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Family May 2011

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Letter from the publisher

Mother's Day is every day

This magazine decided to forgo the usual focus on Mother's Day that will be so prominently highlighted and marketed this month by everyone else. The commercialization of the recognition of mothers makes a lot of businesses a lot of money, and I'm certain this year will be no exception.

Mothers all over the land will be taken out to brunch or dinner and thanked for their efforts and devotion with a meal, perhaps some flowers, or maybe both. Perhaps they won't go out, with the way the economy is, and served "breakfast in bed," or something like that.

In any case, the sentiment will be to try to give "Mommy" something special to signify the day that has been set aside to do just that. It's actually a great idea, but it only works if the sentiment is real and the children one has worked so hard to raise, to nurture, to guide, and to educate, feel grateful and pleased with the effort and the result.

If they are happy and loving, they will love you back and let you know you are being appreciated.

If they are caught in the throes of growing, they may not, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are not appreciating you or what you do or have done — it just means they are doing the life thing. Ah, the life thing.

Newborn Gregory

As a mother, the life thing means to me that every day is Mother's Day, because almost every day since I became a mother I have had some Mommy work to do. I have, for the most part, enjoyed this work more than anything else I have ever done. It has been more rewarding and more fulfilling than anything else, and I have done a lot of things.

Wishing our absent Mommy and partner, Sharon Noble, congratulations on the recent birth of her son Gregory, and all of you mothers who read our magazines a Happy Mother's Day, means I am wishing you that every day, because as every mother knows, every day is Mother's Day.

Thanks for reading!

Susan Weiss

Susan Weiss-Voskidis, Publisher

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PERSONAL ESSAY

My little miracle

One reader shares the story behind the birth of her third son

BY SUE CATRAMA

I have been a wife for many wonderful years, and a mother to three great boys. But for years, I thought that having a third child would never be a possibility for me. But sometimes, life surprises us.

After the birth of my second son, I was told I could no longer conceive, because I had developed a severe case of endometriosis.

The protocol medicines were not working, and at times, the pain was horribly debilitating. I spent years trying prescribed medications, natural remedies, and simply trying to live with the condition. Eventually, my doctor recommended a total hysterectomy.

I kept putting off the decision, because I didn't want to spend the usual four to six weeks recovering — I had children and a home to take care of, and that amount of time spent recovering just didn't fit into my life. My husband and I were actually fine with not having more children; we were already blessed with two great guys, and we knew that in a few short years, they would both be adults, and we would be free to go for that midnight cup of coffee we had talked about for years.

The author's third child is now 5.

Could it be?

Then, in June of 2005, I wasn't feeling well, but couldn't pinpoint what was wrong. I had a stomach virus or some form of the flu that was making me feel run down and sick to my stomach all the time. A good friend of mine told me that I looked radiant — almost glowing — and urged me to take a home pregnancy test. I brushed it off and told her I had just bought age-defying make-up.

Regardless, she showed up at my house for coffee — and to insist I take the home pregnancy test she brought with her. I knew the test would be negative, but I took it to humor her.

I took the test and left it in the bathroom while we had our coffee, and then got lost in conversation, not knowing that 20 minutes had passed.

Once she realized how much time had gone by, though, she ran to retrieve the test from the bathroom, and I could hear her shouting, "I knew it!" She was practically shoving the test in my face and at the same time hugging it with joy. I grabbed the test from her and stared at the positive sign. I admitted that I was more than two weeks late, but had assumed that it was because of my endometriosis. I wasn't due to see my doctor for another two weeks.

For days, there was something urging me to take another test. I stopped at the drug store and bought a kit that came with two tests. The instructions stated that in order for the test to be accurate, I had to take it first thing in the morning. Instead, I ignored it and took it as soon as I got to work — and got an immediate positive sign.

Since I ignored the instructions, I again naturally assumed that it was a false positive, and kept the information to myself.

I didn't want my husband to know what I was doing, because I figured that, after 12 years of knowing we couldn't conceive, he would think I was crazy. So, the next morning, I secretly took the second test. Another positive!

I had to get to the bottom of this, so I looked for information online. I read and read and concluded that

It wasn't until we heard the baby's heartbeat that we were finally able to take a deep breath and enjoy the pregnancy.

this was a tubal pregnancy — one in which the fetus develops outside of the uterus.

Happy news

At that point, I just had to know. So, having no appointment, I sat in my gynecologist's office until she could see me. She also thought it was a tubal pregnancy, and performed an internal sonogram. Then, she was silent for what felt like an eternity. I looked at the screen, but had no idea of what I was looking at.

"This is your uterus," she said, pointing at the screen. "Inside your uterus, not on, or around, but in, there is a baby. You are pregnant!"

I can't remember exactly how I got to my husband's work in my excitement, but I found myself showing him the home pregnancy test and the sonogram picture. He stared at them blankly and asked me who was pregnant. In an emotional outburst I told him it was me, as tears flowed down my face and I tried to repeat myself. But, by the look of his face, I knew he had heard me. Against better judgement, and family tradition, we proceeded to tell everyone and anyone who would listen that we were actually pregnant.

The next few doctor appointments were extremely scary. It wasn't until we heard the baby's heartbeat that we were finally able to take a deep breath and enjoy the pregnancy.

A difficult pregnancy

However, my enjoyment was short lived. Around Thanksgiving I started labor — yes, labor — pains. I was sure of it, because, though it may have been many years since my last son's birth, labor is a pain one never forgets. Of course, both my husband and my doctor thought I was overreacting, and my doctor told me, over the phone, to relax, that the pain was just my uterus stretching. Oh, yeah? I ended up in the emergency room with contractions five minutes apart!

I was admitted and observed for three days, during which the contractions slowed down and proved to be unproductive, and I was sent home with a diagnosis of dehydration.

However, the contractions never subsided, and I would suffer — at times — almost every hour when they again became five minutes apart. I was readmitted and given medicine to keep the cervix from opening. Then, I was released and told to have complete bed rest.

Just before Christmas, I was admitted again. My doctor and several specialists spoke with my husband and I about what could, and probably would, happen to our unborn baby. They administered steroid shots over a three-day period to help form the baby's lungs. Because of the pain, I slept most of the time, and I was becoming depressed. I wanted to be home with my sons, and was missing valuable time with my family.

A happy ending

Then, once again, the contractions began and were, again, five minutes apart. This time, however, I began to dilate, and it seemed that this new baby was arriving almost six weeks early! My room was set up with oxygen, an incubator, and a team of nurses and pediatric specialists. My doctor moved quickly while assuring my husband and I that every measure would be taken to care for the baby. Together, they even talked me out of the hysterectomy I was still considering, because, if this medical miracle could happen, so could another!

On Feb. 4, 2006, my youngest son was born. He was 6 pounds, 10 ounces, and 21 inches long. The doctors told me he was the healthiest preemie they ever saw.

My oldest son is now 22; my middle guy, 18; and my little one, who was a wonderful surprise for me, is now 5. Against all odds, I was able to have a third baby. I went from believing that my family would never expand, to believing that medical miracles really do happen. I could not be happier that my family has been completed — and that I finally have my three sons.

Sue, a reader of this magazine, is a mother and wife who lives on Staten Island.

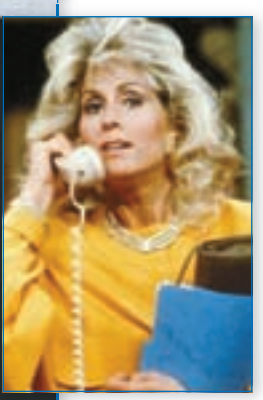
Remembering our TV moms

BY MARYROSE POPPE

Mothers come in all sizes and shapes, with varying strengths and weaknesses, and nothing has shown the variety of approaches to motherhood quite like those portrayed on television shows.

I recently watched reruns of the 1960s western, "Bonanza" and realized that the main character, Ben Cartwright, was probably one of TV's first "Mr. Moms." Ben was a rugged rancher, a widower, and a gentleman. He ran the outside of his home with a firm hand, and the inside with a gentle touch, much like I think many of the career moms of today do. Thinking of Ben also got me thinking about some of the other TV moms and the messages they send.

Remember pioneer Caroline Ingalls from "Little House on the Prairie?" She and her husband, Charles, packed up their wagon, left family and friends, and sought a new place to live so that their children could have a better life. She helped plow the fields, tend the farm, and raise seven children, some "chosen from her heart" along life's journey. And, she did all this while making a home out of a tiny, rustic house.



Then, of course, we had the "Waltons." Liv, who very well might have been the first TV "sandwich generation" mom kept her husband, children, and in-laws happy, healthy, and secure through the trying times of the Great Depression — all under one roof!

Let's not forget "Julia." Diahann Carroll portrayed one of TV's first single moms — a beautiful career woman, who had to raise her young son on her own after being widowed. Unbeknownst to the writers, she was an inspiration for all of the single parents that would follow.

And "Eight is Enough" taught us that a stepmother can indeed become a "mom." We learned that it takes heart and soul, patience, endurance, and most of all, love and laughter to make a house a home.

Maybe our idea of a perfect mom would include a blend of a bit of magic from Samantha of "Bewitched"; a little zaniness from Lucy, of "I Love Lucy"; a bit of prim and properness from "Leave it to Beaver" mom June Cleaver; the legal mind of Clair Huxtable of "The Cosby Show"; the tenderness of Mrs. Cunningham from "Happy Days"; Alice's ("The Brady Bunch") housekeeping abilities; first-aid knowledge from "Dr. Quinn: Medicine Woman;" and let's not forget the financial independence of an Angela Bauer from "Who's the Boss?"

Of course, the sit-coms and dramas on television are fiction, but over the years, the medium has given us examples of many kinds of approaches to motherhood. The moms are all different from each other, and from most people in real life, but they all love their families, try to make sure things run smoothly, and serve as a positive example for their children, much like today's real life mothers. We all have our strengths.

And we all have days when we feel that we are not living up to the task and are a bit overwhelmed, but on those days, we should pause and be inspired by the perseverance and successes of our favorite TV moms.

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FAMILY HEALTH

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Too posh to push?

Are too many women favoring c-sections?

At what point did we become too busy to push?

It has become increasingly popular in today's hectic world to scroll through our Smartphones to find a good time to schedule our c-sections. Pregnant women, all too often, are so busy with work, errands for their other tykes, and family responsibilities, that they are neglecting their bodies when it comes time to deliver.

As a practicing OB/GYN, my main goal is to provide great obstetrical care. I want every day of a woman's pregnancy to be a healthy one — including the day of delivery. I was trained — and still firmly believe — that the healthiest way to deliver a baby is vaginally.

In 2010, the U.S. cesarean section-rate hit an all-time high of 32 percent. We, as a country, have not only doubled our c-section rate, but have also doubled the rate of maternal complications, and the maternal death rate in labor — all due to the increase in cesarean sections being performed. There is a direct link between cesarean sections, maternal injury, and maternal death.

A cesarean section carries with it many risks, such as increased risk of infection, blood clots, hemorrhage with the need for a blood transfusion, longer hospital stay, longer recovery, incisional wound breakdown, and future risks with subsequent pregnancies. A cesarean section increases the chance of a woman dying in labor by 100 percent.

I am not saying that all cesarean sections are bad. Sometimes, delivering your baby by c-section is the safest way to deliver. If your baby's heart is not tolerating the forces of labor, or if you start to experience heavy vaginal bleeding, these may be signs that you need a c-section. Other reasons to have a c-section may include: the baby is too big to fit through the birth canal, the baby enters the birth canal other than head first, or the baby's umbilical cord slips into the vagina.

