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Letter from the publisher

Years ago, my friend Don and his family moved from Brooklyn to New Dorp. They went from living in a small apartment in a very urban and gritty central Brooklyn to a two-story house with land around it and a rural feeling that it was like country. They had wall-to-wall carpeting, and felt rich.



Happily, I was invited out to Christmas dinner — quite a trek from the Upper West Side of Manhattan — but I remember the journey being amazing! Don escorted me, and just being on the ferry, which I think cost a nickel, was festive and a real treat. There was snow everywhere and it looked like a wonderland as we made our way in his dad's car to New Dorp.

In the years since, Staten Island has changed considerably. It's obviously a great deal more populated, more vital, and certainly not as "sleepy" as it was almost half a century ago. With this vitality and surge in citizenry has come a need for more resources.

We aim to help in filling that need. Along with this publication, we also bring to Staten Island our very unique New York Special Child magazine.

Both are edited by native Staten Island and parent Vince DiMiceli, who's first-person essay about growing up on the Island is included in our premiere issue Staten Island Family.

We are also pleased to offer a first-person article and profile from writer Laura Varosca about her son Henry's day at the Staten Island Children's Museum.

We are very pleased to present this first issue and we know the future will bring more and more relevance, and greater connections with the various communities and the terrific people who bring education and programs of all kinds to the families of Staten Island.

We feel woven into the fabric already.

I look forward to the future and the growth of Staten Island Family and I thank you very much for reading it.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis, Publisher



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Paradise Island

Remembering Staten Island at its best

BY VINCE DIMICELI

I am confident that I grew up in the best place in the world — Staten Island.

Really.
No, *really*.

That sentence, which I've repeated many times, has raised eyebrows, produced uncontrolled snorts, and, mostly, brought about heated debate. But I believe it. To this day.

In the mid-1970s, Manhattan was dead to most (and quite notably to Gerald Ford). Entire neighborhoods were burnt out. Central Park was a place people got mugged. Taking the subway meant taking your life in your hands. The population in Brooklyn, the Bronx and Manhattan was dropping. It seemed no one wanted to live in New York City anymore.

Unless they moved to Staten Island.

Back then, The Rock was the only place middle-class families wanted to be.

They came in droves, and why not?

For the first four years of my life, we lived in a duplex of a three-block development in Eltingville. For the most part, the houses on Ray Street, Arden Avenue and Bent Street were quite similar — and so were the people inside them. Dads worked for the city. Moms stayed home to take care of the kids and dog. And the kids, well, we pretty much had the run of the place.

The doorbell would usually ring early in the morning, and if it wasn't some older kids asking my mom if they could play with our dog, Tiger, it was Timmy or Kim or Andrea or Mickey-Michael (sometimes all of them) seeking out me and my brother. Every backyard had a pool. Every front



In 1970, few cars, and lots of woods, defined Staten Island. Here, our editor's dad with his oldest son and partner (no — they were cops) on Ray Street, with Peggy's Field in the background. (Inset) The author, center, and pals on Serrell Avenue during the Blizzard of '78.



yard had a lawn. There were swingsets. There were sandboxes. And there was the street where, occasionally, a car slowly passed, the driver waving to the kids playing ball around freshly painted bases.

To our parents, who moved here from Brooklyn in the late '60s, it was paradise. Our neighbor, Andy, even refused to put up a fence.

"I own what I survey," he would say — and he didn't want anything to disrupt his view.

Staten Island gave our parents the promise that their kids would get the things they didn't have, growing up in small apartments in Brooklyn. Who would believe that three boys wouldn't have to sleep in the same bed — or even in the same room?

In 1975, with a building boom going full throttle and my parents in need of a two-family house, they didn't have to look far. They found a home five blocks away on Serrell Avenue. It was the last house on a block of new houses, each with a garage and carport. When we moved in, the road was still dirt. Our neighbor was the woods.

During the next 10 years, my two brothers and I, along with a dozen or so kids our age living on the block, explored every nook and cranny. We built forts, played manhunt, rode bikes, climbed trees and hung swings so we could fly over brooks.

Our homes were just places to eat and sleep. Ballgames were interrupted

by a dad's distinct whistle, calling Matt or Mark or James or Aaron or Bird in for dinner. We lived a life not found anywhere else in New York City at that time.

By the time the woods finally fell during the mid-'80s building boom, we turned our sights north. We hopped a train from the Annadale station and headed to the ferry. Within an hour, we were in Manhattan, making a comeback. We'd walk up Broadway and buy knock-off sunglasses on Canal Street and fake IDs (that nobody accepted) at Times Square. We learned we could get to Yankee Stadium without even taking a car!

We worked at the Mall, or some mom-and-pop in town. We went to good public schools. We partied at Midland Beach, where the cops could keep an eye on us.

And then, for most of us, we moved on. A lot of us went to Jersey, seeking out the childhood we experienced for our own kids. Others went the other way, to Manhattan or Brooklyn, in search of a truer city life.

And then there's a guy like me, torn between the two.

So what did I do?

I moved to the North Shore, which offers the Zoo, the Ballpark, Snug Harbor, a new, excellent public school, the Serpentine Commons and a free boat ride all minutes away from my house.

Ah, paradise!

Love your borough?

Hey moms and dads! We are looking for essays from local parents. Write to us at family@cnglocal.com or call (718) 260-2587 and let us know if you'd like to contribute something about your community, history or family life in the borough of Staten Island.

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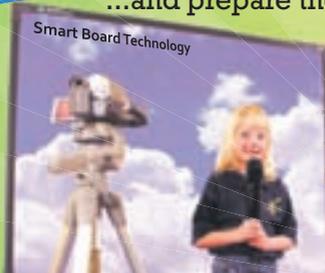
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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Shake off the salt

Many of us have had a long love affair with salt, but that may be about to change. Earlier this year, the Institute of Medicine urged the U.S. government to gradually reduce the maximum amount of sodium that food companies and restaurants can add to foods.

Salt versus sodium

Although both terms are often used interchangeably, there is a difference between salt and sodium.

Salt is made up of sodium chloride: 60 percent is sodium, the rest, chloride. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the average American ingests about 3,400 milligrams a day. The latest health organization recommendations range from 1,500 milligrams to 2,400 milligrams. Most nutrition experts estimate that about 75 percent come from processed food.

Salt sensitivity

Not all medical doctors agree that everyone needs to limit salt. But, there is growing evidence that a significant number of people have a condition called salt sensitivity, an abnormal increase in blood pressure in response to increases in dietary sodium. According to research performed by Myron H. Weinberger, MD, certain salt-sensitive people do

Sodium shockers

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	SODIUM (mg)
French bread	1 slice	416
Rice pilaf, mix, prepared	1 cup	780
Lite soy sauce	1 Tbsp	550
Panera Turkey Artichoke Hot Panini	1	2,340
Houlihan's Thai Chile Style Chicken Wing appetizer	1	4,979
Hebrew National quarter-pound franks	1 frank	1,070
Cottage cheese	1 cup	820
Oscar Mayer Lunchable (ham, cheese crackers)	1	1,060
California Pizza Kitchen Kid's Cheeseburger Pizza	1	1,680

not necessarily develop hypertension — but their long-term mortality rate is just as high as those who do.

Driven by convenience

Busy family lives often necessitate taking dietary shortcuts that are high in sodium — frozen meats, entrees and pizzas; rice and soup mixes; canned fish and soup; seasoning mixes and prepared spaghetti sauce. Hurrying in and out of drive-thrus, and especially dining out at restaurants, provide another huge dose. Some restaurant entrees have 2,000 milligrams or more in one order.

Do you need to be concerned about how much sodium your child ingests? Yes. A taste for salt is acquired, and salt-loving children grow up to be adults who eat a salty diet. A 2001 report said that by ages 7-9, 68 percent of children ate too much sodium. And, salty foods are often high in fat and calories. Two years ago, a study published in the journal

“Hypertension” found that the more salty food children ate, the more sugary sodas they drank to wash it down.

It's not easy for food companies to simply drop the salt due to the many roles it plays. For example, bread dough depends on sodium chloride and sodium bicarbonate in order to rise.

Here are some tips to reduce the sodium in your family's diet:

1. Prepare as much from scratch as possible. Eat fresh vegetables, plain meats and grains (such as rice) that you season yourself.

2. Cook without salt, but add just a little at the table. Surprisingly, this can allow you to get by with less because your tongue gets a direct “hit” from the salt crystals.

3. Add plenty of herbs and spices. Also, freshly squeezed lemon or lime juice and red wine or balsamic vinegar add a lot of flavor with negligible sodium.

4. Choose restaurant entrees that come without sauces and gravies. And by eating a half portion, not only will you save calories, you'll save sodium, too.

5. When reading food labels, pay attention to portion size. A can of soup may be two (or two-and-a-half) servings, so multiply milligrams of sodium by that factor.

Christine M. Palumbo, RD, is a Chicago area nutritionist who doesn't mind cutting back on salt, but leave her popcorn alone. Send your questions and column ideas to her at Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com or (630) 369-8495.



Herbed Pork Chops

Makes 4 servings.
Prep Time: 5 minutes
Cook Time: 8 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon McCormick® Perfect Pinch® Salt-Free Savory All Purpose Seasoning
½ teaspoon salt

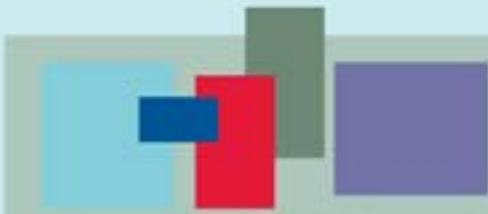
4 bone-in pork chops, 1/2-inch thick (about 1 1/2 pounds), trimmed
2 tablespoons oil

INSTRUCTIONS: Sprinkle Seasoning evenly over both sides of pork chops. Heat oil in large skillet on medium heat. Add pork chops; cook 4 minutes per side or until desired doneness.

