and bodies. Observe the environment as you tour the home or facility.

What is the daily schedule? How are children treated? What is the caregiver-to-child ratio? How does the day care feel? How do the employees transition children into new rooms?

Be comfortable with the method of discipline

Ask how the day care disciplines a child. If you are not comfortable with its methods, walk.

I did not think about asking about discipline until my son, an only child at that time, was kicked out of day care at the ripe age of 12 months for biting. I found another in-home day care for him and tearfully told the caregiver the truth. She gave me a big hug and said, "Well, that's normal!"

My son's aggression and biting disappeared within days, because he was receiving more nurturing.

She also had him potty trained at 14 months. He stayed with her until he began kindergarten.

Pay attention to safety and cleanliness

What are the security procedures? Does the day care follow them?

Check out the bathrooms. Ask to see the kitchen. Check if the caregivers and other staff members wear gloves when cleaning up bodily fluids. How are the rooms that your child will be in cleaned? Are cots disinfected? Is bedding washed or sent home with you on a consistent basis? Are the tables and other furniture appropriately child-sized? Are the toilets and sinks? What is the outdoor play area like?

Assess the communication style

How proactive is the day care with communication? Will you get a summary of your child's day, down to the number of dirty diapers and time and length of her nap? Will you be called immediately if there is a concern? Is the caregiver approachable for questions and discussion?

Understand expectations

Are you expected to pay for a full-time week over a certain number of days? How do vacations and holidays work? What hours is the day care open? Will the day care be able to take your child early or keep her late if necessary? If so, what is the charge of doing so?

Understand the sick policy

Most day cares are specific about what constitutes a sick child or an infection that will not be allowed to be in day care. A child in my son's day care came down with the highly contagious conjunctivitis (also known as pinkeye). I was relieved the affected child was sent home immediately and could not return until a doctor said he was no longer contagious.

As a parent, you hope the day care will follow the policies it has in place. Understand that adhering to the policy is important not only for your child, but others as well.

Judy M. Miller is a freelance writer living in the Midwest and a mom to four children, all of whom have spent time in day care when young. She is a Gottman Institute educator and the author of "What To Expect From Your Adopted Tween" and "Writing to Heal Adoption Grief: Making Connections & Moving Forward."

Calendar

JULY

A rip-cord good time

Children can try their hand at conquering this obstacle course at the Alley Pond Adventure Course every Sunday now through Aug. 28.

This outdoor adventure fosters trust, communication, and team building. The program is a two-hour adventure, which includes both low and high elements. The Adventure Course is open to individuals, small groups of friends, and family, ages 8 and up. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

Valid photo identification is required and participants must wear sneakers. Space is limited and participants are chosen by lottery. Please visit our Urban Park Rangers' Events Registration page to enter your name in the lottery.

Adventure Course, Sundays, from 9:30 am to noon, now through Aug. 28. Free

Alley Pond Park Adventure Center [Alley Pond Park in Little Neck, (718) 217-6034; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers].



Photo by Daniel Avila

Never miss a great event!

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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, JULY 1

IN QUEENS

First Friday Residency Series:

Jamaica Center for the Arts & Learning, 153rd Street and Jamaica Avenue; (718) 658-7400; intern@jcal.org; www.jcal.org; 6 pm to 9 pm; Free.

Scheduled performances and presentations by jazz band The Eric Lemon Trio, writer Keisha-Gaye Anderson, singer and songwriter Julia Capello, poet and writer Sokunthary Sway, and dance company ZEST Collective.

"Little Giants": Elmhurst Park, Grand Avenue and 79th Street; (718) 393-7370; www.nycgovparks.org; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

A successful retired jock and his geeky younger brother play out their sibling rivalry by coaching rival little league football teams in this family comedy. Movie begins at dusk. You should come early to get a spot and bring a chair or blanket. All ages welcome!

SAT, JULY 2

IN QUEENS

Fly a Kite: King Manor Museum, Jamaica Avenue and 150th Street; (718) 206-0545; <http://www.kingmanor.org>; 1 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Learn to fabricate kites and watch them flutter, then enjoy a reading of "Kite Day" by Will Hillenbrand.