Celebrities have not helped women realize the risks of c-sections. Victoria Beckham stated she was, "too posh to push," while Jennifer Lopez simply did not want to push out her twin babies. These are simply just not the appropriate reasons for a c-section.

Yes, you can deliver twins vaginally. No, you are not too posh to deliver your baby vaginally, the healthiest way. As a pregnant woman, you need to care about and protect your body every day — not just for the day of delivery, but also for your future pregnancies.

Talk to your OB/GYN and insist that everything be done to ensure a vaginal delivery, if possible. If you delivered by a cesarean section in the past, ask if you can deliver vaginally with this pregnancy. Eighty percent of women with a prior cesarean section will successfully deliver vaginally with their next pregnancy.

Take control of your body and insist that you are too posh to be pushed around. Know the facts, and good luck delivering your baby the healthiest way — by pushing.

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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

First for allergies

Are firstborn children really at greater risk?

Brooklyn Heights mom Stephanie MacDougal knows about allergies. Her oldest daughter, Kayla, is allergic to trees, pollen, gluten and lactose. She was quite surprised that when her second daughter, Ava, was a child, she was bouncy, bubbly, and could eat anything and go anywhere — without sniffling, sneezing, or coughing.

Researchers however, may not be so shocked.

A new study recently presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology suggests that firstborn children are more likely to have hay fever, pinkeye due to allergy, and food allergies. The study surveyed parents of more than 13,000 children ages 7 to 15, and found that the prevalence of food allergy was four percent in firstborn children, 3.5 percent in second-born children, and 2.6 percent for children born later.

While the percentages do show a change in the prevalence of allergies due to birth order, the difference is significantly small. It leaves parents wondering if the risk of allergies in their later-born children will be slighter.

One Queens mom says she doesn't believe the study.

"Our pediatrician has always said that since my husband has asthma and hay fever, the chances of our children having them were higher," says Terri Williams, whose four children, ranging in age from 3 to 17, have suffered from allergies since birth. "Like clockwork, each child has come down with asthma, but luckily has outgrown it as they got older," says the Glendale-based mom. "For us, this study doesn't hold water. I wish it did."

Dr. Paul M. Ehrlich, a partner at Allergy and Asthma Associates of Murray Hill, and clinical assistant professor of pediatrics at New York University School of Medicine, agrees.

"This is one of those funny statistics that you can only discern from a great height. The percentage differences involved are tiny," explains the doctor, who co-authored "Asthma Allergies Children: A Parent's Guide."

"There is also a question of whether we are too sanitary for our own good — that by over-cleaning our homes, we may be depriving our kids' immune systems of the challenge they need to toughen up; this is known as the 'Hygiene Hypothesis.'"

He says that parents may be more conscientious for the firstborn and less for the rest, which might explain why eldest children have more allergies, although some allergies occur too early for that to make any difference.

Since there is little a parent can do to prevent the inherent genetic risk of allergies, awareness is key. Regardless of the variation between firstborns and later-born children, one thing is for certain: allergies are on the rise.

"We are seeing a great rise in pollens and grasses — anything that is related to climate change. Spring comes earlier and summer lasts longer," explains Ehrlich.

The key to helping your children is proper diagnosis.

"Allergies are not necessarily being better diagnosed. Runny noses are being treated as allergies when they may be something else. Asthma is misdiagnosed 30 percent of the time," says Ehrlich.

As with every healthcare concern, a patient is his best advocate. If you suspect your child has allergies, or if allergies run in your family, a visit to a pediatric allergist is your best bet.

Danielle Sullivan, a Brooklyn-born mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years, and was recently honored with a Gold award for her health column by the Parenting Publications of America. Danielle also writes for Babble.

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Alternatives to college

Your teen has other options — which can lead to career opportunities

BY CANDI SPARKS

If tax season is not already stressful enough for most families, college acceptance notices are being mailed out at the same time. Just as paying taxes is mandatory, so is going to college. At least that had been the case for most families. But with the economy stinging the pocketbook, many young adults are rethinking whether they can put themselves and their relatives into debt when there's no longer a guarantee that there will be a good job — or employment in their field — when they graduate. For them, college might be seen as optional, at least for the moment.

For these young people, the decision not to go to college may be based on the desire to avoid taking out student loans. To begin one's adult life dreamy-eyed and deeply in debt is not attractive. Everyone knows someone who is either unemployed or underemployed. Taking on a large debt at this time is risky. Creditors are unforgiving, and bankruptcy laws have changed.

While this may make students apprehensive about taking out loans, their parents — who would like to help out with tuition — may not be able to afford more debt, either. It is tough to pay your child's tuition when the cost of living is rising; income to make the mortgage payments is not guaranteed; and boomers may be feeling the need to invest more for their own retirements.

It comes as no surprise that popular opinion about the importance of getting a college degree is gradually shifting every year, but few parents want their children wasting the best years of their young lives on the couch, tweeting or watching television until inspiration strikes.

Instead, families can use this period of uncertainty to explore alternatives to going to college that can provide valuable experience for high school grads.

Hone job-seeking skills

These days, people will change jobs at least seven times during their adult working lives, and perhaps even more with the state of the economy. The ability to locate employment opportunities, go through a series of interviews, land a position — and keep it — are critical skills that young people can develop. Job hunting takes time, energy, and practice. The competition in the market is making job hunting a life skill that is needed, whether or not a person has attended college.

Carla, a Brooklyn-based mother of three, thinks that job-seeking preparedness is as important as emergency preparedness.

"I tell my kids, you just never know who you might meet. You need to be ready to interview anytime, any place, anywhere. By just being prepared, you might get the job on the spot," she says. Carla's graduating high school senior, Theo, has received a few college acceptance notices, but he also wants to consider his other options before heading off to college. At the moment, he has decided to check out the job market before formally responding to any college offers.

Theo is equipped with a USB wristband, which has electronic files of his resume, references, grade point average, and current report card, as well as other important information, stored in data files. He wears it in case he comes across an opportunity to interview, and says that it is a convenient way to have all of the necessary infor-

mation in one handy place. He also hopes that it shows any potential employer his commitment to job readiness.

Carla encourages her kids to use "big-picture thinking," and spends time discussing with them what they would like do in life. She is not pressuring Theo to make a decision about college right away, because she is more concerned about his "quality of life" and "finding the right fit, whether it is in a school choice, job setting or career," she says.

Carla also says that "satisfaction is a big part of success," and her emphasis is on raising happy children who use the power of making their own informed decisions. She recommends that job seekers use the website of the U.S. Department of Labor as a resource for information and assistance. The website also gives career guidance specifically for working and non-working teens.

Get experience with internships

Many companies need short-term help, and are willing to fulfill staffing needs with interns. The interns go through an application, screening, and hiring process. The benefit of taking an internship (usually without pay) is that the position can be listed on the resume.

Interns are also viewed as future salaried hires in the industry, because they have had some job experience. Internships are limited-time opportunities, such as during the summers or on holidays. They may even be for shorter periods of time, such as over the course of a weekend, depending on the assignment and the company that is hosting the internship.

Internships can be searched on the Internet by geographic location, corporation, time period and industry. One of the most popular summer internship programs is at Major League Baseball.

Volunteer abroad

Travel opportunities abound for those who want to do some good, see the world, and sneak in a vacation along the way. Organizations that provide volunteer opportunities may offer the perfect vehicle for a young adult to experience different cultures and to garner hands-on experience.

Opportunities to assist in the areas of agriculture, conservation, teaching, and medical work are just a few of the volunteer projects in countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, and China, among many others. The more reputable organizations have an application fee, screening process, and program fees, which help to provide a better quality program and volunteer experience. Depending on the location of the volunteer program, individuals may be required to submit to medical clearances and get the appropriate vaccinations. In addition, volunteers may have to pay for their airfare and travel insurance.

A Queens mother of an adopted daughter (who wishes to remain anonymous) decided that postponing college for a year to "do volunteer work, clear the mind, and think about things," would be a better plan than dealing with a daughter who was already cutting classes and could be headed down the wrong path.

The daughter had been struggling with her identity and was asking her mother to let her take a trip to her homeland. The mother wanted her daughter to "get in touch with her roots and see what her life could have been like," but said "making the decision was emotionally draining."

Regardless, she supports her daughter's search for herself — even if it involves overseas travel. The volunteer program is only for a few weeks, and the mother will meet her daughter overseas at the half-way point, so that they can share some of that discovery together. She is happy that her daughter can mix in a little personal time within a structured volunteer project. However, as she pointed out, not all volunteer opportunities require overseas travel. Some exist right here in New York in soup kitchens and in community garden projects.

Hopefully, we can help our young adults realize that time is precious, that they can blaze their own trail, and still create a happily-ever-after of their very own.

For more information about job-seeking information and advice, visit www.dol.gov.

To learn more about Major League Baseball's internship, visit www.mlb.com.

For New York City-based volunteer opportunities, visit www.nyc.gov.

Candi Sparks is the author of the "Can I Have Some Money?" children's book series sold on Amazon.com and is on Facebook and Twitter (Candi Sparks, author). She is also a Brooklyn-based mother of two.

Maria Montessori truly led the way

Her pioneering work on early childhood education

BY MARY CARROLL WININGER

At the beginning of the 20th century, educating young children was a far more grim experience than what we know today. Schools at that time were designed to drill and discipline, rather than grow and nurture young minds. Classrooms were often dirty and crowded Dickensian places where children were deposited to memorize lessons and wear dunce caps. Schools of today are vastly different, with sing-alongs, magic carpets, and class pets.

So how, in the span of a century, did early childhood education make the transition from "Bleak House" to "Sesame Street"? How did ideal classrooms go from being places of tedium and punishment to sweetness and light? The shift was due almost completely to the research and philosophies of one person, who happened to be the first Italian woman to ever receive a medical degree. Her name was Maria Montessori.

A Montessori student learns about the decimal system.

The only child of Alessandro Montessori and Renilde Stoppani, Maria Montessori was born in 1870 in the town of Chiaravalle, on the eastern edge of Italy. From the beginning, she wasn't like the other girls. She was described as having been "headstrong" and "self-confident," often emerging as the leader in schoolyard games. She easily excelled in school and, at the university level, Maria Montessori spent hours in the library studying math and science — her favorite subjects. After several years of pressuring the University of Rome, she was eventually permitted to study medicine there, and in 1896, became the first woman in Italy to become a physician. It was her work with the university's psychiatric clinic that led to her life's calling.

As part of her work with the clinic, Dr. Montessori was to visit asylums for the mentally challenged. She noticed immediately how their youngest residents were starved for attention and experience. When she saw the amount of human potential being wasted, she began conducting experimental research, observing how children in the asylums interacted with specially designed self-teaching materials. After the mentally challenged children scored higher than average children on the same aptitude tests, Montessori determined that learning did not consist of memorizing and reciting, but sensing and experiencing the world through concrete objects.

As a result of this early success, she was asked to establish an experimental day-care center for disadvantaged children in Rome. Sixty children from the low-income San Lorenzo district were chosen to attend the "Casa dei Bambini" (Children's House), where Montessori had designed a "prepared environment" in which the children could freely choose from a number of developmentally appropriate, self-directed learning activities.

Maria Montessori changed the face of early childhood education.