ALTERNATE PREP METHOD: Grill chops, over direct heat, turning once, to medium doneness or until the internal temperature reaches 155 degrees Fahrenheit, about 3 to 4 minutes per side.

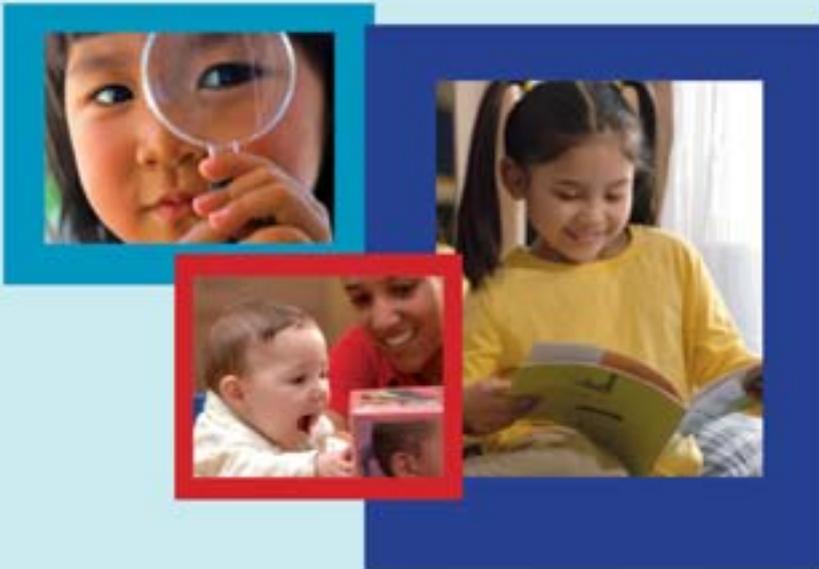
NUTRITION FACTS: 253 calories, 17 grams fat, 24 grams protein, 1 gram carbohydrate, 78 milligrams cholesterol, 252 milligrams sodium, 0 gram fiber

Recipe courtesy of McCormick.com.



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Back-to-school

How to get your A in organization this fall

BY CAROL BRZOWSKI

When I sent my firstborn off to school 10 years ago, I was ill-prepared for the realities of his new life. I thought I'd just send him off with a tearful goodbye, and that would be that.

Boy, was I wrong.

I completely underestimated how managing my son's (and later, his brother's) school life would consume such a chunk of my time.

Each day, I had to review a list of questions. Is today the day they take in money for lunch from the cafeteria or pack a lunch? What's the deadline for filling out the paperwork and getting the money for the field trip? What time do I have to pick up my son from the after-school activity? Buy what for the science fair?!

But, through the years — and now with both sons in high school — I've learned a lot through my own experience and that of other seasoned parents who taught me the key to surviving the school years: "Work smarter, not harder."

Here are some tips I've gathered that should help you glide through the next four semesters:

- Organized parents are always seen with their organizers. Whether you use electronics or paper, maintain an organizer in which you keep all of your appointments and phone numbers with you at all times. Record dates as soon as you're made aware of them. And make sure to have important phone numbers, like your child's school, the bus company's and those of child's friends' parents, available in a pinch.

- Avoid vacations that run up into the week before school. That's the

week you want to train your children to start waking up early again and getting back into routines. It's harder for the kids to go back to school if they are on a trip right before school starts.

- Avoid the mistake of buying unnecessary school supplies by checking with your child's school to determine what is needed. Consider saving money by buying supplies in bulk and splitting the cost with a friend whose child needs the same supplies. There are usually a few items you'll always need on hand throughout the year — lined paper and pencils — so stock up when they are on sale.

- Cell phones have become a common school supply, though many schools are limiting their use during the school day. They are useful in keeping in touch on important matters — my sons call or text during lunch to let me know they need something for the following day or that a club meeting has been canceled. If you're not keen on buying them their own cell phone, consider a pre-paid phone. Make sure you know the phone carrier's costs — my sons once racked up a few \$100 through unnecessary text messaging and Internet access.

- Organize everything your child needs to take to school the night before (older children can

do this on their own). Pack their lunchbox with non-perishables and add the items that require an ice pack in the morning. Make sure the kids put the ice pack back into the freezer when they get home from school and empty the wrappers and food bits out of the lunchbox to clean it for the next day.

- Buy extra ice packs for lunch boxes. In a pinch, you can pack a plastic storage bag with ice cubes. Ask your child to brainstorm about what healthy food they'd like for lunches.

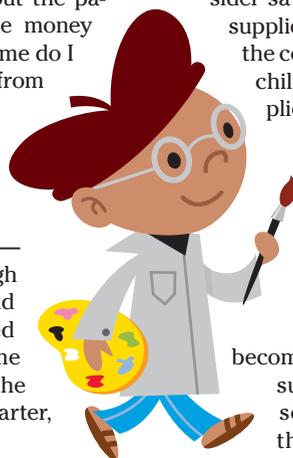
- Keep a day's worth of extra lunch money stashed in the backpack for those times when your child forgets money.

- Make sure your child's vaccinations are up to date. This is often required not only for school, but for participation in sports and scouting. If you are applying for exemptions, get your paperwork organized.

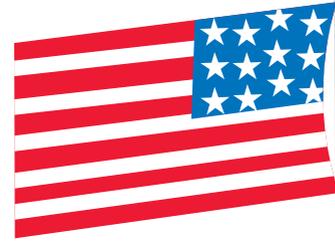
- If your child commutes by car or bus, carry snacks and cold water in the car or pack extra in the backpack for bus trips, if permitted. You may want to freeze bottles of water; they'll thaw out and provide cold refreshment by the end of the day.

- If you're the type of parent who likes to give teachers and bus drivers gifts for holidays or at the end of the year, consider buying items as you see them and can afford them, packing them away in the closet until needed, rather than making a mad rush for gifts at the last minute.

- Most school districts now have Internet sites that allow you to see your child's academic progress in real time. I can set up my district's site to send me e-mails every time



checklist



my sons' grades dip below a certain level. It's been an invaluable tool in keeping abreast of their academic performances.

- Join the PTA or other school groups and prepare to get involved. Nothing will keep you more connected to your child and the school more than volunteering. Get to know your child's teachers. Take advantages of opportunities, such as open houses, to know what materials your child is using for learning.

- If your child is starting at a new school, visit the school with him or her once before the year begins so he or she will feel more comfortable on the first day.

- If your child is going to school for the first time, plan to have your child spend a lot of down time there after classes — perhaps at the playground — to help deal with some of the transition stress he or she may feel.

- Line up emergency contacts on your child's behalf just in case the school has trouble getting in touch with you.

- Organize car pools whenever possible, especially given the escalating fuel costs that have hit every family budget.

- One of the most challenging aspects of the

school year is having nutritious, delicious meals ready by the end of the day. If you don't already have one, invest in a slow cooker. It's a parent's best friend in the kitchen. Consider making oatmeal the night before so your family wakes up to a hot-cooked breakfast in the morning (this is especially helpful if your family is on

different work-school shifts and everyone needs to help themselves). The slow cooker also can be used to prepare dinner and cuts down on the end-of-the-day frustration of what to do for dinner on those rush days.

You can also ensure healthy meals by making large portions of food and freezing it for later use.

- Make sure school personnel are aware of any special needs your child may have.

- Make sure you read at least a half hour each day with your younger child. It's also fun to read the same books your middle or high school child may be reading.

- Talk to your child about drugs, alcohol, bullies, peer pressure, guns, strangers and not picking up needles or allowing another child's blood to get near his or her cuts. Review sex education with older children.

- Try to be sensitive to your child's feelings

around test times — be aware of how you have felt when you were under pressure at work.

- Feed your child well and give him or her plenty of support and opportunities for rest.

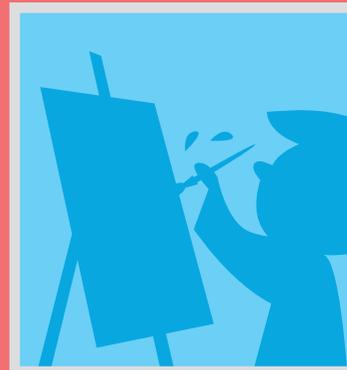
- Get to know your child's friends and their families. Open your home to supervised parties and sleep-overs.

- Review your child's homework with him or her. Ensure that homework comes before play, TV, computers or video games, but allow for some down time.

- Set up a quiet place to study and provide reference materials.

- Augment your child's education with family field trips and home projects. Schools are cutting back on the extras, so you may have to take up the slack with art, music and physical education.

- Celebrate your child's accomplishments.





GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS



Parents can find free parental controls — that's right, FREE — if they know where to look.

Using online filters

It's a rare parent who hasn't thought about installing filtering or monitoring software on the family computer. It's an even rarer parent who doesn't feel confused by the many choices and resentful about the cost. "Youth Safety on a Living Internet," a recent report from the government's Online Safety and Technology Group, acknowledges that parents face a bewildering variety of product choices.

Many commercial products, such as Net Nanny, CyberPatrol and Safe Eyes, have established reputations for effectiveness. Now, parents can

find free parental controls if they know where to look. The kind of tool you need depends both on your child's age and temperament. Filtering limits a child's access to the various aspects of the Internet, minimizing the risk that kids will encounter people or places they are too young to handle. Parents can point children toward specific Web sites that they know to be family-friendly, or they can depend on software that screens out

sites that are decidedly not for kids.

Older children need to learn how to make responsible decisions online. While they are in training, parents may want to use accountability software that provides detailed information about what a child does online. Used surreptitiously as "spyware," this kind of software can disrupt trust between parent and child. Instead, parents should explain what kind of monitoring they plan to do, and why. Just like curfews, the level of monitoring should be adjusted as the child demonstrates maturity.