Making Magic: Forest Park Carousel, Woodhaven Boulevard and 88th Street; (718) 788-2676; www.nyccarousel.com; 2 pm to 2:45 pm and 4 pm to 4:45 pm; Free.

Ethan's philosophy is that magic is meant to be created and shared with people; it should not simply be designed to trick the crowd. Together, both Ethan and the audience create an amazing show. Guests of all ages should come out and be surprised!

Camping: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Road at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org; 6



Folktales with a twist

Storyteller April Armstrong shares her take on favorite folktales at Flushing Town Hall on July 30.

"The Cat Came Back – Stories and Songs with A Jazzy Twist" presents musician, storyteller, and winner of a 2015 Parents' Choice Award April Armstrong and her friends Mario Sprouse on piano and Napoleon Revels-Bey on drums. The group performs folktales and nurs-

ery rhymes, including: "Ananci and the Sky Chief's Daughter," "Chicken Licken," "Old Mother Hubbard's Blues," and "The Cat Came Back."

"The Cat Came Back – Stories and Songs with A Jazzy Twist" on July 30 at 10:30 am. Tickets are \$13, \$10 members (\$8 children and \$5 child members).

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

pm to 8 am; Free.

Camping affords us the opportunity to unplug from the diversions of everyday life and to laugh and play with our families. The Urban Park Rangers celebrate the tradition of camping and we look forward to welcoming your family. Space is limited and families are chosen by lottery. Pre-registration required.

"The Lego Movie": Maurice Park, 54th Avenue and 63rd Street; (718) 393-7370; nyc.govparks.org; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

A lowly Lego figure (voiced by Chris Pratt) joins a group intent on battling an evil force after a case of mistaken identity in this computer-generated comedy from the filmmakers behind "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs." Movie begins at dusk. You should come early to get a spot and bring a chair or blanket. All ages welcome!

SUN, JULY 3

IN QUEENS

Block Party: Fantasy Forest Amusement Park, 111th Street and Corona Avenue; (718) 788-2676; www.nycgovparks.org; 2 pm to 6 pm; Free.

Kid-friendly entertainment. Come celebrate the holiday weekend with live DJ music, dance contests, fun games, and magic shows with Omar Olusion. Omar's unique mix of creativity, passion, amusement, and magic will keep guests of all ages on their feet and entertained!

MON, JULY 4

IN QUEENS

Block Party: 2 pm to 6 pm. Fantasy Forest Amusement Park. See Sunday, July 3.

TUES, JULY 5

IN QUEENS

"Minions": 111th Street Parking Lot, 111th Street and Corona Avenue; (718) 760-6560; 8 pm to 10pm; Free.

The minions of "Despicable Me" get their very own spin-off in this cartoon movie from Universal Pictures. The movie begins at dusk. You should come early to get a spot and bring a chair or blanket. All ages are welcome!

WED, JULY 6

IN QUEENS

"Hiawatha": Lower Highland Playground, Elton Street and Jamaica Avenue; (718) 235-4100; www.nycgovparks.org; 6 pm to 7 pm; Free.

Catskill Puppet Theater presents their exquisitely-crafted puppets that tell the story of Hiawatha, a curious Iroquois hero, who decides to disobey his grandmother and venture out to explore the forest.

THURS, JULY 7

IN QUEENS

Poetry slam: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 6 pm; \$5 (free for members).

Open mic for poets of all ages, free-style rappers, and emerging artists of all kinds. Hosted by poet and storyteller Bobby González.

FRI, JULY 8

IN QUEENS

Mommy Music and Me: Buz O'Rourke Playground, 214th Place and 33rd Road; (718) 352-4793; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:34 am to 11:30 am; Free.

Participate in music and movement activities for children up to 7 years old.

"Despicable Me 2": Glendale Playground, Central Avenue and 70th Street; (718) 393-7370; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

Universal Pictures presents this sequel to the wildly successful 2010 animated picture following Gru (voiced by Steve Carell), the ex-scheming evil-doer-turned-parental figure. The movie begins at dusk. You should come early to get a spot. Bring a chair or blanket. All ages welcome!