She noticed how the children, when allowed to move about the room and interact with learning materials, would absorb knowledge almost effortlessly from their surroundings. The children of Casa dei Bambini, whom society had dismissed as unruly "street kids," also achieved above-average test scores, thanks to Dr. Montessori and her newly-developed method.

She knew then that if children coming to school with special needs or challenging backgrounds could benefit from this non-traditional approach to learning, it would stand to reason that average children could, too.

As word spread of her success with teaching children who were formerly considered "unteachable," Montessori began to lecture, write books, and conduct training programs to explain her approach, which came to be known as the "Montessori Method." Her ideas

swept through enlightened circles, but did not officially take hold in the U.S. until the early 1960s. Today, there are at least 4,000 certified Montessori schools in the United States, and about 7,000 worldwide.

Present-day Montessori schools observe many of the same principles as their predecessors. The sparse environment of a Montessori classroom is filled with carefully chosen materials to facilitate independent research and learning. (A Montessori tenet holds that the teacher is there to control the environment, not the child.)

Blocks and color tablets help children learn about the sensory world; beads and sandpaper numerals teach about decimal representation and identifying numeric symbols. There are materials for buttoning and bow-tying, pouring and scooping, and preparing food — all to encourage hand-eye coordination. Other areas are designated for cleaning, gardening, or caring for animals.

At Montessori schools, children are not forced to sit behind a desk and listen to a teacher talk at them. There are no deadening call-and-response drills, no rigid reward and punishment systems. Children are instead free to move around and explore any subject for as long as they wish, with no time constraints.

When children are allowed to choose what they want to do and concentrate for as long as they need on a given task, they tend to leave that task refreshed and filled with good will towards fellow students. All the while, the teacher must protect the student's concentration from interruption. Children therefore discover on their own, while being gently guided by their teachers — which fosters a lifetime love of learning.

Students at Montessori schools also do not receive papers back filled with red marks and corrections. Instead, the teacher plans individual projects to enable each child to work on what he needs in order to improve. And Montessori students are not forced to compete — they learn from each other in mixed age groups, where they bounce ideas off one another and learn what the others know. This ensures the acquisition of problem-solving skills and social interaction, and, in this way, children learn to work together.

There are numerous local examples of schools that uphold Montessori ideas and beliefs, the central one being to bring out the best in each child. Children are allowed to develop at their own speed, according to their capabilities. The students make the choices, and their unique qualities and talents are respected.

It is believed that the most important years of a child's education are not at the university level, but from birth to age 6. If a child is allowed to pursue hands-on tasks during this period and think independently, without obstacles, she can be guided to a promising future.

Montessori's method has proven again and again to advance children's aptitude, thinking and reasoning skills, and overall happiness. It allows children to grow at a relaxed pace into the intelligent men and women they will become.

Mary Carroll Wininger is a writer based in New York City. She is a frequent contributor on topics ranging from etiquette to feng shui.

Montessori students learn about math by playing with plastic beads.

Maria Montessori enjoyed observing children learn about the world around them.

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A parent's guide to understanding learning styles

Identifying — and acting on — how your child processes information

BY NANINE IENGO

My sister and I were born 13 months apart. We didn't really suffer from sibling rivalry — what was mine was clearly her's, and vice versa, without question. I do not know a life or a way of being that does not include her.

However, we are as vastly different as two people can be, not only physically (I'm 5'8 and she's 5'4; she's blond and I'm not), but in the way we approached and functioned in school — as were many siblings before and after us. I was an avid reader, greatly preferring books and low-key activities (chess, puzzles), while she ran straight into any physical activity she could (she was actually on a pre-Olympic gymnastics team and one of her fellow gymnasts participated in the 1980 Olympics).

The comparisons were inevitable and typical. I was tall and awkward, but made straight As, while she was small and lithe and was banished to the resource room — as were most kids who were non-typical learners, and therefore, labeled learning disabled in the 1970s and '80s.

I remember the first day we moved into a new school — my sister and I had to take placement reading tests in order to see where we fit among the three classes on our respective grades. I placed in the middle grade because, while I may have been a great student, it was very intimidating sitting in the principal's office, under scrutiny of the third grade teacher, the principal, and my parents, while trying to read passages and answer questions.

My sister, a shaky test taker from the beginning, tested into the lower class. She ended up developing low educational self-esteem because of the low abilities and bad behaviors of the other students in her class. To her, and obviously to the school, she wasn't able — able to read well, to write well, or to be a good student.

But, here's the thing: she was. Every child is — the key to learning just needs to be uncovered.

And it wasn't until I first read about Dr. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences way back in my undergraduate days that I understood this and put into perspective the great differences in our educational experiences, and my sister's great difficulties in school. My sister wasn't a bad student, she just needed a different approach to learning than what schools at that time were using.

The theory illustrates the many ways in which a person can learn and process information. There are currently eight widely-accepted intelligences, and they are:

• **Visual/spatial intelligence:** People who are visual/spatial learners are great at visualizing and representing their ideas in 3-D, are great with puzzles, and may grow up to become engineers, architects and artists. They tend to need to incorporate concrete examples when they learn, such as drawing a scene from a play if they are reading Shakespeare, or creating a replica of the Eiffel Tower if they are learning about France.

• **Linguistic intelligence:** People who are linguistic learners are great with words, both written and spoken. They love to play with words and find reading a pleasurable activity. In order for them to learn, they need to include note taking or journal writing when they are learning.

• **Logical-mathematical:** People who are logical-mathematical learners tend to be great at reasoning and logic. Math and science are also strengths for these learners, as they approach learning in an investigative way, asking a lot of questions and applying their reasoning powers.

• **Bodily-kinesthetic:** People who are bodily-kinesthetic learners need to incorporate movement into their learning. They retain information when there is an action incorporated into the lesson. They often need to touch something or physically do something (creating a muscle memory) for it to become meaningful.

• **Musical:** Musical learners tend to be sensitive to noises, music, rhythms and patterns. They need to incorporate music (whether it is by singing, dancing, or moving) in order to learn something and create a memory. You will often find these learners tapping their feet when they are listening to someone talk and creating their own songs from what they are hearing so that they can better understand it.

• **Interpersonal:** Interpersonal learners tend to be the social butterflies of any group. They learn best by transmitting information to others and having others interact with them. Very extroverted, interpersonal learners are empathetic and do well in groups of people.

• **Intrapersonal:** People who are intrapersonal learners are highly intuitive and seen as shy or quiet. They have a keen ability for self-reflection, and tend toward working alone rather than in groups.

• **Naturalistic:** Naturalistic learners love to be in nature and study best when the natural world is involved.

Dr. Gardner did not primarily develop his theory for education, but the educational world has wholeheartedly embraced it. It makes the vocation of teaching and parenting a little easier if a teacher or parent understands the ways in which children see and approach their worlds.

Resouces

To find your learning style, visit literacyworks.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html.

To find your child's style, visit www.scholastic.com/familymatters/parentguides/backtoschool/quiz_learnstyles/index.htm.

For more information on Dr. Howard Gardner, visit www.howardgardner.com.

While there is usually a base type of intelligence, many of us do exhibit a combination of intelligences, and that is why it is so important that when teachers and parents approach any type of activity — whether it be reading, disciplining, teaching, or playing — they include a variety of ways to approach it.

Now, as an educator, I often look back on the pair of us and our educational and personal paths, and use it to inform my educational theories. And it is because of this that I have always aimed at providing my students with lessons that were developed with many different learning styles in mind. I usually didn't plan lessons until I got to know my students and the different styles they offered. I made sure to include activities or projects that would help me uncover the way they learned, and offered them a multitude of ways to access the different centers or projects in our class. This was easy in a preschool environment, but maybe not so much so in a higher elementary grade.

On the first day of class, I designed my classroom to provide opportunities for small and large group, as well as individual activities (listening center, playdough, reading nook). During circle time or whole group work times, I allowed for the different ways a child may need to access the circle or whole group experience. A child was allowed to sit at the table, sit at the circle in a chair, sit holding a stuffed animal, or stand, as long as he wasn't disrupting the class.

When I first started teaching, I had a little girl in my class who was so sensitive to music that she was terrified of the music teacher. After bringing her outside of the classroom to calm down a few times, the music teacher and I decided that it was best for her to sit at the door in a chair. But, by the end of the music time, she was usually in the circle dancing with the other kids.

To be honest — this does create more work at first, especially doing this for an entire class. But, as a preschool teacher, I found that approaching teaching in this way, creating lessons to include as many of the ways of learning as I could, challenged me and help me become a better teacher.

And now, I see this with my own parenting style. My 3-year-old son is also highly sensitive to sound, but is extremely musically inclined (not to brag too much). He plays simple scales on his piano, and has started writing music with my husband, and on his own.

However, when he enters a room full of screaming kids (say, at an indoor play area), he sometimes has a hard time functioning. I feel that it is up to me — and those who take care of him — to understand his learning needs, and help him understand them as well. This will help him in school, and will make things a little easier for him when he comes across information that he just doesn't understand.

We were taking music classes together at a local Music Together Studio, and after a few weeks, he just wasn't able to handle it. There were too many elements for him to process, and while he loved the music, the surroundings became too much. My husband and I feel that our son does love music, and we want to encourage his natural abilities, so we plan on enrolling him in one-on-one music lessons. Being able to identify his way of learning helps me, especially when the challenging times come up. And trust me, they do come up!

My sister and I sat down and filled out an online questionnaire to find our learning styles. Sure enough, what we had already assumed was true — I'm a linguistic learner, and she's a bodily/kinesthetic learner. I did the same for my son, and confirmed he is a visual/spatial and musical learner. I can't wait for my husband to take the test!

Nanine Iengo is an Early Childhood Educator and Administrator who is working toward her Professional Certification in special education. While taking a leave of absence from the working world to be home with her son, she has developed a parent participation class called Toddler Lit 101, which is aimed at giving all children a love of reading.

Why music?

Listening to music at an early age can do wonders

BY MARY ALOIA

I was always amazed at how music transformed my children. When my oldest two were babies, music was one of the few things that calmed them BOTH — at the same time! When my youngest was born, my daughter was 6-years-old and my son was 5, and music was, again, the thing that we could all enjoy together. I loved fixing the rearview mirror on the back seat and watching them all bounce, clap and smile as we sang along to our favorite songs. Many, many times when they were little, I found solace in my car with my three children peacefully asleep as the music of Chopin, Brahms or James Taylor soothed their tiny souls. These were just a few of the signs that my children loved music… and why I love music — because it was my super nanny!

Music can alter a child's mood instantly. We all have our personal stories of using music to calm a colicky baby, singing a family lullaby to put our little one to sleep, or getting through an endless car ride singing "The Wheels On The Bus."

Music is very much a part of our everyday culture. Years ago — before iPods and iTunes — music was something that we MADE. Before the age of technology, when I was a child, music was either playing on the radio, sung by a church choir, or sung by my parents from the front seat of our station wagon. Eventually, I got a record player, then a tape player, and much later, a CD player (all of which are prehistoric now).

Music-making is something that we need to work on, something we need to create. Our experiences with music started in our early childhoods, and it is our job to create these important musical experiences for our own children.

Thankfully, more attention is being paid to the role of early childhood music exposure and how it influences our children. Why? Why music? The short answer is that music is fun, but extensive research has shown that exposing children to music stimulates their overall intelligence and emotional development, nurtures their self-esteem, and at the same time, encourages creativity, self-confidence and curiosity.