Parental control software that you purchase may have a wider range of

features, but for parents who know what they need, the following programs offer a reliable service at the unbeatable price of free. Just keep in mind that a child with an Internet-enabled cellphone can circumvent any controls installed on the home computer:

- Toddler Keys is a little program written by a dad to protect his computer from little hands. It allows you to lock up the keyboard as well as power buttons, CD drives and the mouse. If a curious toddler presses a key, she gets sounds and pictures, but no access to files or programs. Toddler Keys can be downloaded with confidence from download.cnet.com. Just search for the name of the program.

- KidSurf (www.kid-surf.com) costs \$5.99, but that modest price may be worth it to parents of kids under 8. It creates a very simple but appealing interface for the Internet. You choose the sites your child can visit, and the program blocks everything else, including pop-ups and links. There's also a timer so you can decide when online time is over.

- Parental Control Bar (www.parentalcontrolbar.org) will filter Web sites to be sure they are kid-friendly. You can easily modify the list to block — or approve — different sites. A button makes it easy for the person who knows the password to flip from child to parent mode.

- K9 Web Protection, provided free by Bluecoat, a company that specializes in corporate Internet security, offers a checklist so parents can block content in 60 categories and gives you access to a "cloud" where the database is constantly being updated. One drawback — there is no child mode — once a site is blocked, no one in the family can visit it.

- Kidlogger (www.rohos.com/kidlogger/s) is a very simple program that records keystrokes so you can see what Web sites your child has visited, who he chatted with, what documents he opened and what pictures he viewed. It can create different logs for different users and includes a screen capture feature. Simply telling your child you've installed the software is an inexpensive way

to infuse conscience into computing and spares you the \$100 price tag for more sophisticated spyware.

- Windows Live Family Safety (<http://explore.live.com/windows-live-family-safety>) is ideal for families that use Messenger, Hotmail and other Windows features. In addition to three pre-set levels of filtering, parents can block or allow specific Web sites. Parents can also restrict conversations so kids can only communicate with people on an approved buddy list.

- Imsafer (www.imsafer.com) uses a language analysis program that understands English as well as the acronyms typical of chat and instant messaging. It keeps track of both sides of online conversations and sends you an alert if your child strays into territory that is sexual or threatening.

- Norton Online Family (<https://onlinefamily.norton.com>) is, by far, the most sophisticated of the free programs. Norton, of course, sells cutting-edge technology for Internet security. Its free family software makes it very easy to monitor Web sites your child visits and blocks any that are unacceptable. Just as useful, the program lets you monitor chats and searches and gives you a limited window into your child's social networking habits. Perhaps most important, the Web site offers valuable advice about how to talk to your child about online activities, as well as up-to-the-minute insight into what kids are actually doing online and a community where parents can share their experiences.

Norton's take-away message is that, in the end, the only way to really know about your child's online experience is to talk to your child. Still, it's comforting to know that parents now have access to free tools that will allow them to, in the words of a former president, "trust and verify."

Carolyn Jabs, MA, has been writing about families and the Internet for over 15 years. She is the mother of three computer-savvy kids. Other Growing Up Online columns appear on her Web site www.growing-up-online.com.

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Education

DIRECTORY

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2734 Victory Blvd.
718-494-1827 or www.bumblebees-r-us.com

At Bumblebees-R-U's our philosophy is simple, "To provide a safe, loving, stimulating environment where our children will thrive in all areas of development." By implementing a multi-sensory approach to learning, our children learn through play and play while they learn. Our daily schedules are jam packed with creative hands-on activities, indoor and outdoor play, teacher instruction and supervised free play. We are licensed under the Department of Health and we carefully adhere to all of their guidelines.

Jewish Community Center of Staten Island (JCC)

Early Childhood Center
Bernikow JCC/Mid Island – 1466
Manor Road, 718.475.5230

Avis/South Shore JCC – 1297
Arthur Kill Road, 718.475.5270

Aberlin/North Shore JCC – 485
Victory Blvd, 718.475.5290 or
www.sijcc.org

At the JCC's Early Childhood Center our programs are sensitive to each child's special and unique talents and strengths. We pride ourselves on creating fun hands-on learning opportunities for all. We are dedicated to providing children with a strong educational foundation. Our thematic curriculum allows children to discover and grow in loving, nurturing and engaging environments. Children's activities are individualized and age appropriate. We encourage creative problem solving, decision making and leadership skills. All programs are staffed with caring and experienced professionals. Our teachers

are certified by the State Education Department of New York and we are licensed by the Department of Health's Bureau of Day Care. We offer Infant & Toddler Day Care (ages 3 months – 2.8 years); Preschool (ages 2.9-4.9 years); Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) plus full day option through JCC preschool program. Parent involvement is key to your child's success in school. We welcome a partnership with you and your family.

Staten Island Academy

715 Todt Hill Road
718 303-7846 or www.statenislandacademy.org

Successful students — achieving their goals in school and in life — are at the center of Staten Island Academy. An independent, co-ed, college prep school for Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12, the Academy provides an inspiring balance of challenge, exploration and opportunity. In Pre-K through Grade 4, children receive the kind of nurturing that makes them feel at home, comfortable enough to ask questions, explore, and create. In Grades 5-8, students begin to stretch their wings in a safe, supportive environment. In Grades 9-12, we put our students at the center of their high school education with outstanding academics, one of New York City's finest college guidance programs, and a wide variety of extracurricular activities.

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309 St. Paul's Avenue
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Staying cool at

The Staten Island Children's Museum lets imagination soar

BY LAURA J. VAROSCAK

When the heat gets to be too much this summer, escape to the Staten Island Children's Museum — where families can have hands-on play time on four fun-filled floors. I recently visited the museum, located on the grounds of historic Snug Harbor, in a search of things new and different that my sons would enjoy.

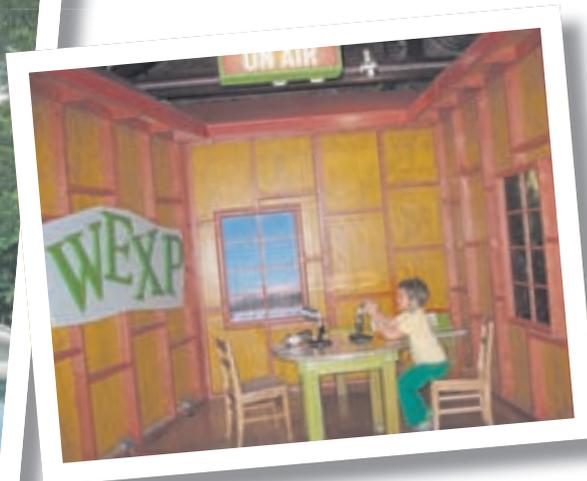
Upon entering, Henry, my 5-year-old, was immediately attracted to Ladder 11, an old-fashioned fire truck equipped with lights and a bells named in memory of September 11. Children donned the firefighter uniforms available in cubbies nearby and excitedly climbed aboard the truck. Some radioed-in emergencies and pulled on the hose, while others

adjusted the valves and gauges on the side of the vehicle. Ready for action, kids in fire hats and coats wearing oxygen tanks slid down the brass pole. Youngsters clambered into a pair of authentic boots, admiring themselves in a mirror next to a fully-dressed model of a firefighter. Some older children watched a video showing real firefighters talk about safety on the job.

In the Big Games room, a sun-drenched hall next to the garden terrace, families can play with giant-sized tic-tac-toe, cards, oversized dominoes, a jumbo Connect Four and a checker and chess board so big, they can actually travel with their pieces. They can also build mazes, practice their aim in a ball toss and bowl in the mini howling alley.

"Every time we came to visit, we never got to the exhibits," explained Michael, a father we met who became a member of the Museum because his son loved it so much. "Some days we just come here to hang out and play games."

Kids can travel the globe in the Great Explorations exhibit by using a computer to pinpoint any place on Earth, via satellite, and then experience the



the Museum



location interactively. Henry was drawn to the “rainforest,” where he explored dark caves and pulled himself across a river on a bamboo raft — just like Indiana Jones. Others dressed in scuba suits and dug for buried treasure “under the sea,” while in the “Arctic” kids tried on real snow shoes, rode the virtual dog sled, built an igloo and climbed an icy mountain. Glass cases are also positioned throughout the exhibit, each containing books, biographies of famous explorers, photographs and authentic travel gear — perfect for older kids interested in taking their learning one step further.

Even Charlie, my infant, marveled at the huge sculptures hanging from the ceiling and stared at paintings hanging in the stairwell. He also

enjoyed eating outdoors in the Sea of Boats, a play space that encapsulates Staten Island’s maritime history. Henry enjoyed spending time hoisting sails, rowing with oars, fishing, digging for oysters, and playing at the large water table.

My family lit up the stage in Portia’s Playhouse — a cozy theatre space that included different scenery, a light and sound board, a ticket booth, costumes and props. Henry and I sat at the light and sound board creating dramatic effects for my husband to react to on stage. First he chose a farm scene and Henry pressed the rooster button as I brought up the lights on a bright sunny morning. Next, we changed to a city scape and I darkened the lights. Henry hit the thunderstorm button and my hus-

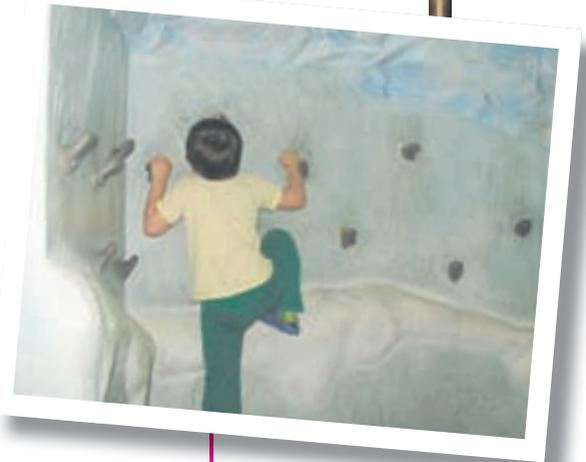
band ran for cover. We experimented with many combinations of lights, sounds, and backdrops and ended with a round of applause for my husband, the ham.