SAT, JULY 9

IN QUEENS

Festival of Kites & Kayaks: Socrates Sculpture Park, 32-01 Vernon Blvd.; 718-956-1819; www.socratessculpturepark.org; 11 am to 3 pm; Free.

Using recycled materials, children and their families draw inspiration from the park's fantastic view of the Manhattan skyline to build expressive kites, and then fly them in the park. Teaching artists from Socrates and The Noguchi Museum will lead workshops for participants of all ages to produce and personalize handmade kites that explore ideas of flying, freedom, and community.

Transportation Day: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718)

Continued on page 30

Calendar

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

Continued from page 29

699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org;
Noon to 4 pm; Free with admission to the hall.

Families participate in hands-activities, workshops, and conversations with local organizations to explore the wide variety of transportation methods and technologies. Experiment with motors, talk to transportation specialists, take a workshop, and learn about forms of transportation that don't involve motors, gas or electricity.

Queens memory: King Manor Museum, Jamaica Ave. and 150th St.; (718) 206-0545; <http://www.kingmanor.org>;
1 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Make your memories of Jamaica a part of history and get those family photos digitized for free! The Queens Memory Team will scan your photographs, postcards, and other memorabilia and save them to a thumb drive you can take home. Stop by to see rare maps from the archives at Queens Library and learn something new about your neighborhood!

Presto Pete and Incredulous Chris: Forest Park Carousel, Woodhaven Boulevard and Forest Park Drive; (718) 788-2676; 2 pm and 4 pm; Free.

Presto Pete and Incredulous Chris of Pete and Chris Amusements are New England's only two-man kids' magic show! They give an ultra, high-energy performance that capture's kids' attention and doesn't let go!

"The Goonies": Beach Channel Park, Beach Channel Drive and Beach 120th Street; (718) 318-4000; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

Seven young friends from a small Northwest town find themselves on a thrilling underground adventure filled with humor and heart-pounding peril as they seek the secrets behind the treasure of the notorious pirate One-Eyed Willie in this '80s classic. There will be popcorn. Bring a blanket or chair.

SUN, JULY 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 per family (\$5 members) plus Hall admission.

Kids ages 18 months and older experiment with the Japanese printmaking technique known as *suminagashi*, or floating ink.

Presto Pete and Incredulous Chris: Forest Park Carousel, Woodhaven Boulevard and Forest Park Drive; (718) 788-2676; 2 pm and 4 pm; Free.

Story time and craft: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main Street; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org; 2 pm to 3:30 pm; Free with



A toothy adventure

Franklin needs help — are you up for the challenge? "The Quest for the Seven Teeth" is coming to Central Park on July 17 and July 31.

Presented by Accomplish the Show, this fun, interactive scavenger hunt will ignite children's imaginations as they embark on a quest to assist the Tooth Fairy's cousin, Franklin, in finding some teeth to replace those that he lost. Children dive into the world of characters that use crafts, puzzles, and games to

move the story along and come to the rescue.

The event lasts approximately two hours, rain or shine, and is suitable for children 6 to 11 years old. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Reservations in advance required.

"The Quest for the Seven Teeth," July 17 and July 31, time to be determined. Admission is \$40 per child; adults are free.

Central Park [Call for exact location, (347) 559-6223, www.Accomplishtheshow.com/kids].

garden admission.

Bring your little nature lovers to Queens Botanical Garden for a relaxing afternoon featuring nature-inspired stories, followed by a botanically themed craft activity.

TUES, JULY 12

IN QUEENS

Hip Pickles: 111th Street Parking Lot, 111th Street and Corona Avenue; (718) 760-6560; 11 am to noon; Free.

Hip Pickles brings an exciting blend of high-energy drumming, vocals, electronics, hip choreography, humor, and interactive audience participation that your kids are sure to love.

Queens memory: 5 pm to 8 pm. King Manor Museum. See Saturday, July 9.

WED, JULY 13

IN QUEENS

"Hiawatha": Tribute Park, Beach Channel Drive and Beach 116th Street; (718) 318-4000; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am to 1 pm; Free.

Catskill Puppet Theater presents its exquisitely-crafted puppets that tell the story of Hiawatha, a curious Iroquois hero, who decides to disobey his grandmother and venture out to explore the forest.