Can early childhood music learning really make our children smarter? Well, recent data from the University of Texas indicates that students who had an early childhood music education received higher SAT scores. Studies have also shown that music can benefit cognitive abilities — particularly spatial abilities, higher reasoning and motor skills, and greater understanding and higher achievements in language and math.

Music has also been proven to develop the "whole child." Music exposure has shown to increase overall intelligence in children by shaping attitudes, interests and self-discipline. Music can be inspiring and motivational, even to the youngest listener, thereby helping with focus and listening skills. Music is blind to age, gender and ability.

Give kids music!

Years ago, families would gather around the piano or the radio in the evenings and sing songs together. Over the years, we have lost this important family pastime, but there are still things that families can do to share the joy of family music. There are many fun and inexpensive ways for parents to explore music with their children.

Here are some interesting music-making ideas that you can try with your child:

- Sing with your child — You may not be the next American Idol, but chances are your child will think you are!
- Make music with things around the house — Get creative and look for everyday things that you can transform into musical instruments. How about making a maraca out of a plastic water bottle? Just fill an empty bottle with some dried beans and re-seal for an instant shaker!
- Introduce your child to different types of music — Add variety to your child's musical life by playing a different type of music each day. Classical, country, rock, rap, big band, jazz, or whatever you love! Just mix it up.
- Try playing a harmonica or a kazoo — An easy and inexpensive way to introduce your child to an instrument and have them experiment with creating different sounds and tunes. Play together and make your own band!
- Talk about music — As you listen to music or make music, talk about it! Talk about how the music makes you feel or what it may remind you of. Tell stories that involve music and singing.
- Try a music class — Exposure to an early childhood music and movement program will help to lay the foundation of childhood music learning.

Mary Aloia is the director of Staten Island Family Music. Staten Island Family Music offers Music Together classes at three Staten Island locations. To learn more, call (888) 731-8719, or visit www.sifamilymusic.com or www.music-together.com.

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To enable artists to refine the skills necessary for art-related careers. To assist non-professional artists of all ages to develop their talents to the highest levels of skill and enjoyment. To help young adults bridge the transition from secondary school to professional standing. To develop scholarship programs to insure that students may nurture and use their talents regardless of economic limitations. To collaborate with other cultural and educational organizations in programming that will expand Art Lab's ability to serve the multi-cultural community while maintaining the integrity of its overall objectives.

"Dea" Music & Art School

19 St. Mary's Avenue
718-876-5223 or www.deamusicandart.com

We want you to enjoy the marvelous world of Music and Art so come to see us and choose from a wide range of music and art programs. We Offer Private Instruction in PIANO, VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, GUITAR AND VOICE as well as Solfeggio and Music Theory classes. We also offer Art Classes for all ages and levels. At "Dea" Music School we offer programs of study that develop both musical sensitivity and technical facility, create opportunities for social interaction, and increase the confidence and self-esteem of students of all ages.

The school's basic curriculum is a combination of private instrumental lessons with theory, ear-training, and chamber ensembles. For those students wishing to pursue a career in music, the school can provide the foundation necessary to attain the highest level of performance. Our students have been rated with "outstanding" at ABRSM graded exam, have won prizes and awards at the "Bradshaw and Buono International Piano Competition" and have performed at Carnegie Hall as part of the prize for their achievement. In our Art Department you can create a professional portfolio of artwork as you explore the inspirational work of Art Masters. Learn about their creative process while using a variety of materials and techniques as you draw, sculpt, paint and collage. The goal of Art education at "Dea" Art School is to help children to better know themselves and the world around them and give them the ability to enhance their creativity by using visual materials. Teaching children how to paint gives them more possibilities to develop their artistic expression. Classes from 3 years old to adults.

Continued on page 26

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Arts

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 24

Rhythm Central Dance

1300 Hylan Blvd (Dongan Hills)
718-668-1030 or www.therhythmcentral.com

Our philosophy is simple. Students learn to dance in a fun, safe, and family friendly environment. Our highly qualified staff of instructors strives to nurture all of our dancers to build self esteem and respect for themselves and others. We offer both recreational and competitive classes in Ballet, Jazz, Tap, Hip Hop, Modern, Acro, and Lyrical for students ages 2 thru adult. Rhythm Central is proud to offer Zumba and ZumbaTomic classes for adults and children looking for a fun way to exercise. New for our Fall season are Mommy and Me dance classes, sure to please your future star and ALL BOY classes teaching basic coordination, hip hop and break dancing. We look forward to meeting you at our Open House, September 8th and 9th from 4-7pm! For any further information, please call us at 718-668-1030 or visit our website at www.therhythmcentral.com.

Richmond Choral Society Youth Chorus

718-448-3656 or www.richmondchoral.com

Richmond Choral Society Youth Chorus (RCSYC) was created in 2003 as the junior division of Richmond Choral Society (RCS); we are Celebrating Richmond Choral Society's 60th Anniversary. Young singers from 4th through 12th grades in Staten Island encounter a variety of fun and challenging musical experiences and receive instruction in vocal production, music literacy and concert performance. They meet every Wednesday from 4:15 to 6:30 from September through May to rehearse music from the classical and contemporary choral repertory in different languages for two adult RCS concerts in December and May. RCSYC holds its own concert every year in collaboration with Moore High School, on the first Tuesday in June in Christ Church, 76 Franklin Ave., Staten Island, NY 10301. Auditions are held in September and January. Call us to have your child join in our youth chorus!

SMB Studio Arts

3777 Richmond Avenue
718-984-5700 or www.smbstudioarts.com facebook.com/smbstudioartsinc

SMB Studio Arts Inc. offers art and design programs that cover a broad spectrum to benefit Pre-K students, as well as those who aspire to art careers — including beginners and advanced adults. It offers disciplines for those who wish to expand their horizons and develop their talents, as well as inexperienced creative types who wish to pursue a commercial career — and especially those who seek acceptance to a University or Art School. The program will offer basic drawing, cartooning, mixed media, oil and watercolor painting, digital photography and design, and portfolio preparation. An upscale waiting area for parents and friends is provided.

Call us for information on our discounts and scholarships.

Staten Island Family Music

Mary Lee Aloia, Program Director
888-731-8719 or www.sifamily.com

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Join us for a FREE TRIAL CLASS anytime !

Staten Island Music School

3770 Hylan Blvd (Great Kills)
718-356-8323 or www.statenislandmusicschool.com

Frank J. Busso, the director of the school has been teaching music for over 40 years. The school focuses on instructions for accordion, piano, keyboard and guitar. In addition to private weekly lessons, students may participate in band training. These bands and ensembles participate in various competitions and festivals. The Staten Island Music School is one of the most Highly Achieved and finest in the Country. Our students participate in the Tri-State Music Festival in the spring and a National Festival in July. The school then has an annual recital at the end of June, at a Staten Island location. Call us today, and set up a time to come in and visit us!

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Bonding by book

Scrapbooking is a great way to preserve memories while making new ones

BY MARY TOMASULO

Take those old records off the shelf. No, not your vinyls from the 1980s, but all of the photos of your favorite family moments, and spend time with your kids by using them to create a priceless book of treasured moments — create a scrapbook.

From Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, to Long Island City, Queens, scrapbookers are snipping photos and meeting for crops (when the hobbyists gather to arrange their pages). They are similar to the old-fashioned quilting bees, when a group of women came together to share conversation, material, and sewing tips. Scrapbooking is the fastest growing sector of the craft and hobby industry, and 30 percent of all U.S. households have at least one member who scrapbooks.

The best part of scrapbooking is that anyone can do it.

"All you need are an album, glue, scissors and photos, and you can get started," explains Mattie Ettenheim, a Brooklyn resident and scrapbooker since high school. This expressive craft combines the love of photography with the art of collage.

She created a birthday wish book for her best friend, made up of notes and photos of family and friends. In the class she teaches in Manhattan, baby and wedding books are the most popular. She recommends working with ideas from different websites, and working with only one or two photos at a time.

Any event can be recorded by using photos, memorabilia, or anything else you can glue to a page.

"I get inspired by the photographs that I've taken, and scrapbooking becomes alive with my life," said an interior designer who takes classes with Ettenheim. "I love to add funny titles." She says that she keeps a notebook where she can sketch ideas and designs, and her scrapbook pages become a journal of her life. This stay-at-home-mom says she enjoys scrapbooking, because it is an absorbing distraction that has her thinking about composition, color and the image.

Be creative and use your imagination when decorating your pages. Using wrapping paper from holiday gifts makes a lovely background for a page with December photos, and Valentine's Day hearts can adorn the pages with your family sharing hugs and smiles. Birthday cards can be cut and pasted onto a page, while music lyrics can be background for photos of school musicals and summer campfires. Maps and postcards can accompany last summer's getaway pics, and recipes for holiday dishes can be put together with family photos and handed out as gifts.

Scrapbooking as we know it today began many centuries ago in the form of friendship albums — old books which would contain mounted photos; memorabilia, such as newspaper clippings and letters; and sometimes, a lock of hair. Scrapbooking became popular in the 1980s and has grown to a million dollar industry with craft supplies available for purchase in stores and online.

And if you're not handy with scissors and glue, don't worry, because scrapbooking has caught up with the digital age. Online resources and easy layout options allow you to create cards, calendars and scrapbooks with no mess to clean up.

"I love pictures, and looking back at them is fun," says Sue Lape, a 35-year-old television researcher who does her scrapbooking digitally. She takes photos with her digital camera, edits them on her computer and then creates gift books, calendars, and scrapbooks — all using various websites. She says she has never made a traditional scrapbook, because there are so many tools available on the Internet.

So, whether you're snipping and gluing, or moving your mouse, scrapbooking is a great hobby that anyone can enjoy.

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Calla Karate & JuJutsu

1293 Castleton Avenue
718-720-2509 or www.callakarate.com

As parents ourselves, we are well aware of the importance of qualified day care for our children. Calla Karate is happy to introduce our Summer Camp Program. Not only will you be leaving your child in a Safe environment, you will be entrusting them to Professionals who care. We will be filling our days with fun filled events, trips and what we pride ourselves on most, Outstanding Martial Arts Instruction!! We will be making day trips to the park, library, zoo, movies and more. At the school we will be having Board Breaking & Kata contests, Game Day, Nerf and Super Soaker Wars. Trophies, medals and certificates will be awarded. Can you imagine having this security and peace of mind - all for just $6.25 per hour?? It's true. Here at Calla Karate it is our goal to provide families the affordability to be able to do just that!! Sensei Eddie or Sensei Mary will be there each and everyday along with qualified camp counselors keeping a safe watch over your children. Enrollment is limited and spaces are filling up quickly. Spaces are limited so call now to ensure your child's spot at the Calla Karate Camp Program.