The third floor features “Bugs and Other Insects,” an exhibit filled with creep crawlly creatures with which kids can interact. After studying how ants work together in a colony, kids can pretend they are ants crawling through an ant hill. While older children try on the outer “shells” of different insects, babies explore the enclosed padded Toddler Garden.

Henry, a big fan of Spiderman, liked reading about how real spiders catch and devour their prey. He also enjoyed inventing his own bug he named Bat-bug (yeah, he’s also a big Batman fan). Fascinating to children and adults alike are the displays of live insects, including the hissing cockroaches from Madagascar and the thousands of honey bees bustling in their hive.

In addition to the regular exhibits, the Museum offers weekly cooking, yoga, arts and crafts, dance and educational workshops and special programs designed for toddlers. During the summer, it hosts a camp with art, cooking, photography, animals, theatre, dance, sports and games. It is also available for parties, festivals and outdoor programs, like bug hunts or haunted tours.

The Staten Island Children’s Museum [1000 Richmond Terrace in Snug Harbor, (718) 273-2060] Open Tuesday through Sunday and closed Monday, except most school holidays 12 pm–5 pm when public schools are open and 10 am–5 pm when schools are closed. For info, visit www.statenislandkids.org.



The author’s son enjoys the Staten Island Children’s Museum’s many exhibits including the chance to dress up like a giant beetle or slide down a fire house pole.



NEWBIE DAD

BRIAN KANTZ

Super-sized summer

Kids today have the coolest toys for hot days!

Maybe the heat is getting to me. Or, maybe I've watched one too many "60 Minutes" commentaries by that famous curmudgeon, Andy Rooney. Or, maybe it's the fact that some kid at the playground just called me an "old dude." (37 is not old, kid! You may not believe that now, but you'll see! You'll see!) Whatever it is, I have a rock in my shoe this summer.

So, what's wrong? What's my beef? Well, I'm just wondering, who went and super-sized summer for today's kids? Just about

blanket at the beach, on your new white t-shirt, everywhere. Other than taking a swig from the garden hose, Kool-Aid was your only option.

And what flavor was Kool-Aid? It was red. There was only one flavor of Kool-Aid that I knew of: red Kool-Aid. Maybe Kool-Aid did offer its drink mix in other flavors back then, but we were never aware of it.

Do you know how many flavors of juice and juice-like beverages are on the market today? About 150,000. So, when someone at a picnic asks me if I would like a strawberry orange pomegranate or a Pacific mango sun-splash, I usually ask, "Do you have any red?"

Let's move on to the Slip 'n Slide.

It was a true backyard necessity on a hot summer day, especially once the three-foot-round plastic pool just wouldn't comfortably accommodate

my three gangly brothers and I anymore. The original Slip 'n Slide featured some pretty basic engineering: a long plastic sheet with an opening for the garden hose.

Turn the spigot on and away you go, slipping the hot summer day away under the soft drizzle of cold

water. You just had to make sure that no large sticks, giant rocks or neighborhood dogs were underneath the plastic,

lest you impale yourself, break a shin or get bitten.

Today's Slip 'n Slides? Whoa-ho-ho. Fancy. You've got gushing waterfalls, cushy inflatable parts, hydroplaners, boogie boarders, triple racers, wave riders, whitewater blasters, the whole nine yards. It's apparently less about slippin' and slidin' and more about looking good.

And speaking of fancy, what is with all of the kids tooling up and down the streets in motorized vehi-

cles? Is it really necessary for 4-year-old Johnny to be hogging the sidewalk in his mini-Hummer? Well, at least his vehicle doesn't guzzle gas, but he should still need a license to drive that thing. I've seen more than a few innocent flowers buried under the wheels of Johnny's wildly navigated bad-boy machine.

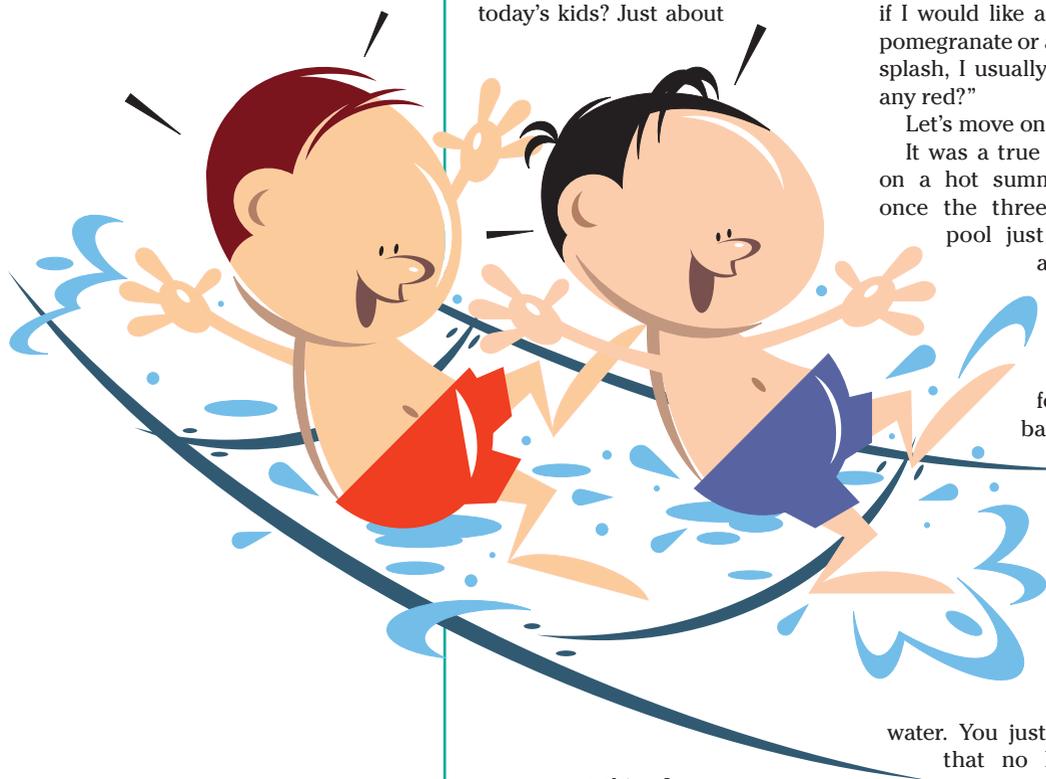
Back when we were kids, we toiled up and down the streets all summer long on our Big Wheels and banana-seat bicycles with sissy bars. Pedal power, baby. If you wanted to visit a friend who lived down the block, you either pedaled or hoofed it on your own two feet. You wouldn't have even imagined taking your battery-powered Lightning McQueen out for a spin.

OK, I'm almost done. Here's one more favorite summer activity: going to the neighborhood playground. This is my two sons' favorite thing to do. They call it going to "swings and slides." Back in my childhood, that's exactly what it was. We went to a playground that had swings and one slide. All of the equipment was fashioned out of industrial-grade steel. You sat on a flat steel seat on the swing and you climbed up steel steps to get to the top of the tall steel slide. That steel was a molten 220-degrees in the hot sun.

Today's playgrounds? Oh... my... gosh. They are unbelievable! Instead of simple swings and slides, these are monstrous "play structures." Spiral slides, rock-climbing walls, ziplines, fireman's poles and on and on! All in cool-to-the-touch molded plastic. It's madness, I tell you! And, I must admit, it's all so much darn fun!

So, go ahead, kids, enjoy your super-sized summer! Have a grand old time. Just know that in another 30 years, your stuff will seem pretty old school, too, and you'll be left to write a nostalgic (and, yes, completely jealous) column for the benefit of your peers.

Brian Kantz nearly broke his collarbone diving on a Slip 'n Slide the other day. Totally worth it. Visit Brian online at www.briankantz.com or drop him a note at thenewbiead@yahoo.com.



every great thing I remember from the summers of my childhood still exists, but it has all been super-sized, mega-hyped and full-throttled. It's like summer on steroids. I notice this all the time as I play with my kids. Do you?

Let me give you a quick example. The taste of summer from your childhood — quick, what was it? If you said Kool-Aid, you would be correct, my friend. A pitcher of Kool-Aid was everywhere, it seemed. In the fridge at home, in the fridge at your friends' houses, on the picnic table, on the

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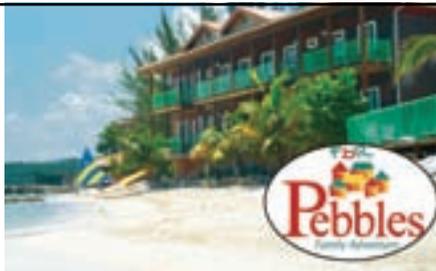


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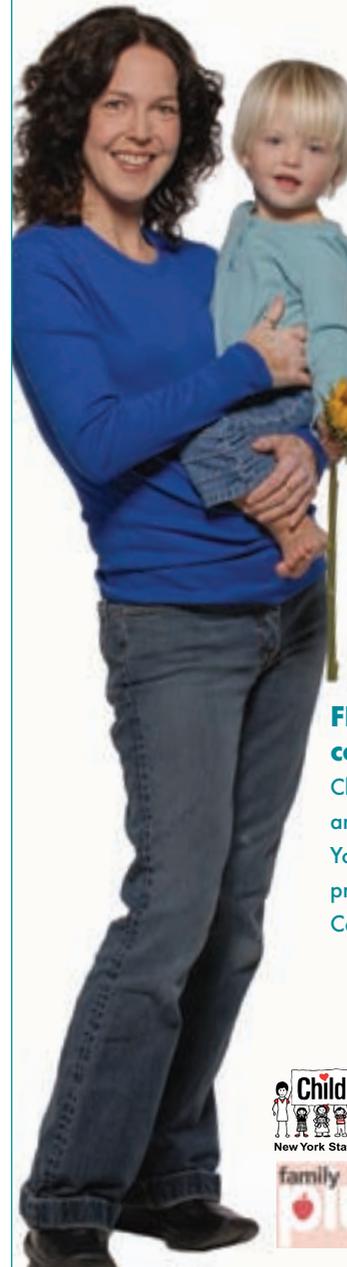
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PARENTS
HELPING
PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

Off the couch and into an active life



Dear Sharon,

We have two sons, ages 8 and 12. Our older son is a terrific soccer player and is slim and fit. Our youngest son is pudgy and overeats. He has the opposite personality and lacks activity. His favorite pastimes are reading, TV and video games, and he snacks constantly. What should we do? I am very concerned about him, his health and his future.