Sounds like Science: Lower Highland Playground, Elton Street and Jamaica Avenue; (718) 235-4100; 6 pm to 7 pm; Free.

Everyone will be shocked as Mad Science creates a dinosaur roar with simple materials. Explore the science of speakers as we create a funky disco show

with magnets!

THURS, JULY 14

IN QUEENS

Uni Project: Charybdis Playground at Astoria Park, 19th Street and Ditmars Boulevard; www.nycgovparks.org; 3 pm to 6 pm; Free.

Come read and draw with the Uni Project.

"The Muppets Take Manhattan": Rainey Park, 34th Avenue and 9th Street; (718) 393-7370; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

Jim Henson's Muppets find themselves in Manhattan yearning to get a musical on Broadway in this charming film that also chides show business and its foibles. Movie begins at dusk. You should come early to get a spot and bring a chair or blanket. All ages welcome!

FRI, JULY 15

IN QUEENS

"Puss in Boots": Beach Channel Park, Beach 94th St. and Shorefront Parkway; 311; www.cityparksfoundation.org; 10 am; Free.

Presented by CityParks PuppetMobile, this is the old tale — with a twist. Once upon a time there lived a young man named Ferguson Mundingle. Ferguson has just the bare essentials in life — a roof over his head, the clothes on his back, and his ever faithful pet cat. One day when lamenting his poor lifestyle, Fergus is astounded when his cat stands up, begins talking, and introduces himself as Puss.

Uni Project: Sean's Place, Steinway St. and 31st Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; 3 pm to 6 pm; Free.

Come read and draw with the Uni Project.

"Monsters Inc.": George U Harvey Park Hockey Rink, 20th Avenue and Whitestone Expressway; (718) 393-7370; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

This animated feature from the creators of "Toy Story" shows us the life behind the scenes of things that go bump in the night. Movie begins at dusk. You should come early to get a spot and bring a chair or blanket. All ages welcome!

SAT, JULY 16

IN QUEENS

The Sammie and Trudie Show: Forest Park Carousel, Woodhaven Boulevard and Forest Park Drive; (718) 788-2676; 2 pm and 4 pm; Free.

Come see why Sammie and Trudie are New York's favorite comedy duo! With their signature brand of silliness, Sam-

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

mie and Tudie will take both kids and parents on a wild ride of fun, magic, and zany props. Come see what everyone is talking about! Stop by after each show to say hello!

SUN, JULY 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 per family (\$5 members) plus Hall admission.

Kids ages 18 months and older create their own citrus-flavored drink while learning the chemistry behind acids.

Skats the Clown Show: Fantasy Forest Amusement Park, 111th Street and Corona Park; (718) 788-2676; 2 pm and 4 pm; Free.

Skats the Clown has been bringing the funny to audiences for nearly two decades. His confusing style of clown comedy is guaranteed to bring out the inner child in everyone. Combining magic and clownery, Skats makes everyone laugh out loud while also leaving them in amazement!

TUES, JULY 19

IN QUEENS

Darlene Graham: Buz O'Rourke Playground in Crocheron Park, 214th Place and 35th Avenue; (718) 352-4793; 10:30 am to 11:30 am; Free.

Children's entertainer shares her brand of interactive and exciting performances for kids of all ages.

The Reptile Guys: Flushing Meadows Park, 111th Street and Corona Avenue; (718) 760-6560; 11 am to noon; Free.

Join us for an hour-long interactive show featuring 12 amazing reptiles. The event will also include a petting zoo session to allow kids to touch and hold the reptiles.

Full Moon drumming workshop: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 7 pm; \$5 (free for members).

Celebrate the Full Moon with master drummers from Korea Song-Hee Lee, then jam with the entire group under the moon. Space is limited to 20 participants per workshop. Drums provided. All are welcome from beginner to professional, just bring your enthusiasm and participate!

WED, JULY 20

IN QUEENS

Hip Pickles: Lower Highland Playground, Elton Street and Jamaica Avenue; (718) 235-4100; 6 pm to 7 pm; Free.



Meet bugs, eat bugs

How about tasting some juicy bugs? Yuck!

You can find out all about the creepy, crawly, critters at the New York Hall of Science on July 24.