Camp Good Grief of Staten Island

Mount Manresa Retreat House, 888-507-4474 or www.campgoodgriefsi.org
sunshine@campgoodgriefsi.org

Camp Good Grief of Staten Island, Inc., a nonprofit organization helps children and teens cope with the death of a parent, sibling or a primary caregiver. Camp Good Grief was founded by Irwin and Linda Steinman, native Staten Islanders whose former spouses and son died. After witnessing the devastation experienced by their respective children, they wanted to give bereaved youngsters the opportunity to heal and grieve the loss of their loved ones in a healthy way. They hired on their Clinical Director, Karen L Goldman, LMHC, BCPC, Licensed Mental Health Counselor and University Hospice (SIUH) Bereavement Coordinator for her expertise to program Camp Good Grief. Camp Good Grief is scheduled over the course of one weekend, FREE to Staten Island families. Children ages 7-16 meet with others their age who are going through similar experiences. Campers learn to understand and express their emotions, through art, music, drama and traditional camp activities, feeling a sense of community, hope and normalcy as they cope with their loss. Camp Good Grief is staffed with Hospice nurses, community Mental Health Counselors and trained volunteers. They provide 24 hour support for each child during the weekend, teaching them a toolbox of coping strategies for their future and every day functioning. An adult Camp Good Grief is planned for the near future, in hopes to provide support for those adults who need guidance dealing with the untimely death of their loved ones. Please call or visit our website for further information.

"Dea" Music, Art and Broadway Theater - Summer Camp

19 St. Mary's Avenue, 718-876-5223 or www.deamusicandart.com

At "Dea" Music & Art we believe music education is an important aspect of a fuller and better development of children. Given the lack of a significant music and arts program at primary and secondary schools we want to fill that gap by offering a more complete and effective method. Our objective is to offer every student the highest possible level of music and artistic achievement by providing an appropriate curriculum in an environment surrounded by the beautiful world of music and art. We are committed to helping students grow emotionally and develop social skills through music activities and art work. We believe in creating an environment that encourages learning and social growth through character building and high expectations. We also know that summer time is, for some, the best time to get involved in those extracurricular activities. "Dea" Music & Art Summer Camp will offer theory and ear-training classes and campers will choose from an array of musical instruments they would like to learn. In addition all campers will participate in the Art Classes where they will be able to work with a wide variety of materials and projects. If selected, campers will be able to be part of a musical theater performance with costumes.

FasTracKids Summer

1461 Hylan Blvd, 718-351-7333 or www.fastrackids.com

Is designed for children ages 3-7. Sessions last for one week at a time. A full day program is offered that includes enrichment classes, math, reading, and writing classes, exercise, local field trips, arts and crafts, karaoke, computers, special projects, science experiments and much more. Hours are from 9am-4pm with extended hours available.

The camp offers a fast-paced, fun and fully interactive setting; learning adventures captivate and entertain as they deliver truly meaningful lessons.

Each day FasTracKids will enjoy learning as they explore, discover, imagine and create. This is the summer adventure children will use for life. One or 2 times per week Enopi Math & English Classes are also offered all summer and throughout the year.

JCC of Staten Island Lillian Schwartz Day Camp

1131 Manor Road, www.camp.sijcc.org
Camp Directors – Glenn Wechsler: gwechsler@sijcc.com 718.475.5231, Stephanie Feldman: sfeldman@sijcc.com 718.475.5232

Continued on page 32

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STATEN ISLAND

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Staten Island YMCA Broadway Branch	(718) 981-4933
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UPSTATE NY - New York YMCA Camp (845) 858-2200

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LIVESTRONG KIDS CAMPAIGN

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Camp

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 30

For more than 80 years the JCC of Staten Island's Lillian Schwartz Day Camp has provided children on Staten Island with a safe, quality day camp experience with a focus on fun, spirit, friendship, and community. The camp is situated at the lush Henry Kaufmann campgrounds in Staten Island's Greenbelt and features 100 country like wooded acres, 2 lakes, boating ponds, ball fields, hiking trails, an outdoor amphitheater and 3 Olympic sized swimming pools. At the camp, children participate in a full array of activities including swimming, sports, music, arts and crafts, animal encounter, archery, and nature. The program also includes spectacular shows, special events and weekly trips to place like Sesame Place, Fun Time America, Keansburg Amusement park, and a New York Mets game. The Camp employs child-friendly, energetic and dedicated staff. They receive extensive pre-camp and on-going training in the areas of child development, supervision, child safety, and camper sensitivity. The camp, which is American Camp Association accredited, is open to children ages 2-15 and runs from June 29 – August 19. Bussing and extended hours is available. The camp day is from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Additionally, there are camp divisions for children with diabetes and children with special needs.

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Check out our SUMMER DAY CAMP!

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Staten Island Academy Summer Day Camp

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

Staten Island Academy Summer Day Camp offers safe, fun-filled, activity-packed programs for children ages 3-14and we specialize in making memories that last a lifetime! Day camp dates are June 20 through August 26, 2011. In addition to weekly events and activities, our campers run, jump and play on our 12-acre campus, three tennis courts and two swimming pools. Included in our day camp program are dance and the Camp Show, arts and crafts, Discovery Science, computer lab, game room and hot lunch in our cool cafeteria! We also offer NYC's only Summer Institute for the Gifted program and specialized sports camps for basketball, soccer, tennis and rugby/lacrosse. We have something for everyone – from the most active to the most creative camper! Learn more at an Open House March 13, April 16 or May 2. For more information call or visit our website.

Staten Island Day Camp

2800 Victory Blvd., 800-301-2267or www.statenislanddaycamp.com

Staten Island Day Camp is proud to offer a true day camp experience held on the beautiful grounds of the College of Staten Island. This site allows us to conduct all our activities in one safe location, and our campers avoid continuous travel on hot buses in the heat of the summer. Our program is never disrupted by excessively hot days as our indoor facilities are air-conditioned, which allow our campers to move inside and still have a true day camp experience. Our Olympic sized pool is also inside. Our outdoor facilities include: three ball fields; four basketball courts; a modern track; soccer field and an all-purpose field for our Early Childhood campers. Two former school administrators; a child psychologist and four licensed teachers supervise our campers and our college counselors - a professional administrative team not to be matched anywhere.

Please call or visit our website for a comprehensive look at our camp.

Staten Island Tennis Camp

2800 Victory Blvd., 718-982-3355 or www.sitenniscenter.com

Please have your child join us this summer for a fun filled tennis camp, held here at our tennis club on the College of Staten Island Campus. In addition to tennis instruction, we will also provide enjoyable activities such as swimming, board games, and other special events. We have experienced tennis instructors who will teach and supervise your child in a safe and pleasant environment, guiding them through the activities all day. Our instructors are chosen for both their interpersonal and tennis skills. Children will not be left unattended at any time. We have a certified lifeguard on duty at all times when students are in the pool. Come join us for a fun week (or more) this summer.

YMCA Summer Camps

651 Broadway 718-981-4933 or www.ymcanyc.org
3939 Richmond Avenue 718-227-3200 or www.ymanyc.org
Staten Island YMCA @ pouch Camp 718-227-3200

Provides youth with supervised activities that teach core values, conflict resolution and leadership skills. Kids have fun while making new friends, building self-confidence, appreciating teamwork and growing in self-reliance.

Their program includes playing games, arts & crafts, exploring science and technology, swimming, field trips, appreciating nature and values of many cultures. All camps are accredited by the American Camping Association. Registration for Summer 2011 is now open. Please contact your nearest YMCA Day Camp or visit ymcanyc.org/camp for more information.

Zion Summer Camp

505 Watchogue Road, 718-981-3623 or www.zionlutheransiny.com

Zion Zummer Camp is a place where children ages 3-10 can come and do what children are meant to do – HAVE FUN! We are fortunate enough to have the entire property inside and outside at Zion Lutheran Church & Preschool to utilize. Our camp runs Monday through Friday, beginning on Wednesday, June 29th – Friday, July 29th, 9:00 – 12:30. The activities include: arts/crafts, soccer, basketball, lawn games, baseball, volleyball, theme days, sprinkler, playground, sandboxes, kickball, storytime, music, magic, Minute To Win It challenges, and for the first time this year an end of summer camp production! Our classrooms are air conditioned and our grassy field is fenced in. The children return year after year to our camp to make new friends and renew old friendships. Call us today for more information.

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CAMP GOOD GRIEF OF STATEN ISLAND, INC.

Camp Good Grief is open to Staten Island children ages 7 to 16 who are grieving the loss of a parent or sibling. This weekend experience, is provided **without cost to the family**. Camp Good Grief of SI provides an opportunity for children and teens to grieve, to share similar losses, to build community, learn coping skills and express emotional needs while having fun.

MAY 13–15, Mount Manresa Retreat House

Call Today to Register!

Clinical Director, Karen Goldman, MA, LMHC-BC

(888) 507-4474 • sunshine@campgoodgriefsi.org

www.campgoodgriefsi.org

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St. George triumphs

Historic Staten Island theatre comes back from the brink

BY MONICA BROWN

It was the late 1940s, and the St. George Theatre was thriving on Staten Island's North Shore.

Families were spending their weekends "going to the show" (the phrase "going to the movies" didn't exist yet), to see films like "Gung Ho" and "The Fighting Sullivans."

Native Islander Camillo DiClerico, now 74 years old, has specific and fond memories of his days as a New Brighton youngster, enjoying the theatre with his family or friends.

"The St. George had matinees where the kids had to sit in special sections, and the theater had a monitor to keep us in line. We were never allowed to go into the balcony," he recalls.

"At Easter-time, the St. George would give school kids free showings of a silent movie version of 'King of Kings,' which was about the life of Jesus Christ. Try watching that every year in a silent movie with subtitles," DiClerico says with a chuckle.

Courtesy Staten Island Advance / Bill Lyons

These days, the big screen is gone, but the stage regularly comes alive with live entertainment by legendary musicians such as Diana Ross, Smokey Robinson, Tony Bennett, and Bret Michaels, just to name a few. There are children's performances, school and community outreach programs, pageants and dance recitals. And this year, Mayor Michael Bloomberg delivered his State of the City address from center stage.

The St. George Theatre is thriving once again, as it did more than 80 years ago.

Looking back

The St. George Theatre originally opened in 1929 as a movie and vaudeville theatre. It was a grand venue, by all accounts — rivaling many Manhattan theaters — with its velvet seats, huge spiraling staircases and specially-constructed balcony area.

It was sold in 1938 to the Fabian Theater chain, which took over and ran it as a movie house — as DiClerico remembers — until 1972. In the 1970s, the theatre fell into disrepair, and various owners tried hard to revive it. There was a roller rink, a nightclub, and an antique showroom. There was even an attempt in the mid-1990s to turn it into a performing arts center. But that venture, too, was abandoned.

Bringing back 'a white elephant'

In 2004, a Staten Island family stepped in and the transformation began.

Rosemary Cappozalo, the owner of "Mrs. Rosemary's," a legendary New Dorp dance studio, had been renting out the theatre for recitals during the 1960s and '70s. Because the St. George became more run-down with each passing year, she decided to look elsewhere to stage her shows.

When Cappozalo was approached by its owner with the possibility of taking it over, she knew she had no choice. She decided it was time to save the theatre once and for all, so, along with her daughters, Doreen Cugno and Luanne Sorrentino, she created a non-profit organization called St. George Theatre Restoration, Inc., which now owns and operates the venue.

A life-long patron of the arts, Cappozalo donated her life savings of more than $1 million to help with the restoration.

The re-building was an uphill battle, to say the least, says Sorrentino, the theatre's chief financial officer and director of operations.

The St. George had been padlocked for years, and restoring this diamond in the rough was an arduous task.

"It was a white elephant," says Sorrentino. "Everybody told us not to do it. Lawyer friends, accountants, people in the business. We turned a deaf ear. We knew that if someone was going to do it, it was going to be us."

The women had their work cut out for them. The red velvet seats had been ripped apart; the stage curtain was torn; and the stage itself had chunks of it missing. There was no electricity, no plumbing, no stage lighting or sound system, and no heat or air-conditioning.