Dear Parents,

As a mom of three sons I have learned that children can be very different — even if they are siblings. It seems that your boys are no exception.

It is important for parents to view their children as unique individuals and praise each of their strengths, while sorting through effective ways to assist them with their challenges.

Your younger son is not alone — many children today tend to drift towards sedentary activities that are unfortunately accompanied by excessive snacking.

I suggest to parents confronting similar issues that they keep the following in mind:

Younger brothers often feel less competent than their older brothers — especially when it comes to physical prowess. Living with an older brother who is a slim, fit athlete can eat away at the younger boy's self-confidence.

I often suggest that parents spend

some relaxed time with a child, especially one who might have low self-esteem, before helping him with a problem. In your case, that might mean joining your son while he is reading books, watching TV or playing video games. Stepping into a child's world can help parents worry less, understand their child's point of view and reassure him that anxiety and suggestions are not the main component in parent-child interactions.

After relaxing with a child, parents usually find it easier to bring up difficult topics, like getting more exercise, playing fewer video games or eating healthier snacks. Sometimes parents are quick to offer solutions to complicated problems such as these. Parental advice can, of course, be useful, but it can be good to elicit a few of the child's suggestions as well. The ability to strategize with mom and dad can build a young one's confidence and produce some pretty good ideas!

It can also help for mom and dad to suggest some specific physical activities that they know their child will enjoy. For parents of siblings I often propose that they offer different kinds of activities for each child

— especially if ongoing comparisons between brothers or sisters are an issue. Children (and for that matter, adults) who have been sedentary often resist such suggestions at first, but it is often useful if parents try not to take an initial negative reaction too seriously.

It can be very important for adults to join their child in the activity, in part to make sure the experience turns out to be fun for their little one. Bike riding, swimming, walking, kite flying or roller blading are some pastimes that can provide great summer fun. If parent and child are interested in playing competitive games, it can be exciting and help build a child's self-esteem if the parents let the child win. A younger sibling, in particular, will benefit from doing better than the person he is playing.

Summers can be an excellent time to help a child develop a more active personality. Parents I know who have managed to appreciate the strengths of their sedentary children find that things improve by avoiding comparisons with more athletic siblings, enjoying their company, discussing their concerns and playing fun physical games together. Have fun!

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

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

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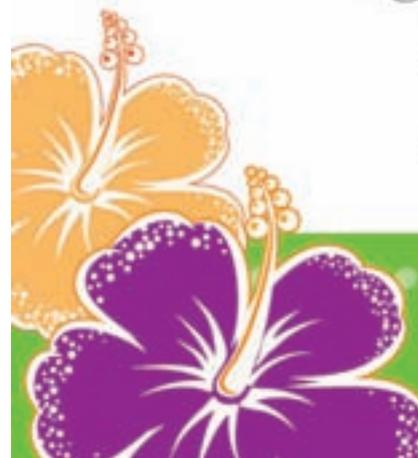
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Cruise control

Disney boats are fun for the whole family

BY ALLISON PLITT

This year, my husband and I wanted to take our first family vacation with our 4-year-old daughter, Chase. I was concerned about finding a vacation that would suit all of our desires for eight days — entertainment for our daughter, activities for all of us to enjoy and, most of all, babysitting services.

After some research and feedback from other families, we decided on a week-long Disney Cruise through the Western Caribbean.

When we arrived at Port Canaveral, via a Disney bus from the Orlando Airport, we checked-in while marveling at the size of our cruise liner, the Disney Magic. As we were waiting to board, Minnie Mouse appeared in her sailor's outfit. My daughter was awestruck with the adult-size version of her favorite cartoon character and agreed to stand in line to get her picture taken with her. However, she was too afraid when we finally reached



A terry cloth elephant was one of many "towelgami" creatures left on the bed.

the front of the line and instead, ran away in fear. My husband and I ended up having our picture taken with Minnie as our daughter sulked in the distance.

Once on the ship, the first thing Chase wanted to do was swim in the pool. There were three different pools on the deck — the children's pool, shaped like Mickey Mouse's head with a water slide; the family pool, with outdoor movies and entertainment and always very crowded; and the adults-only pool,

the quietest and least crowded, with a bar and jacuzzi (which appeared to be the only place on deck where you actually could relax!).

My daughter immediately jumped into the kids' pool and played in the water, but there were so many other children, she didn't have a lot of space. This didn't seem to bother her since she was used to fighting for space in crowded places, being raised in Queens. As soon as my husband got into the water to play with her, a bunch of kids spotted him and shouted "grown up!" Immediately, the children rushed toward him and climbed on him, like a human jungle gym. My husband played along for about 10 minutes and then escaped to the jacuzzi, where he sat for an hour to recuperate.

The food on the Disney Cruise was very good and the three restaurants on board had different cuisine themes every day. We were seated next to a nice family from Ohio, the Patels, a couple with a daughter a year older than Chase. We were told

that we would be seated at the same table with the Patels every night for dinner — which concerned me because I was afraid it would end in disaster if we didn't like each other.

Luckily, we all hit it off. Both of the Patels' parents were from India and had been to Jackson Heights many times to shop in the Indian stores and supermarkets and eat at the Indian restaurants. We spent a good amount of time exchanging stories of our experiences visiting the neighborhood.

I had always heard that when you go on a cruise, you gain 10 pounds, so I was conscientious about portion control at the meals. My husband, on the other hand, is very active and can lose weight quickly. While the Patels and I were careful not to overindulge, my husband ordered two entrees and two desserts every night. Needless to say, he became pretty well-known with the dining staff.

As the cruise progressed, the Disney characters made their rounds at the dining tables. They also appeared at different areas throughout the ship, and kids could be photographed with them and get their autographs. When my daughter met them, she calmed down and finally posed for the camera. Girls of all ages dressed up at night as the different princesses and the crew and staff usually addressed all the girls, whether or not they were in costume, as princesses.

This was the third Disney Cruise for the Patels and they gave us a lot of good advice about things we could do, like the evening theater shows that were Broadway-quality productions. We joined them some nights, and I thought the shows were wonderful — they left our daughter completely entranced, sitting on the edge of her seat, gazing at the stage and singing along, which made the people sitting next to us chuckle.

Every night when we came back to our cabin, our sheets were turned down with mints, a program of the next day's events and a towel sculpture, or "towelgami." The first night our daughter was afraid to come into the cabin when she saw a big lobster made out of terry cloth sitting on our bed. However, after several nights of being welcomed home by a swan, elephant and turtle, she



would run back to the cabin to see what creature awaited us, but mostly she was looking forward to eating the chocolate mint.

There were plenty of activities to do to work off all the calories we were consuming. My husband ran the jogging path on the ship's deck one morning. At the fitness center there were yoga and exercise classes, but my husband and I opted for the spa, where we worked up a sweat sitting in the sauna for two hours.

Every time the ship landed in a port, we would sign up for an off-shore excursion. Since my husband took a day trip in Cozumel to go scuba diving, I chose to take our daughter to Xcaret, an ecological swim park in Cancun. I had been to Xcaret before and loved the rivers that flowed through lagoons and underground caves.

When we arrived, our Mexican tour group company gave all the Disney guests life preservers, walked us into the river and assured us none of us would drown. As I was pulling my daughter through the river, since she could not swim, she screamed and hollered at the top of her lungs for her father. At the end of our river adventure, we stayed on the beach and had lunch. We were then given a couple of hours to venture off and see all the animals, birds and fish. Unlike the older chil-

dren on the tour, my daughter had no interest in seeing the wildlife. All she wanted to do was swim in the water and see how much sand she could put down her bathing suit.

At the next port in Nassau, I decided to put our daughter in the babysitting service for half the day. The ship had an entire floor devoted to children's activities where there were so many security measures to keep track of all the kids, it would take nearly 10 minutes to just drop off or pick up your child.

At Castaway Cay it was sunny and cool and we got a chance to enjoy the beach and go bike riding. When I asked one of the staff members on the island where I could throw away my trash, she took the sticky garbage from my hands and threw it out herself. If there was one outstanding feature of the entire Disney Cruise, it was the amazing level of customer service.

The last night of the trip was my daughter's fourth birthday and the dining staff came out with a cake and sang "Happy Birthday" to her. Before she blew out the candles, I told her to make a wish. Later that night when I asked her what her wish was, she said she wanted to go on another Disney Cruise.

Since my husband had just paid on board for a Disney Cruise for next year, her wish had, in fact, come true.

Broadway-quality evening shows feature beloved Disney characters. Mickey, Minnie and the gang also appear throughout the ship, ready to pose for photos.



FAMILY HEALTH

BY PHILIP ROTH, MD, PHD,
 Director of Neontology,
 Chairman, Dept. of Pediatrics
 Staten Island University
 Hospital

Breastfeeding: A good start is worth the effort



Years of study have demonstrated that breast milk contains an ideal mixture of essential nutrients that all infants need, yet, the percentage of mothers who choose it over formula falls short of the target goals set by the Healthy People 2010 initiative in this country. Women need to understand how important breastfeeding is for infants, and for themselves.