Little Makers have a fun bugged out day with tastings, a carnivorous plant workshop, and of course, live insects.

Hip Pickles brings an exciting blend of high-energy drumming, vocals, electronics, hip choreography, humor, and interactive audience participation that your kids are sure to love.

"Tomorrowland": Unisphere at Flushing Meadows Park, Avenue of Africa and Avenue of the Americas; (718) 760-6580; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

Casey Newton and scientist Frank Walker travel to the metropolis Tomorrowland to uncover its mysterious secrets. Bring your own chair or blanket to this fun, free event. The movie will begin at dusk.

"ET The Extra Terrestrial": Arrow Field House, 35-30 35th St. and 36th Avenue; (718) 349-0444; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

Bring a blanket, chair and friends and enjoy movies outdoors. Some seats will be provided. This classic movie is for kids and adults. In case of rain the event moves indoors.

Hold a variety of beasties, meet a local beekeeper, and even eat some bugs and bug-based products.

Bug Day on July 24 from noon to 4 pm. Free with admission to the hall.

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

THURS, JULY 21

IN QUEENS

Uni Project: 3 pm to 6 pm. Charybdis Playground - Astoria Park. See Thursday, July 14.

"Finding Nemo": Katzman Playground, 68th Avenue and 108th Street; (718) 393-7370; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

When the defiant Nemo takes off from his dad and gets captured by a tropical fish seeker, he finds himself stuck in a fishbowl in a dentist's office. Marlin and his well meaning, but wacky, friend Dory embark on an epic journey to find his son. Movie begins at dusk. You should come early to get a spot and bring a chair or blanket. All ages welcome!

FRI, JULY 22

IN QUEENS

Rocket Park Recess - Fat: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Noon to 4 pm; Free with

admission to the hall.

Museum-goers learn how to make yummy, good-for-you snacks while re-imagining how food relates to energy and can be used as fuel to do more and better things.

Uni Project: 3 pm to 6 pm. Sean's Place. See Friday, July 15.

"Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles": Juniper Valley Park, Juniper Boulevard South and 80th Street; (718) 393-7370; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

This reboot of the franchise has the sinister Shredder seizing control of New York City's police and politicians, leaving his ruthless Foot Clan to spread chaos in the streets. Movie begins at dusk. You should come early to get a spot and bring a chair or blanket. All ages welcome!

SAT, JULY 23

IN QUEENS

Bonkerz the Clown: Forest Park Carousel, Woodhaven Boulevard and Forest Park Drive; (718) 788-2676; 2 pm and 4 pm; Free.

This wise-cracking Brooklyn clown is proud to cross the borough border and bring his show to Queens. He'll make jokes, clown around, and do some magic. Always looking for volunteers to help him with tricks, Bonkerz is sure to give all guests stomach aches from laughing so hard!

Story Time and Craft: 2 pm to 3 pm. Queens Botanical Garden. See Sunday, July 10.

Camping: Alley Pond Park, Cross Island Parkway and Grand Central Parkway; (718) 217-4685; www.nycgov-parks.org; 6 pm to 8 am; Free.

Camping affords us the opportunity to unplug from the diversions of everyday life and to laugh and play with our families. The Urban Park Rangers celebrate the tradition of camping and look forward to welcoming your family. Space is limited and families are chosen by lottery. Pre-registration required.

SUN, JULY 24

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 per family (\$5 members) plus Hall admission.

Kids ages 18 months and older design and create insect habitats.

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

Bug tastings, a carnivorous plant workshop, and of course, live bugs are

Continued on page 32

Calendar

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

Continued from page 31

all part of the fun at this one-day, annual event.

"The Wizard of Oz": Athens Square, 30th Avenue and 29th Street; (718) 393-7370; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

Kansas girl Dorothy Gale and her dog Toto are whisked by a tornado into the magical land of Oz in this much-loved musical adaptation of L. Frank Baum's classic novel. Movie begins at dusk. You should come early to get a spot and bring a chair or blanket. All ages welcome!

MON, JULY 25

IN QUEENS

"The Incredibles": Highland Park, Elton St. and Jamaica Avenue; (718) 235-4100; 7:30 pm to 9 pm; Free.