"The roof had to be repaired," says Sorrentino. "It was raining in

the theatre. The only ones finding comfort in the theatre were the raccoons and the birds."

They rolled up their sleeves and got to work installing toilets, sinks, sheetrock and carpeting, while dealing with bigger projects like missing stairs and orchestra seats, as well the installation of a $30,000 skylight over the stage.

The restoration project itself was fraught with delays and setbacks. There were building codes to adhere to, and safety regulations were top priority. But Sorrentino, her mother, and her sister were determined to make it work. Twelve weeks after they closed on the St. George, the theater was open for business. As daunting as it was, Sorrentino says they never thought about giving up.

"We just kept thinking, 'How can we make this better? What do we need to do next?'" she says.

Continuing to evolve

While business began to boom, the renovations continued. Back in 2008, new lighting and sound systems came, with the help of a $3 million grant from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro, and then-City Councilman Michael McMahon. With additional grant money and fund-raising efforts, the theatre will soon be purchasing a new rigging system for the stage, handrails for the balconies, and new doors. A new marquee is currently on order.

Cugno and Sorrentino continue to book shows that draw crowds of all ages, but Sorrentino says it's the work they do behind the scenes that brings them the most satisfaction. Since 2004, they have hosted the "Night of Theatre" program, which opens the theatre to senior citizen groups and community service organizations, allowing them to enjoy the performances for free.

In addition, their Summer Outreach Program offers free dance and theatre training — along with a free, healthful lunch — to economically disadvantaged children, ages 9 to 18 years old. It had begun with Cappozalo while the theatre was first being renovated.

"We'd be down there scrubbing floors, painting, and all the kids in the neighborhood used to come and ask us, 'What are you doing?' And my mother would talk to them and have them help her do things like take out the garbage, little errands," says Sorrentino. "They were looking for things to do, and a little pat on the back. They'd spend hours with us! And my mother said right away, 'We have to think of something for these kids to do, to get them off the street.'"

The outreach program was born. And Sorrentino says it has brought hope and change to thousands of kids' lives over the years.

"We teach them all about dance, theatre, theatre etiquette, lighting and sound, public speaking, and poetry," says Sorrentino. "The Staten Island Foundation has even funded a literacy component now. It's my favorite. I love it."

A living legacy

In June of 2009, Cappozalo passed away, after a 10-month battle with cancer.

Sorrentino describes her mother as a woman of vision, passion and grace — someone who gave much more than she ever took. Cappozalo began teaching dance back in 1959 to earn money for her young family, and the business grew steadily over the years. Now, with 1,500 students a week, Mrs. Rosemary's Dance Studio has become one of the largest dance instruction schools on the East Coast.

Her daughters are following in her footsteps. But make no mistake — the workload of running the school (still in its original location on New Dorp Plaza) and the theatre is tremendous. Sorrentino says she's become adept at managing her time properly.

"I'll be on a break at dancing school, but I'll be in the back, on my phone, checking e-mails, looking at applications for the theatre, whatever it takes," she says. "But it doesn't feel like work. It's who we are; it's our lives.

"We're not the type to sit at home, put our feet up and watch Oprah," she says with a laugh, knowing her mother would be proud.

And she admits, there's no giving up now.

"This is not our theatre," says Cappozalo. "It's Staten Island's theatre. It's been saved for generations to come."

St. George Theatre [35 Hyatt St. in St. George, (718) 442-2900]. For more information, visit www.stgeorgetheatre.com.

Monica Brown is a cable television news anchor who lives on Staten Island with her two children. She can be reached at monicaldbrown@gmail.com.

NEWBIE DAD

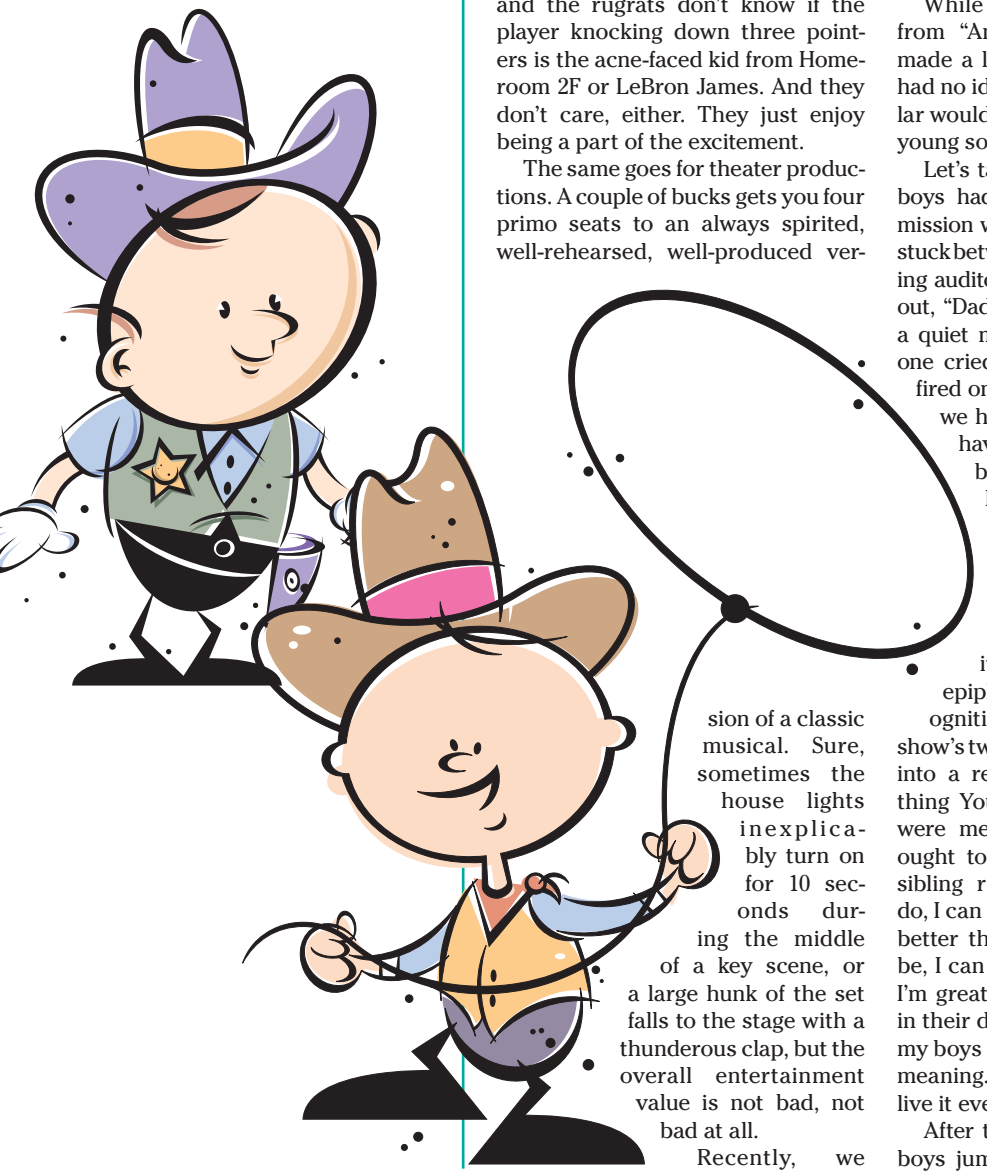
BRIAN KANTZ

Anything you can do, I can do better

One of the great things about being married to a high school teacher is the dirt-cheap family entertainment. There's always something going on at her school, and it almost always costs nothing, or next to nothing, to attend.

We can take our two boys, who are 6 and 4 years old, to the high school basketball game on a Friday night, toss down a couple of bucks, and the rugrats don't know if the player knocking down three pointers is the acne-faced kid from Homeroom 2F or LeBron James. And they don't care, either. They just enjoy being a part of the excitement.

The same goes for theater productions. A couple of bucks gets you four primo seats to an always spirited, well-rehearsed, well-produced version of a classic musical. Sure, sometimes the house lights inexplicably turn on for 10 seconds during the middle of a key scene, or a large hunk of the set falls to the stage with a thunderous clap, but the overall entertainment value is not bad, not bad at all.



Recently, we took the boys to see a production of Irving Berlin's "Annie Get Your Gun," which just so happens to be one of my all-time favorites. My wife and I had the pleasure of seeing Bernadette Peters belt out the role of Annie Oakley on the Great White Way one rainy spring evening a few years back (well, more than a few years now, I guess), and I've been singing those beautiful moonshine lullabies in my head ever since.

While the lyrics and rhythms from "Annie Get Your Gun" have made a lasting impression on me, I had no idea that one song in particular would have a similar effect on my young sons.

Let's take it straight to Act II. The boys had already made it to intermission without incident. No one got stuck between the cushions of the folding auditorium seats. No one blurted out, "Daddy, I have to poop!" during a quiet moment between songs. No one cried when the first "gun" was fired on stage. During intermission, we had rewarded their good behavior with a fund-raiser-sized box of Skittles for each kid. Happily, they ate the candies in their seats (don't tell the student-ushers) as the second act began. All was well.

Then, it happened. Call it enlightenment. Call it an epiphany. Call it the simple recognition of an age-old fact. The show's two main characters launched into a rendition of the song "Anything You Can Do," and both boys were mesmerized by what clearly ought to be the official anthem of sibling rivalry. "Anything you can do, I can do better. I can do anything better than you. Anything you can be, I can be greater. Sooner or later, I'm greater than you." I could see it in their delighted little grins. Both of my boys got this song. They knew its meaning. Even at a young age, they live it everyday.

After the show was over and the boys jumped into the back seat of the car for the ride home, it started. First one, then the other, sang little bits of the song — and, of course, began bickering over who had the words right, who sang it better, who was singing the boy's part and who was singing the girl's part and who was and was not keeping his hands to himself. Luckily, the pure joy of singing this wonderful song — by now, my wife and I had jumped in on the second verse — was enough to diffuse the situation.

In a way, though, it was beautiful to listen to them go at it for a moment. There's just no way around sibling rivalry. I have three brothers, and although I wouldn't classify us as ultra-competitive, there's always been enough one-upmanship and friendly competition to go around. I wouldn't expect any less from my own two sons. It's the way of the world and, ultimately — hopefully — some good comes out of it. At its best, sibling rivalry pushes us to excel and achieve and reach our goals with the incentive of that friendly competition. Of course, it's essential that it be kept at that level.

So, when sibling rivalry flares up between your kids at home, know that it's natural. And to calm things down when things get a little too heated between siblings, go ahead and tap "Anything You Can Do" on your playlist and encourage everyone to join in with this delightfully silly tune:

"Anything you can say
I can say softer.
I can say anything
Softer than you.
No, you can't. (Softly)
Yes, I can. (Softer) No, you can't. (Softer)
Yes, I can. (Softer) No, you can't. (Softer)
Yes, I can. (Softer)
YES, I CAN!" (Full volume)

Brian Kantz can't carry a tune to save his life. At least he still sounds better than his three brothers. Visit Brian online at www.briankantz.com or drop him a note at thenewbiedad@yahoo.com.

PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

How to tell your child she's adopted

Dear Sharon,

We have a 5-year-old daughter who is adopted. We haven't told her, and we have mixed feelings about when — and if — we should. Do you have any advice for us?

Dear parents,

I believe that it is important to create a foundation of trust between a parent and child, so it is usually a good idea to let a child know she is adopted relatively early in her childhood.