Breast milk contains protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, as well as a rich source of calories — all of which play important roles in the baby's development.

The fat includes acids that the infant's body can not produce. Long chain fatty acids Arachidonic Acid (AA) and Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) aid in brain and eye development.

The numerous vitamins and minerals the milk is packed with — A, B6, C, potassium, calcium and iron are just a few — would fill a large section of a pharmacy aisle.

Women need to be aware of the fact that they benefit from breastfeeding as well.

Breast milk contains factors that help prevent infants from infections, support the development of the gastrointestinal tract and can prevent a multitude of chronic illnesses in childhood and adolescence, including allergies, Diabetes, Celiac Disease, Crohn's Disease, Ulcerative Colitis and some cancers. In addition, children who were breastfed tested higher on intelligence tests than children who were fed formula.

Women need to be aware of the fact that they benefit from breastfeeding as well. Mothers experience a muted response to stress, reduced

post-partum blood loss, and protection against the development of premenopausal breast and ovarian cancers, and post-menopausal spinal and hip fractures.

How could you go wrong with a feeding that is ideal in all ways and available at no cost?

The “make or break” for successful breastfeeding often depends on what happens immediately after birth. At Staten Island University Hospital, we have developed a process that begins with skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding in the delivery room, continues with lactation support in the nursery, and relies on breastfeeding-friendly practices, referral and follow up after discharge.

Unfortunately, there will be times when you will have to be an aggressive advocate for breastfeeding, especially in public settings, but remember that as a mother, breastfeeding is your right and well worth the effort.

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Happy, minus 15 pounds

After six months of effort, Kathy achieves her diet goal

BY KATHY SENA

My secret goal has been hanging in the back of my closet — and I did it. After six months on my weight-loss plan, I'm wearing my favorite size-10 polka-dot dress again. Woo hoo! POLKA DOTS. Not something I've been wearing all that much for the past few years. But, here I am, 15.8 pounds thinner than I was when I started. And it feels good.

I'm definitely no "skinny Minnie" in this photo, but I just had to share my polka-dot victory! When you're a busy mom, getting into super-skinny jeans isn't always a realistic goal. Just getting to a healthy weight and feeling more energetic feels pretty darned good. I'll take it.

When I started this plan, my size-12 clothes were feeling pretty snug. But, now my size-10 pants are a bit in need of a belt — so color me happy. Here are the things I have found to be most helpful in my quest for a thinner, healthier body:

- I didn't drink my calories. I had a glass of wine now and then, but I gave up margaritas for six months, and I plan to save them for special occasions in the future — so I

don't start packing on fruity-cocktail poundage. I drank mostly water with my meals, in addition to skim milk or low-fat soy milk for breakfast. I gave up the high-calorie orange juice and grape juice that I used to drink almost daily. When I wanted fruit, I ate whole fruit for fewer calories and

a lot more fiber.

- I hit the road — walking the dog, walking with friends, walking to the mailbox down the street — I tried to hoof it whenever I could. I even got busy on our long-neglected treadmill, watching "American Idol" while I walked

to the beat (had to get my Crystal Bowersox fix). And I got creative and added a special desk to my treadmill so that I could work on my laptop while walking. No, I couldn't exactly power walk while doing e-mail. But, slow and steady wins the race, and I got to where I could easily spend an hour on Facebook, e-mail, Twitter, etc. while walking at a steady 1.5 mph. Beats sitting on my behind in front of a desk!

- Working out — and sharing tips — with friends. Every woman needs a walking buddy like my friend, Ellen. When we start hoofing it, the time speeds by. It doesn't even feel like work, because we're having such a good time chatting. We also call each other to share diet suggestions and talk about our progress. Whether you tackle weight loss as part of a group or with the support of one special friend, I highly recommend the buddy approach.

- For the past six months, the book "Small Changes, Big Results" has been my companion. I can't recommend this book highly enough. Registered Dietitian Ellie Krieger has offered such encouragement and so many practical suggestions. She makes you feel as if you have your very own food guru by your side, encouraging you and sharing great tips.

Some final advice from Krieger: It's important to find the right amount of structure; to find a balance between indulging and keeping track. It's helpful to look at this time not as the end of something but as a time to decide how to hold onto this new way of eating and working out.

Yep, I'll slip up from time to time,



WEIGHING IN

Part 6 of a series

Krieger admits. We're all human. I'll just plan to get back on track. It's important to anticipate the challenges I'll be facing in the next six months or so, she says. Whether it's a summer vacation, back-to-school time or the holidays that

are a particular challenge, "it's important to have a 'Plan B,'" she says. "Stuff happens. You want to make the best of the situation."

On summer vacation, for example, "Have that pina colada, but enjoy hiking, going for long walks and experiencing where you are," she says. On one family vacation, for example, she indulged in a pina colada — and even an order of French fries. But she also enjoyed lots of fresh seafood and took classes at a local yoga studio. "It's all about balance," she says.

So here's my final weight-loss log:

Weigh-in number one: **147.0** (*my starting weight*)

Weigh-in number two: **144.6** (*lost 2.4 pounds total*)

Weigh-in number three: **139.0** (*lost 8 pounds total*)

Weigh-in number four: **135.6** (*lost 11.4 pounds total*)

Weigh-in number five: **134.4** (*lost 12.6 pounds total*)

Weigh-in number six: **131.2** (*lost 15.8 pounds!*)

Yep, it's the end. And the beginning, as I keep swigging the water, making healthier food choices and keeping my girlfriends close by for support (and entertainment!) as we all pull on our walking shoes (or e-mail each other from our treadmills) and head down the road together. Why not grab your friends and join us?

Kathy Sena is a freelance journalist specializing in family health issues. Her writing has appeared in the Los Angeles Times, Newsweek, Woman's Day and many other publications. Visit her parenting blog, Parent Talk Today, at www.ParentTalkToday.com.



Kathy in her polka-dot dress.

www.webfamilyny.com

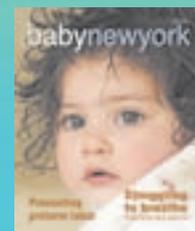


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College road trip

Why you should hit the road *before* your senior applies

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

By the time your child is entering her junior year in high school, you should consider visiting colleges. Back in the last century, my folks never took me to visit any colleges until I was accepted, but it is a different world today.

One mother was incredulous when I told her that visiting a school might increase a student's chances of being admitted.

"They don't really look at minutes like that, do they?" she asked.

Yes, they do — sometimes. Most colleges will not admit it. These days, the college-admissions process is very competitive, and many even ask on the application if the student has visited the school or spoken to a representative. The schools want to know how effective their outreach is, but they may also use this data when they are having trouble deciding if they should admit a particular applicant.

Colleges want you to visit so that they can show you their facilities and encourage your child to apply and if accepted, to attend. Their goal is to have as many students apply as possible, accept a limited number and raise their yield by convincing the accepted students to attend. They are focused on filling their incoming class with the most qualified freshmen. Students should have their own reasons to visit: to see if they like the school, to ask questions, and, if possible, to interview.

"You can get a feel for where you will call home, learn about the academics, the surrounding area, [your preference for an] urban or rural [environment], and be able to narrow down the number of applications [you will submit]," says Tom Mariano, Assistant Dean of Admissions at Franklin & Marshall College.

Ask if the college encourages interviews and uses them in its decision-making process. Some offer interviews for informational purposes only; that is, for your information. Your child can avoid the extra stress

and ask questions by e-mail, on the phone or at an information session.

If your child is interviewing, have her prepare by going on the school's Web site and on collegeboard.com — this way she does not ask basic questions that show she did not spend any time researching the school. She should have some questions prepared for the interviewer — this is her chance to sell herself and charm the interviewer with her personality. Have her do her first interview at her safety school, as a practice run.

Before hitting the road, create a list. The initial selection of potential schools should be made taking into account cost, location, social

Visiting a campus will help your student think of questions and issues important to her, which she can't even think of asking until she's there.

life, and perhaps religious life on campus. Do research online to find out basic information like available majors and minors, male-female ratio, ethnic diversity, sports available, and geographic breakdown of the student body. Often, high school guidance counselors make useful suggestions. Once you have a list, you can plan your trip(s).

Many schools require students and their families to sign up in advance for tours and information sessions. Interviews require appointments. You will need to figure out how long each portion of your visit will last and schedule in a lunch break, if you are visiting more than one school. We always leave early to get in a tour, information session, interview and time to walk to parts of the campus not included on the tour — checking out the bookstore, the sorority houses, the surrounding

neighborhood and the Hillel House.

Athletes can arrange for a meeting with a coach, and all prospective students should try to make an appointment in advance to speak with a professor or teaching assistant in the student's chosen department, unless she is undecided. This way she can get a good idea of the available coursework in her area. Ask at the Admissions Office for a course catalogue from the previous year, which can usually be found online, as well, and see if there are limited offerings in the area of interest. I know of a student who transferred out of a school because he ran out of courses in his chosen department. In most schools, all majors are required to take some courses outside their area, so the prospective student should think about how much math and science or humanities she can stomach.

Some people prefer to visit the cold-weather schools (the "snow-belt" ones) in the winter to be sure their child will be happy there. Apart from my personal fear of driving during white-out conditions, one friend told her son he could not attend a particular cold-weather school because the door to her car froze shut during their winter visit. Many prefer to visit when school is in session, if possible, during high-school vacation time. Some visit while high school is in session and miss classes. Most schools will excuse the absence if the student provides proof of the visit.

Visiting a campus will help your student think of questions and issues important to her, which she cannot even think of asking until she is on campus. Tell your student to look at collegeconfidential.com, collegeproowler.com, and unigo.com to get the students' point of view, although, what other students post is not the gospel. Nothing replaces her being there and looking around herself.