Come see Mr. Incredible, Elastigirl, and friends save lives and battle evil. Bring a blanket or low chair.

Moth Story Slam: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 7:30 pm; \$10.

Open to anyone with a true story to share on the night's theme: Neighborhood (July 25) and Back to School (Aug. 22). When the doors open, storyteller hopefuls put their names in The Moth Hat. A half-hour later, names are picked, and storytellers take the stage. Each person has just five minutes! Ten featured stories are scored by teams of judges selected from the audience, which picks the StorySLAM winner. Your story may be heard on NPR. Sign up or just enjoy the show!

"Big Hero 6": Astoria Park Lawn, Shore Boulevard between the Hell Gate Bridge and the Pool; (718) 728-7820; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

A special bond develops between plus-size inflatable robot Baymax and prodigy Hiro Hamada, who team up with a group of friends to form a band of high-tech heroes. A captivating adventure story for the entire family.

TUES, JULY 26

IN QUEENS

Mommy Music and Me: Flushing Meadows Park, 111th Street and 53rd Avenue; (718) 760-6580; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am to noon; Free.

Participate in music and movement activities for children up to 7 years old.

Asian American International Film Festival: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 6 pm to 11 pm; Free.

This was the first festival in the U.S. to showcase the film and video work by artists of the Asian diaspora. Now 39 years later, it has grown to include films

and video from more than 30 countries, a variety of topical panels and workshops, industry mixers, staged readings, exclusive interviews, receptions, and more.

WED, JULY 27

IN QUEENS

"You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown": Highland Park, Elton Street and Jamaica Avenue; (718) 235-4100; 6 pm to 7:30 pm; Free.

Enjoy a performance from Plaza Theatrical Production. Please bring a blanket or low chair.

Asian American International Film Festival: 6 pm to 11 pm. Flushing Town Hall. See Tuesday, July 26.

THURS, JULY 28

IN QUEENS

The Reptile Guys: Buz O'Rourke Playground, 214th Place and 33rd Road; (718) 352-4793; 10 am to 11 am; Free.

Join us for an hour-long interactive show, featuring 12 amazing reptiles. The event will also include a petting zoo session to allow kids to touch and hold the reptiles.

Asian American International Film Festival: 6 pm to 11 pm. Flushing Town Hall. See Tuesday, July 26.

"Monsters University": PO Edward Byrne Park, 135th Avenue and 130th Place; (718) 393-7370; 8:30 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

Take a trip back in time to when star Monsters, Inc. employees Mike Wazowski (voice of Billy Crystal) and James P. "Sulley" Sullivan (voice of John Goodman) were just two promising young students at Monsters University in this frightfully fun Disney-Pixar prequel. You should come early to get a spot and bring a chair or blanket. All ages are welcome!

FRI, JULY 29

IN QUEENS

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

Visitors learn about momentum, energy, and different forms of transportation at workshops that get them moving.

"Jurassic World": Croheron Park, 35th Avenue and 214th Place; (718) 393-7370; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

A new theme park is built on the original site of Jurassic Park. Everything is going well until the park's newest attraction — a genetically modified giant stealth killing machine — escapes con-

tainment and goes on a killing spree. Movie begins at dusk. You should come early to get a spot and bring a chair or blanket. All ages welcome!

SAT, JULY 30

IN QUEENS

"The Cat Came Back": Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 10:30 am; \$13 (\$10 members; \$8 children; \$6 member children).

Enjoy musician, storyteller and winner of a 2015 Parents' Choice Award April Armstrong and her friends. In this family performance, the trio adds a new spin to some of our favorite folktales and nursery rhymes. For children 8 and younger.

"Grease": Joseph P Addabbo Memorial Park, N. Conduit Avenue and 81st Street; (718) 393-7370; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

Parents and kids will enjoy getting up and dancing to this classic movie with Olivia Newton John and John Travolta. Movie begins at dusk. You should come early to get a spot and bring a chair or blanket. All ages welcome!

SUN, JULY 31

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 per family (\$5 members) plus Hall admission.

Kids ages 18 months and older discover the physics of sound and make their own musical instruments from recycled materials.