As children grow older, questions invariably arise about physical appearance, genetic health risks, and life story details that are important for all children to know. Since adoption is more common and public than it was years ago, it can be easier for parents to find the relaxed and confident tone that is helpful to children as the parents share the information about their child's birth and "arrival home" to them.

There are plenty of opportunities to explain details and answer questions as a child grows, but here are a few things to keep in mind as you begin:

There is not an exact way to tell a child her story, in part because every parent is different and, therefore, frames important discussions in unique ways.

Many 5-year-old children are interested in babies, and how they come into the world. This can be a good starting place to explain that babies grow in a woman's "stomach" and that sometimes a "birth" mother does that part of the process. Depending on the circumstances, parents I know have also explained how the birth mother was happy to make the baby, but couldn't take care of it after it was born and found people who wanted to and were able to be parents when the baby needed a home forever.

Talking to a child about how much she is wanted — and how happy you are to have her — is invariably helpful. Parents I know have described how much time they took to decide to have a baby, how much they wanted to be parents, and how excited they were about meeting their very special little one. Talks such as these are reassuring to all children, but especially to someone who has been adopted.

It is important to remember to find a quiet time and place to have the conversation, so it is not interrupted. It is also important to be patient and to go over one piece of information at a time, giving plenty of space for children to ask questions and for you to respond. A child's reactions and questions are the best way to limit the confusion that can surface when children try to sort through complicated topics such as adoption.

It is also important to make this talk age appropriate. A 5-year-old child will have different thoughts and need different specifics than a 10 year old. Finding children's books about adoption can help explain things in such a way.

Many parents I know have made their own books to explain their adoption stories. Children have often helped, adding pictures and text that they are interested in including. Such activities can help a child understand, review, and participate in her own story. As a birth, step, and adoptive mom, I can personally say that there are wonderfully unique things about each form of being a parent. The love and commitment in each case is no different, and in each case, the life story of the child has been important to share and discuss.

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.

Going Places

LONG-RUNNING

Dinosaur display: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th Street; (212) 769-5000; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am–5:30 pm, $24 ($18 students, $14 children).

Children learn about the largest dinos, the long-tailed sauropods by examining the innovative model.

Tot's time plus: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace; (718) 273-2060; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 am–1 pm, Now – Wed, May 25; Admission plus $5 per child.

Parent and child enjoy activities.

Tutoring: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; Saturdays, 2–4 pm, Now – Sat, May 28; Free.

Children in pre-k through eighth grade get help in math and English from volunteers from Stuyvesant High School. Pre-registration required.

YuGiOh: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; Weekdays, 1 pm, Mon, May 2 – Fri, May 27; Free.

Meet new friends and enjoy card games.

Toddler storytime: Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; Tuesdays, 10:30 am–Noon, Now – Tues, June 21; Free.

A different book and songs each week.

Tree tots and peepers: Greenbelt Nature Center, 700 Rockland Ave. at Brielle Avenue; (718) 351-3450; www.nycgovparks.com; Wednesdays, 9:30 am–noon, Now – Thurs, June 9; $4 ($6 non-members).

Children two years old learn about nature. Pre-registration is required.

Clay day: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Terrace; (718) 273-2060; Wednesdays, 11 am–1 pm, Now – Wed, May 25; Free with admission.

Children work with ceramics.

Life in the 19th Century: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Ave. at Tysen Court; (718) 351-1611; www.historicrichmondtown.org; Wednesdays, 1–5 pm, beginning Wed, May 4; $5 ($4 seniors; $3.50 children 5-17).

A look back through children's objects including safety tips, diet, social skills and hygiene.

Time to hop to it

TV's favorite animated bunny siblings come to life in a brand new show this month.

In "Max and Ruby: Bunny Party," a live-action, theatrical show based on the popular PBS show that comes to the St. George Theatre on May 6, the brother and sister are planning a birthday celebration for a very special, surprise guest. The festivities include finding the perfect present and making over their house, so it's just right.

As always, the two never quite want the same thing, and their plans unavoidably collide — with hilarious results.

This fast-paced production will have the whole audience singing — and hopping — to original tunes.

"Max and Ruby: Bunny Party" at the St. George Theatre [35 Hyatt St. between St. Mark's Place and Central Avenue in St. George, (718) 442-2900], May 6 at 10 am and 6:30 pm. Tickets $15-$25. For info, visit www.stgeorgetheatre.com.

After school club: Historic Richmond Town, Clarke Ave. at Gilbert Street; (718) 351-1611 X 281; reservations@historicrichmondtown.org; www.nycgovparks.org. Wednesdays, 3:30 pm, free (cost of book additional).

Students in grades four through seven read and discuss selected books.

Cooking lessons: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; statenislandkids.org; Friday, May 6, 2 pm; Friday, May 13, 2 pm; Friday, May 20, 2 pm; Friday, May 27, 2 pm; Friday, June 3, 2 pm; Friday, June 10, 2 pm; Friday, June 17, 2 pm; Friday, June 24, 2 pm;

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!

Friday, July 1, 2 pm; Friday, July 8, 2 pm; Friday, July 15, 2 pm; Friday, July 22, 2 pm; Friday, July 29, 2 pm; Free with museum admission (plus $5 egg hunt fee).

Presented by Health Plus Kidz; Children learn the healthy way to eat.

Teen Cafe: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; Monday, May 9, 2:30 pm; Monday, May 16, 2:30 pm; Monday, May 23, 2:30 pm; Monday, June 6, 2:30 pm; Monday, June 13, 2:30 pm; Monday, June 20, 2:30 pm; Free.

Play games on the PS3 and Wii and meet with friends.

THURS, APRIL 28

The Yak Packers: Rubin Museum of Art, 150 West 17 Street, between 6th and 7th avenues; (212) 620-5000 X 344. www.rmanyc.org; 10:30 –11:30 am; $10 child and parent ($5 members).

Children two to four with accompanied by an adult touch, explore and create projects inspired by Himalayan art.

Knitting: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 3–4:30 pm; $6 (one-time material fee).

For beginners of all ages.

Book day: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children of all ages enjoy a day of stories, riddles, songs and a puppet show in Spanish and English. Pre-registration required.

FRI, APRIL 29

Doodlebug Fun: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Am-

Going Places

boy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm; $1 per child.

Children 18 months to four years old with care giver listen to stories, enjoy music and do crafts. Pre-registration required.

SAT, APRIL 30

Run for the Wild 2011: The Bronx Zoo, Bronx River Parkway at Exit 6; www.wcs.runforthewild.org; 8:30 and 8:45 am; $30 registration fee.

Third annual 5K race. This year's race is dedicated to helping save the penguins.

Nature storytime: Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; 10:30 am; Free.

Explorer club: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 2–3:30 pm; Free.

Students six to 12 meet with Clay Wolleny and learn about different topics.

SUN, MAY 1

Yankee Peddler Day: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Ave. at Tysen Court; (718) 351-1611; www.historicrichmondtown.org; 10 am–5 pm; $2 (Children 12 and under free).

Over 150 vendors gather for a flea market, antiques and collectibles. Food and refreshments available.

Archery workshop: Willowbrook Park, Eton Pl. at Richmond Avenue; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 10–11:30 am; Free.

Children eight and up learn the proper way to draw a bow and shoot an arrow. Equipment provided.

Gone fishing: Staten Island Zoo, 614 Broadway at Martling Avenue; (718) 422-3101; www.statenislandzoo.org; 10–11:30 am; Free with zoo admission.

Classes for children six and older providing step by step instructions about everything fish. Pre-registration required. Must provide your own equipment.

May Day: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am–12:30 pm; Free.

Naturalist Cliff Hagen leads a tour through the park to hear the songs of spring.

MON, MAY 2

Read aloud: Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children listen to their favorite books.

Dino-mite exhibition

If your little one is captivated by the television shows "Dinosaur Train" and "Dino Dan," he'll get a big kick out of a new exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History exploring all there is to know about a super-sized group of dinosaurs. This show goes beyond traditional fossil displays to reveal the amazing anatomy of sauropods.

In "The World's Largest Dinosaurs," on view now through Jan. 2, you can explore a life-sized, fleshed-out model of a 60-foot-long, 11-foot-tall female Mamenchisaurus, known for its remarkable 30-foot neck.

The exhibition sheds light on how heart rate, respiration, metabolism, and reproduction are linked to size. An interactive dig site at the end will invite visitors to explore how dinosaurs are discovered in the field. Can you dig it?

"The World's Largest Dinosaurs" at the American Museum of Natural History [Central Park West at 79th Street in Manhattan, (212) 769-5000], now through Jan. 2, 2012. Admission $24 for adults, $18 for students and seniors, and $14 for children. For info, visit amnh.org.

Picture book time: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children listen to their favorite books.

TUES, MAY 3

Toddler storytime: Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; 10:30 am; Free.

Books and sing-alongs for children under five.

WED, MAY 4

Painting class: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children 12 to 18 learn how to paint on silk.

THURS, MAY 5

Books and movies: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children 12 to 18 create a book trailer using music. Materials provided.

FRI, MAY 6

"Max and Ruby: Bunny Party National Tour": St. George Theatre, 35 Hyatt St. between St. Mark's Place and Central Avenue; (718) 442-2900; www.stgeorgetheatre.com; 10 am, 6:30 pm; $25, $18, $15.

Children help the bunny siblings celebrate a very special day.

Toddler time: Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 18 months to 3 years old with parent/caregiver share interactive stories, songs and fingerplay.

Tony 'n Tina's Wedding: Es-Ca's Restaurant, 1559 Richmond Rd. (347) 600-8293; tonyntinastour@yahoo.com; www.tonyntinastour.com; 7:00PM; Tickets range from $30-$125.

Buffet dinner and a show.

SAT, MAY 7

Mother's day celebration: Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; 10:30 am; Free.

Read about special moms.

Los Munequitos de Matanzas: Peter Jay Sharpe Theater, 2537 Broadway at West 95th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org/series/77; 11 am; $15 ($25 adults).

Children three and up enjoy the music of the legendary Cuban group.

Carousel opening day: Willowbrook Park, Eton Place at Morani Street; (718) 667-2165; www.nycgovparks.com; Noon–5 pm; Free ($1.50 carousel rides).

Fun, games and of course you can catch a ride on the painted ponies going up and down and all around.

Teen Environmental Club: New Dorp Beach, Hanger buildings, New Dorp Lane at Miller Field; sim-teenenvironmentalclub.ning.com; 1–4 pm; Free.

For teens 13 to 18 years old.

Cooking lessons: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 2–3:30 pm; material fee depending on ingredients.

Chef and food therapist Jamie Seaman teaches children eight to 12 how to cook healthy dishes. Pre-registration required.

Arts and crafts: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 3 pm; Free.

Make a project for mom. Pre-registration required.

SUN, MAY 8

Mother's day: Staten Island Zoo, 614 Broadway at Martling Avenue; (718) 422-3174; www.statenislandzoo.org; 10 am–4:45 pm; Free with zoo admission.

Two for one admission.

Eco-crafts: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am; Free.

Use natural supplies to create a great gift for mom.

Blooming wonders: Bloomingdale park, Ramona and Lenevar avenues;

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Going Places

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(718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 2 pm; Free.

Discover the different types of flowers that are important to the environment.

Explorer club: 2–3:30 pm. Blue Heron Nature Center. See Saturday, April 30.

MON, MAY 9

Read aloud: 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, May 2.