About half of the schools I have had the pleasure of visiting (nine and counting) will show you a fake dorm



room, usually completely decorated by our friends at Bed Bath & Beyond. Some schools have the student guides share their own small abode with you. This will give you a better idea of how an actual college student lives and the opportunity to ask an actual resident specific questions about what it is like to live there, the cleanliness of the bathrooms, the reliability of the air conditioning (if you are lucky), etc.

Talk to students you see on campus, most of the time they will be very friendly and happy to help. Talk to other people taking your tour. I usually stalk other potential students with my daughter's major and ask where else they are applying, just so we leave no stone unturned. It's an opportunity to give and receive valuable information, and people are generally quite receptive.

When visiting a school be sure to ask about the commuter population. I have known students who have been excited about their first year

away, only to be left in a dorm, empty on weekends because all the locals go home.

Being able to eliminate a school or move one to the top of the list can be very important. Not only can your student save money by not applying to a school, but deciding if and where to apply early decision, which is binding, can help her to prioritize her selected schools. Students who apply early usually have an advantage. Also, most colleges ask the applicant to submit an essay describing why they have decided to apply to the school. These essays are much easier to write, having seen the school and learned more about it during a visit.

Know your student. Many teens are not ready to make an educated, adult decision like the selection of a college. Some do all the research and evaluate schools in a rational manner. Others judge schools by their proximity to the best shopping venues or how one student is

dressed. Most high schoolers can use guidance and input when weighing all the important factors.

Deciding where to apply and if one should apply early, while trying to calculate one's chances of being accepted, is a daunting and bewildering task. If your student is able to travel to most of the schools on her list, she has an advantage. Your student cannot control the school's decision-making process, but to some extent, visiting and marketing herself to the schools she determines may best match her needs can put her in the driver's seat.

Of course, showing interest in and visiting a school is a plus, but it will never get a student admitted with unsatisfactory grades, standardized test scores or lack of extra-curricular activities — so, as always, it's important kids hit the books!

Risa C. Doherty is an attorney, freelance writer and mother raising a high-school senior.

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Going Places

LONG-RUNNING

Family Cruise Nites: Classic Car Showcase: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Avenue; (718) 351-1611; www.historicrichmondtown.org; Wednesdays, 4:30, Thurs, Aug. 5 – Wed, Sep. 29; Free.

The Staten Island Region Antique Automobile Club of America rolls onto Center Street of Historic Richmond Town every Wednesday evening from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM to give our visitors a closer look at classic cars from the golden age of the American automobile.

SUN, AUG. 1

Damsels and Dragons: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Avenue; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org/parks/blueheronpark; 11:00 am; Free.

Discover the damselflies and dragonflies that inhabit our ponds. You'll learn to identify each species.

Community Musical: Bernikow JCC, 1466 Manor Road; (718) 475-5263; si-jcc.org/index.htm; 2 pm; \$12.

Performance of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat."

Mysterious Mushrooms and Treacherous Toadstools: Bloomingdale Park, Richmond Pkwy, Bloomingdale Rd, Lenevar Ave; www.nycgovparks.org/parks/R106; 2:00 pm; Free.

We'll trek in search of Witches' Butter, Scaly Tooth, Jack O' Lanterns, Turkey Tails, and the Old Man of the Woods. You're sure to have fun(gi) learning about the magic of mushrooms.

MON, AUG. 2

Kids' Summer Drop-in Session: The Conference House, 298 Satterlee St. 718 984-0415; www.conference-house.org/index.html; 10:00 am; \$10; \$5 (members).

Aug. 2: Domestic Crafts; Aug. 3: Staten Island Redware Pottery; Aug. 4: Colonial Games; Aug. 5: Behind the Scenes Tour.

TUES, AUG. 3

Roller Dance Show: CSI Center for the Arts, 2800 Victory Boulevard; (718) 982-5678; www.enrichmentthroughhearts.com; 10 am; \$8.

Steve Love's roller dance crew dances and does acrobatics.

Kids' Summer Drop-in Session:



It's back to basics

Tough times forcing you to pan a "staycation" this summer?

Then plan it around Wolfe's Pond Park, where, on Aug. 15, you can enjoy canoeing and bird watching, without breaking the bank!

The Ranger-led program will provide canoes, life jackets and instructions to children 8 and older accompanied by parent or

guardian who want to explore the beach of Staten Island's largest park.

Best of all — it's free!

So maybe you can put it towards that vacation after all.

Canoeing basics at Wolfe's Pond Park [Cornelia, Holten and Lutten avenues on Raritan Bay, (718) 967-3542], Aug. 15 from 11 am-2 pm. Free. For info, go to www.nyc.gov/parks/wolfespondpark.

10:00 am. The Conference House. See Monday, Aug. 2.

WED, AUG. 4

Kids' Summer Drop-in Session: 10:00 am. The Conference House. See Monday, Aug. 2.

THURS, AUG. 5

Kids' Summer Drop-in Session: 10:00 am. The Conference House. See Monday, Aug. 2.

FRI, AUG. 6

Films for Children: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Road; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 3:00 pm; Free.

For kids ages 5-12.

SAT, AUG. 7

Watch Dogs!: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace; 718-273-2060; stateniskids.org; 1:00 pm; Free.

Tick tock, make a clock (and learn about telling time).

SUN, AUG. 8

Archery Basics: Willowbrook Park, Richmond Avenue to Victory Boulevard; www.nycgovparks.org/parks/willowbrookpark; 11:00 am.

Learn the safe and proper way to draw a bow and shoot an arrow. Bows, arrows and targets will be provided.

Community Day: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Avenue; (718) 351-1611; www.historicrichmondtown.org; 11:00 am; Free.

Submit a listing

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

All you have to do is send your listing request to calendar@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!

See demonstrations of open hearth cooking, blacksmithing, and spinning. Try your hand at quill pen writing and old-fashioned games. Explore furnished interiors of buildings from the 1690's through the 1890's.

Smokey the Bear's 60th Birthday Bash: Mount Loretto, 6450 Hylan Boulevard; (646) 831-2529; readme.readmedia.com/NYS-DEC-Celebrates-Smokey-Bears-Birthday-at-Mount-Loretto-Unique-Area/1613408; 1–3 pm; Free.

Learn About Smokey, Forest Fire Safety and Other Environmental Issues.

Watch Dogs!: 1:00 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 7.

WED, AUG. 11

Pinocchio: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Road; 718 351-1444; www.nypl.org/locations/dongan-hills; 3:00 pm; Free.

Presented by the Traveling Lantern Theatre Company. Recommended for children ages 4 and older.

THURS, AUG. 12

Lanyard Workshop: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Lane at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org/locations/great-kills; 2:30 pm; Free.

Learn how to make lanyard keychains and bracelets. For teens aged 13-18.

FRI, AUG. 13

Films for Children: 3:00 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Friday, Aug. 6.

Going Places

SAT, AUG. 14

Salt Water Fishing: Lemon Creek Park, Hylan Blvd, Sharrott & Seguine Aves; (718) 948-9766; www.nycgov-parks.org/parks/R079; 10:00 am.

Instructions, poles, and bait provided. First-come, first-served.

Wildlife Film Series: Staten Island Zoo, 614 Broadway; (718)442-3100; www.statenislandzoo.org; 11:00 am; Free with regular admission.

Enjoy short films as you visit the zoo.

Kiddie Yoga: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace; 718-273-2060; statenislandkids.org; 1:00 pm; Free.

Practice your Downward Facing Dog at this yoga workshop.

SUN, AUG. 15

Canoeing Basics: Wolfe's Pond Park, Cornelia, Holten & Luten Avenues on Raritan Bay; www.nycgovparks.org/parks/wolfespondpark; 11:00 am; Free.

Explore the tranquility of Wolfe's Pond while getting to know nature. Let's look for egrets, herons, and turtles while having fun! Equipment provided. First-come, first-served. Ages 8+.

Kiddie Yoga: 1:00 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 14.

Enrichment Workshop "Ocelot": Staten Island Zoo, 614 Broadway; (718)442-3100; www.statenislandzoo.org; 1:30 pm; Free with regular admission.

Enjoy an afternoon with the Staten Island Zoo and its nocturnal friend the Ocelot. Watch this playful creature with some fun toys while you learn about nocturnal animals and their habits. Make a craft for yourself, too!

Songs and Storytelling: Bernikow JCC, 1466 Manor Road; (718) 475-5242; sijcc.org/index.htm; 2 pm; Free.

Afternoon of music from Jewish legend Schlomo Carlebach.

Ferragosto celebration: Garibaldi Meucci Museum, 420 Tompkins Avenue; (718) 442-1608; info@garibaldimeuccimuseum.org; 4-8 pm; Free.

After Christmas, Easter and New Year's Eve, Ferragosto is the most popular holiday in Italy. Celebrants play bocce and learn to dance the Tarantella. Take a free tour of the museum—in English or Italian. Or celebrate like a real Italian and just chill out—play cards, chat with friends, or take a siesta on a blanket on our lawn. There will also be delicious food from various regions of Italy available for sale, as well as a selection of Italian wines for the adults to taste.

WED, AUG. 18

Summer Craft: Dongan Hills Library,



Ferragosto Festival

After Christmas, Easter and New Year's Eve, Ferragosto — a marking of summer vacation — is the most popular holiday in Italy. But you don't have to travel an ocean to celebrate it.

On Aug. 15, head to Garibaldi-Meucci Museum for its Ferragosto celebration, where your family can play bocce, learn to dance the Tarantella, take a free tour of the museum — in English or Italian — and enjoy delicious foods from various regions of

Italy available for sale, as well as a selection of Italian wines for the adults to taste.

Or celebrate like a real Italian and just chill out and play cards, chat with friends, or take a siesta on a blanket on our lawn.

The festival is a day of rest, after all.

Ferragosto celebration at Garibaldi-Meucci Museum [420 Tompkins Ave. at Chesnut Avenue in Rosebank, (718) 442-1608], Aug. 15 from 4-8 pm. Free. For info, email info@garibaldimeuccimuseum.org.