Bonkerz the Clown: Fantasy Forest Amusement Park, 111th Street and Corona Avenue; (718) 788-2676; 2 pm and 4 pm; Free.

This wise-cracking Brooklyn clown is proud to cross the borough border and bring his show to Queens. He'll make jokes, clown around, and do some magic. Always looking for volunteers to help him with tricks, Bonkerz is sure to give all guests stomach aches from laughing so hard!

"The Good Dinosaur": Albert H. Mauro Playground, 139th Street and Park Drive East; (718) 760-6560; 8 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

When a rainstorm washes poor Arlo downriver, the dino ends up bruised, battered, and miles away from home. He meets Spot, a Neanderthal boy, and the unlikely duo embark on an epic adventure to reunite Arlo with his beloved family. Bring your own chair or blanket to this fun free eve.

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.

In this nine-hole miniature golf course, players will explore key science concepts such as propulsion, gravity, escape velocity, launch window, gravitational assist, and more. Recommended for ages 6 and older.

Sculpture Workshop: Socrates Sculpture Park, 32-01 Vernon Blvd.; (718) 956-1819; www.socratessculpturepark.org; Saturdays, Noon to 3 pm, Now – Sat, Sept. 24; Free.

Saturday Sculpture Workshops are designed for kids (ages 5 to 13) and their families. Participants will work with a different artist each week, exploring innovative art mediums and a variety of subject matter.

Alley Pond Adventure course: Alley Pond Park Adventure Center, Alley Pond Park; (718) 217-6034; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; Sundays, 9:30 am to noon, Sun, July 3 – Sun, Aug. 28; Free.

This outdoor adventure fosters trust, communication, and team building at Alley Pond Park. The program is a two-hour adventure, which includes both low and high elements. The Adventure Course is open to individuals, small groups of friends, and family, ages 8 and up.

Garden Workdays: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St.; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org; Wednesdays, 9 am to noon, Now – Wed, Aug. 31; Free.

Teens 16 and older get a chance to experience farming, and learning how to harvest, plant and compost. Registration required.

FURTHER AFIELD

Summer Science Academy: St. Francis College, 180 Remsen St. between Court and Clinton streets, Brooklyn; (718) 489-5200; <https://www.sfc.edu>; Weekdays, 9 am, Mon, July 11 – Fri, July 22; Free.

The workshop offers dozens of city high school students an opportunity to discover and to get real-world experience in the sciences. The program runs Monday to Friday and teaches topics such as DNA barcoding and forensics. Rising sophomores, juniors, and seniors may apply to the program. Candidates should email knolan@sfc.edu with their: name; address; phone number; name of school; graduation date, and one-page essay about why they would like to be in the program.

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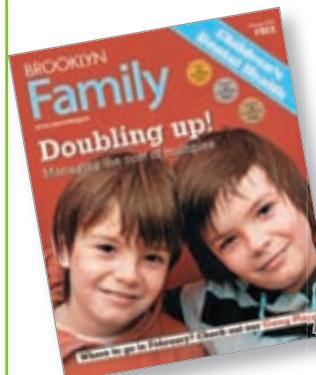
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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

Sounds like America!

“Hello Friend” — the fourth album of children’s music from The Hollow Trees — is quintessential Americana and the perfect soundtrack for your Fourth of July BBQ. It is a rip-roaring hoote-nanny with a mix of original tunes and covers that span an array of high-energy red-white-and-blue genres: folk, bluegrass, country, and jug band. “I Can’t Dance (I’ve Got Ants in My



Pants) is a rollicking, kazoo-y song that will get everyone laughing and singing along with its repeat-after-me style of lyrics, while “The Whole Thing,” a call-and-response song, delighted me with its variety of words employed to describe just how much is wanted.

“Hello Friend” will bring a smile to your face.

“Hello Friend” CD by The Hollow Trees, \$11.99, iTunes.com.

Breast friends

United Kingdom-based company Tommee Tippee boasts that its new Ultra bottle has a breast-like, flexible, silicone nipple that allows for a natural latch that makes it easier for baby to switch between breastfeeding and bottle feedings. The design also minimizes air intake (which means less tears for baby, because gulping air can lead to uncomfortable gas).