1617 Richmond Road; 718 351-1444; www.nypl.org/locations/dongan-hills; 3:00 pm; Free.

Children make Summer related arts and crafts. Ages 5 and up. **Pre-registration is required**.

Pajama Story Time: Great Kills, 56 Giffords Lane at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org/locations/great-kills; 7:30 pm; Free.

For all ages.

FRI, AUG. 20

Family Camping: Wolfe's Pond Park, Cornelia, Holten & Luten Avenues on Raritan Bay; www.nycgovparks.org/parks/wolfespondpark; 7:00 pm; Free.

Get ready for a fun evening of activities, followed by a night under the stars. Tents will be provided but please bring a sleeping bag. Space is limited. To register, visit www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers/register on August 11.

SAT, AUG. 21

Watch Dogs!: 1:00 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 7.

SUN, AUG. 22

Maps and More: Willowbrook Park, Richmond Avenue to Victory Boulevard; www.nycgovparks.org/parks/willowbrookpark; 11:00 am.

Learn the basics of maps and compasses, then take your turn on a course.

Watch Dogs!: 1:00 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 7.

Damsels and Dragons: 2:00 pm. Blue Heron Nature Center. See Sunday, Aug. 1.

WED, AUG. 25

Treasure Island: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Road; 718 351-1444; www.nypl.org/locations/dongan-hills; 3:00 pm; Free.

Presented by the Hampstead Stage Company. For ages 5 and older.

FRI, AUG. 27

"Over the Hedge": Westervelt Garden, 143 Westervelt Avenue, between

Curtis Place and Cleveland Street; www.nypr.org; 7:30 pm; Free.

New York Restoration Project presents Family Movie Nights.

SAT, AUG. 28

Early Birding: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Avenue; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org/parks/blueheronpark; 9:00 am; Free.

Insect Insanity: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Avenue; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org/parks/blueheronpark; 11:00 am; Free.

What vital role do insects play in the natural world? Hike through the park and learn what creepy crawlers can do besides give us the creeps!

Kiddie Yoga: 1:00 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 14.

SUN, AUG. 29

Beautiful Bees: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Avenue; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org/parks/blueheronpark; 11:00 am; Free.

Buzz around the park to experience the wide variety of winged wonders. You'll see honey bees, bumble bees, and even metallic green bees. Learn how the help us every day, and check out their homes.

Kiddie Yoga: 1:00 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 14.

Knot for Nothing: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Avenue; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org/parks/blueheronpark; 2:00 pm; Free.

Come learn and practice some of the most basic and practical knots. Avoid knotty situations in the future, and you'll thank yourself for knot-knowing.

SAT, SEP. 4

Canoeing Basics: Clove Lakes Park, Slosson Avenue, Victory Boulevard, Clove Road; (718) 390-8000; www.nycgovparks.org/parks/CloveLakesPark; 11:00 am.

Explore the tranquility of Marketing Pond while getting to know nature. Let's look for egrets, herons, and turtles while having fun! Equipment provided. First-come, first-served. Ages 8+.

Richmond County Fair: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Avenue; (718) 351-1611; www.historicrichmond-town.org; 11:00 am; Free.

See demonstrations of open hearth cooking, blacksmithing, and spinning. Try your hand at quill pen writing and old-fashioned games. Explore furnished interiors of buildings from the 1690's through the 1890's.

It figures

BY CYNTHIA WASHAM



SCHOOL SNIPPETS

58 Percent of South Korean school children who get tutoring outside of school.



90,000 Number of students who took classes through the Florida Virtual School, a service providing high-school courses online.

25 Percent of American children.

71 Percent of schools in the U.S. that reduced time spent teaching subjects such as music, art and geography after the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 tied federal funding to schools' progress in English and math.



1½ to 1¾ Average hours per night children ages 8 — 13 spend on homework.

3 Average hours per week parents spend helping with homework.

50 Percent of elementary-school students who eat fruit with their school lunch.

25 Percent of high-school students.

70 Percent of students who eat fruit when a cafeteria worker suggests it.



15 Minimal minutes of recess time per day teachers say is needed to improve children's classroom behavior.

22 Percent of school districts nationwide that cut recess time in the wake of No Child Left Behind.



15 Percent of students who use cursive on the written portion of the SAT college entrance exam.

200 Number of British schoolchildren, some as young as 13, who were reported by their teachers to police as terrorism suspects.

Sources: Natural Awakenings, Education Week, The Center for Public Education, Current Events, Education Week, Nutrition Week, Newsweek, Boingboing.net

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Be sure to fill out the form.

**"GO! Have The Time
 Of Your Life!"**

-NY Newsday



**"A SURE-FIRE
 CROWD PLEASER!"**

-The New York Times

ORPHEUM THEATRE

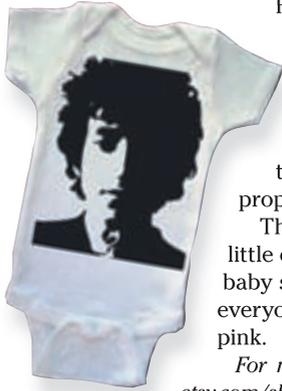
Second Avenue @ 8th Street www.stomponline.com
[ticketmaster](http://ticketmaster.com) (212) 307-4100 1-800-982-2787

New & Noteworthy

Lay, baby, lay

Finally, Bob Zimmerman's face can be plastered on your baby!

With onesies and T-shirts from Truly Sanctuary, the likeness of the mans more commonly know as Bob Dylan, along with those of Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson, are recreated in bold black and white graphics for the world to see.



For more colorful flare, there's a band onesie for Wilco, as well as a smiling ice cream cone that's the most child-appropriate.

They're great for your little one, or for your next baby shower. Because not everyone's into blue and pink.

For more info, visit www.etsy.com/shop/trulysanctuary.

Bathtime gets sweeter

You don't wash you child's face and hair with just any soap or shampoo. That's where products like Baby Oh Baby come in.

These organic, herbal shampoos, body wash, and lotions for babies are made with natural ingredients that will gently clean your newborn — and avoid tears in the process.

Though nothing can beat



that newborn smell, the products also have a soft natural scent derived from an oil blend of lavender, chamomile and orange.

For when your little one gets older, she can move on to Rainbow's kids line, which include shampoo, soap, hand sanitizer and, just for fun, bubble bath.

For more information, visit www.rainbowresearch.com.

For budding green thumbs

Need some "help" in the garden? Have your little one get an lesson in ecology thanks to this handy gardening tool set for children from Wrapables.

With these kid-sized shovels and picks, your child can easily dig up dirt, plant seeds, water the soil, and watch the plants come to life.

The tools can be stored and carried in a colorful nylon case, so you won't misplace a thing.

For more information on the Sagaform Kids Gardening Tool Set, visit www.Wrapables.com.



Money in the bank

Feed the pig!

It's never too early to start saving, and, with these personalized piggy banks, it's never been cuter.

With these — of course — pig-shaped banks, the pennies can start adding up.

Your child can make it her own too, by personalizing it with her name choosing from among 16 col-

ors for the name and polka dots, from apple green to sunshine yellow, as well as adding a bow or bow tie as she see's fit.

Just avoid the classic move of breaking the bank once it's all full; these little piggies are too precious to destroy.

For more info, visit www.etsy.com/CherryBlossomPaperCo.

Just in time

You might be a ways away from teaching your child how to tell the difference between the minute hand and the hour hand, but it's never too early to start. Besides, these clocks are too cute to pass up.

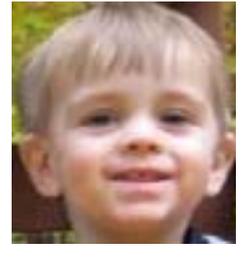
The designs perfectly evoke childhood, from the zoo animals of one, to the whimsy of a girl blowing a dandelion in another. Other graphics on these Kona Interiors-designed timepieces, include vibrant, multi-colored stripes, fairy tale-like castles, trucks, cute forest scenes, and flowers, perfect for many personalities.

The frames and hand colors can also easily be changed to match



your existing little one's theme. It'll be a piece you can treasure throughout childhood.

For info, visit www.etsy.com/shop/KonaInteriors.



thursday's child

An Early Intervention Program

Providing **One to One** Service to children, under 3 years of age, diagnosed with **Autism Spectrum Disorder**



Special Instruction
Physical Therapy
Family Counseling

One to One ABA Programming
Occupational Therapy
Inclusion Daycare Classroom

Speech Therapy
Family Training
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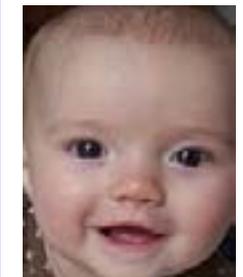
Staten Island Center
348 Seaview Avenue
Staten island, NY 10305

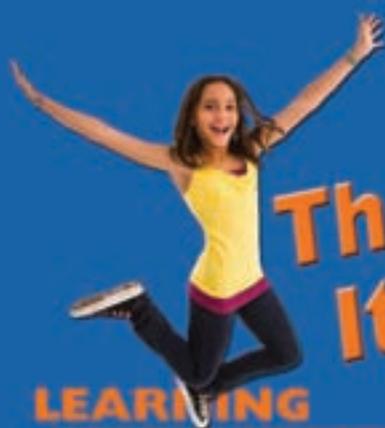


Brooklyn Center
7616 13th Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11228



All services must be arranged by a NYC Early Intervention official and are based upon the unique needs of the individual family after eligibility is determined by a NY State approved evaluator.
All services are provided at no out-of-pocket cost to parents, though health insurance may be accessed for reimbursement
Thursday's Child programs are approved and funded by The NYS Department of Health & The NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene.
For more information Call 311





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Joan & Alan Bernikow
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Our Sunday afternoon birthday
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