The Ultra has secure seals between the nipple and screw ring and ring and bottle base, so milk goes into baby’s mouth and doesn’t leak out.



Ultra bottle 5 or 9 oz. by Tommee Tippee, \$10.99, or the Ultra bottle by Tommee Tippee 3-pack, \$26.99, www.BabiesRUs.com.

Not easy being Greene

“Kelly Greene and the Green Hats” is a suspenseful page-turner about a chapeau-loving tween with a mystery to solve. In this first, self-published chapter book from DM Dondero, Kelly grapples with the idea that her bedroom closet may be haunted. And she considers the alternative — that she may be plagued with an overactive imagination. Either way, she’s nervous, but she’s not alone. She has doting Uncle Jed, a visit-



ing archaeologist, and her friends and sisters to help her solve the riddles.

As the creepy sounds pile up, Dondero depicts tween life with humor and empathy. For thoughtful readers ages 9 and older, there are lessons to be learned about working out differences, caring for the Earth; and more.

“Kelly Greene and the Green Hats” book by DM Dondero, \$9.37, www.amazon.com.

Pieces of family history

Our NYC Floor Puzzle, illustrated by Jane Archer, is a colorful map of all five boroughs and features landmarks, museums, and points of interest to discover with the whole family.

Assembling the 100-piece puzzle is a wonderful pastime for everyone ages 4 and older. Manufactured by Brooklyn-based company Cardborders, the finished map measures 18-inches by 24-inches. The large size of the pieces (3-inches by 2-inches) ensures that they aren’t easily lost, and it maximizes the opportunity for success for kids who are just honing their puzzle-assembling chops.

Piecing it together was a sweet experience for our whole family as we recalled happy memories of places we have visited (wandering the halls of the Natural History Museum! Thrilling rides in Coney Island! Taking an Eco Cruise!). And we shouted out in disbelief over all of the fantastic sites we have yet to explore.



And the piece de resistance is that after the puzzle is assembled, kids get to put their house on the map with the enclosed sticker.

Our NYC Floor Puzzle by Cardborders, \$24, www.barneys.com.

One-horned dream team

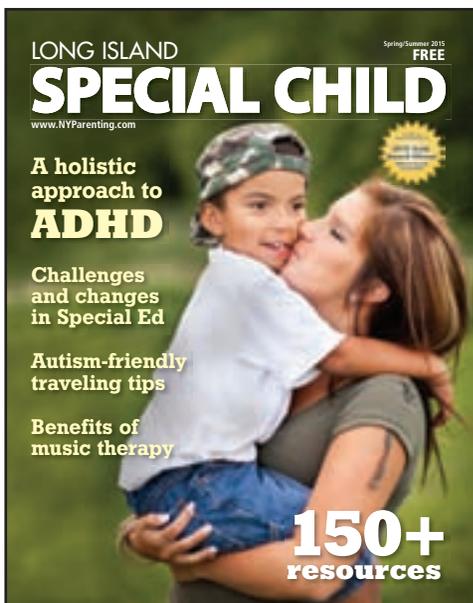
Zoonicorns are small, whimsical, plush amalgams of zebras and unicorns (with troll hair for manes) that are a perfectly portable size (6-inches by 6-inches) — just right for a small child to bring on vacation. Little

hands will love clutching their 3-D Zoonicorn while they play with the new, interactive Zoonicorn app “Ene’s Matching Game”; read the digital picture books “To Catch a Fish” and “The Tag Along” on Zoonicorn.com; or read Mark Lubratt’s “Buffy Meets the Zoonicorn” hardcover book, about a restless bison in a zoo who learns to manage her emotions while dreaming of her herdful of friends, the Zoonicorn.

Available in four colors, the Zoonicorn includes peaceful Promitheia (white with purple stripes), carefree Aliel has pink stripes, cheerful Ene has green stripes, and brave Valeo has blue stripes. The stories and app entertain while helping children acknowledge and understand their emotions and improve their relationships with friends and siblings. These mythical creatures inspire kids to navigate real world challenges.

Zoonicorn plush, \$13.95, “Buffy Meets the Zoonicorn” book by Mark Lubratt, \$16.95, www.amazon.com.





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