Picture book time: 4 pm. St. George Library. See Monday, May 2.

"The Emperor of Nihono-Ja": Peter Jay Sharpe Theater, 2537 Broadway at West 95th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org/series/77; 6 pm; $15.

Author John Flanagan reads from the 10th book of the "Ranger's Apprentice" series as Story Pirates perform a scene from the book. For children eight and up.

TUES, MAY 10

Toddler storytime: 10:30 am. Barnes & Noble. See Tuesday, May 3.

Baby story time: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 10:30 am; Free.

Parents and care givers and their babies from birth to 18 months. Pre-registration required.

WED, MAY 11

Manga meeting: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Lane at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 3–4 pm; Free.

Teens 12 to 18 talk about the latest craze.

THURS, MAY 12

Books and movies: 3:30 pm. St. George Library. See Thursday, May 5.

FRI, MAY 13

Doodlebug Fun: 1 pm. Blue Heron Nature Center. See Friday, April 29.

Grief camp: Mount Manresa Jesuit Retreat House, 239 Fingerboard Rd. at Merle Place; (888) 507-4474; sunshine@campgoodgriefsi.org; www.campgoodgriefsi.org; 4 pm; Free.

For teens and children who have lost a sibling and/or parent. Registration required.

"Les Miserables": St. George Theatre, 35 Hyatt St. between St. Mark's Place and Central Avenue; (718) 442-2900; www.stgeorgetheatre.com; 8 pm; $20, $12.

Based on the Victor Hugo novel. Presented by the Susan E. Wagner High School.

SAT, MAY 14

Volunteer day: Staten Island Zoo, 614 Broadway at Martling Avenue; (718) 422-3174; www.statenislandzoo.org; 10 am; Free with zoo admission.

For children 14 and older that want to work in the Children's center for the summer.

Bike riding class: Midland Beach -Parking Lot D, Mapleton Ave. at Hunter Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am–1 pm; Free.

Teach your child the safety rules and how to pedal away. For children five and up. Bring your own helmet and bike.

'Splish, Splash, Splat': Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; 10:30 am; Free.

Read and do a small craft.

Canoeing basics: Wolfe's Pond Park - Comfort Station, Cornelia Ave. at Edith Avenue; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am–2 pm; Free.

Children eight and up explore the beauty of the wetlands.

Grief camp: 4 pm. Mount Manresa Jesuit Retreat House. See Friday, May 13.

SUN, MAY 15

Gone fishing: 10–11:30 am. Staten Island Zoo. See Sunday, May 1.

Changing times: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Ave. at Tysen Court; (718) 354-4530 X 238; www.si350.org; 2 pm; Free.

Discussion on the changing culinary habits of islanders.

Science club: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 2–3:30 pm; Free.

For students eight to 12.

"Les Miserables": 3 pm. St. George Theatre. See Friday, May 13.

Grief camp: 4 pm. Mount Manresa Jesuit Retreat House. See Friday, May 13.

MON, MAY 16

Read aloud: 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, May 2.

Picture book time: 4 pm. St. George Library. See Monday, May 2.

TUES, MAY 17

Toddler storytime: 10:30 am. Barnes & Noble. See Tuesday, May 3.

Baby story time: 10:30 am. St. George Library. See Tuesday, May 10.

SAT, MAY 21

Jr. Science Club: Staten Island Museum, 75 Stuyvesant Pl. corner of Wall Street; (718) 727-1135; www.statenislandmuseum.org; 10 am– noon; $8 ($5 members).

Children eight to 13 test their lunchboxes.

Bike riding class: 10 am–1 pm. Midland Beach -Parking Lot D. See Saturday, May 14.

Storytime: Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; 10:30 am; Free.

Read your favorite Golden Book.

Adopt a soldier day: Staten Island Zoo, 614 Broadway at Martling Avenue; (718) 422-3174; www.statenislandzoo.org; Noon–4 pm; Free with zoo admission.

Celebrate Armed Forces Day by making donations of toiletries, snacks, stationary and recreation items.

Cooking lessons: 2–3:30 pm. Blue Heron Nature Center. See Saturday, May 7.

"The Fab Four": St. George Theatre, 35 Hyatt St. between St. Mark's Place and Central Avenue; (718) 442-2900; www.stgeorgetheatre.com; 8 pm; $40, $30, $20.

Beatles tribute band.

SUN, MAY 22

Beach clean up: Ft. Wadsworth Visitors' Center, USS Tennessee Rd. and Ayers Rd. (718) 354-4500; 10 am–noon; Free.

Join other volunteers in keeping the shore line neat. Bring sunscreen, sturdy footwear and work gloves.

Archery workshop: 10–11:30 am. Willowbrook Park. See Sunday, May 1.

Gone fishing: 10–11:30 am. Staten Island Zoo. See Sunday, May 1.

Conservation day: Staten Island Zoo, 614 Broadway at Martling Avenue; (718) 422-3174; www.statenislandzoo.org; 10:30 am–3:30 pm; Free with zoo admission.

Talks with the zookeeper, face painting, crafts and fun for the whole family.

MON, MAY 23

Read aloud: 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, May 2.

Picture book time: 4 pm. St. George Library. See Monday, May 2.

TUES, MAY 24

Toddler storytime: 10:30 am. Barnes & Noble. See Tuesday, May 3.

Baby story time: 10:30 am. St. George Library. See Tuesday, May 10.

WED, MAY 25

Teen art: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 3–4 pm; Free.

Children 12 to 18 create their own style. Materials provided.

THURS, MAY 26

Writing and crafting: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children six to 12 learn about myths, write their own, and create a creature.

FRI, MAY 27

Baby time: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 10:30 am; Free.

Interactive program featuring movement and rhymes for kids up to age 12 months plus a caregiver.

Doodlebug Fun: 1 pm. Blue Heron Nature Center. See Friday, April 29.

SAT, MAY 28

Memorial day: Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; 10:30 am; Free.

Summer reading kick off.

Sheep shearing: Staten Island Zoo, 614 Broadway at Martling Avenue; (718) 422-3174; www.statenislandzoo.org; 1–4 pm; Free with zoo admission.

Annual "thinning" of the flock.

Family camping: Wolfe's Pond Park - Comfort Station, Cornelia Ave. at Edith Avenue; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 6 pm; Free.

Enjoy s'mores and ghost stories in the woods. Tent and food provided. Bring your own sleeping bags. Pre-registration required by May 18.

SUN, MAY 29

Memorial day: Ft. Wadsworth Visitors' Center, USS Tennessee Rd. and Ayers Rd. (718) 354-4500; 1–2 pm; Free.

Celebrate the anniversary of the founding, May 1, 1865. Reservations suggested.

MON, MAY 30

Memorial Day run: South Beach, Fr. Capodanno Blvd. and Sand Lane; (718) 816-3179; run@siadvance.com; 9 am–5 pm; $20 registration fee.

Four mile run.

Dinosaurs and more: Staten Island Zoo, 614 Broadway; (718) 442-3100; www.statenislandzoo.org; 1:30–3:30 pm; Free with regular admission (donation requested).

Make a clay fossil.

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New & Noteworthy

Graphic goodies

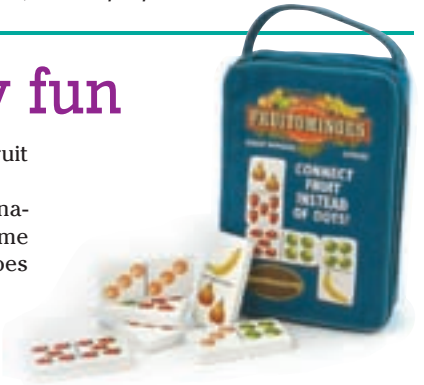
Elizabeth Horton calls her line Nostalgic Graphic Tees. The nostalgia is a funny word — they're shirts for kids, after all — but it works.

Her playful designs include mermaids, cowboys with lassos, baseball players, little scientists with magnifying glasses in hand, boy and girl surfboarders, cheerleaders and gymnasts.

The white silhouettes are contrasted by a vibrant, solid shirt. And the designs are great for the spring and summer months.

Nostalgic Graphic Tee by Elizabeth Horton, $20. For info, visit www.etsy.com/people/elizabethhorton.

Some fruity fun



It's Dominos, but with a fruit twist!

From the makers of Bananagrams comes another fun game with a fruit theme. Fruitominoes is a domino game that connects fruit instead of dots, where you can match apples, oranges, bananas, pears and strawberries.

There are 28 crafted dominoes in a compact pouch, for a colorful — and travel-friendly — update to the classic game.

Fruitominoes, $12.95. For ages five and up. For info, visit www.bananagrams.com.

Duck, duck, duck!

A new edition of a book has us revisiting an old favorite.

"A Duck in New York City" follows the adventures of a little duck from the prairies who dreams of making it big in New York City — on Broadway, of course. The book is also an award-winning CD, featuring songs performed by the writer, Connie Kaldor.

With a new Spanish version of the book, called "Un Pato en Nueva York," coming out this month, a whole new audience can now be introduced to this lovable title — and it also features a CD of Kaldor's fantastic songs.

"Un Pato en Nueva York." For info, visit www.thesecretmountain.com.

Life's a beach

You'll never have to worry about losing a sock again.

With LittleMissMatched, the socks purposely come without a pair. And they also come in bright, colorful, fun designs.

Perfect for the approaching summer is this beach anklet, which is outfitted with bathing suits, sandals and sunglasses. It's everything you need for a day at the beach — right on your socks!

At The Beach Anklet Socks by LittleMissMatched, $9. For info, visit www.littlemissmatched.com.

Batter up!

This book hits a home run.

All your little sluggers out there will want to get their hands on the vibrant new picture book, "Take Me Out to the Ballgame."

It explores baseball's unofficial anthem in all of its lyrics, including heroine Katie Casey, who was "baseball mad" and had "the fever...bad."

It even comes with a recording of the song by none-other-than Carly Simon, so you can do a sing-along after your read-along.

"Take Me Out to the Ballgame," $17.95.

She promises to work hard. **Promise to do your part.**

Through all the homework, projects, and hours of practice, your child gives you her best. All this hard work will pay off when it's time for college. Do your part to help pay for her education by opening a New York 529 College Savings Program *Direct Plan*. With as little as $25, you, family and friends can open and contribute to an account for your child. Contributions can qualify for a generous deduction from New York State taxable income.* Earnings grow tax-deferred, and you pay no state or federal taxes on qualified withdrawals, making a 529 plan one of the most tax-efficient ways to save.** Plus, a rewards service from Upromise® can add to your account. It's so easy — just visit **ny529directplan.com**, and in about ten minutes, you've kept your promise.

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*Up to $10,000 is deductible from New York State taxable income for married couples filing jointly; single residents can deduct up to $5,000 annually. *May be subject to recapture in certain circumstances—rollovers to another state's plan or non-qualified withdrawals.*

**Earnings on non-qualified withdrawals may be subject to federal income tax and a 10% federal penalty tax, as well as state and local income taxes. Tax and other benefits are contingent on meeting other requirements and certain withdrawals are subject to federal, state and local taxes.

Before you invest, consider whether your or the designated beneficiary's home state offers any state tax or other benefits that are only available for investments in such state's qualified tuition program.

The Comptroller of the State of New York and the New York State Higher Education Services Corporation are the Program Administrators and are responsible for implementing and administering the *Direct Plan*. Upromise Investments, Inc. and Upromise Investment Advisors, LLC serve as Program Manager and Recordkeeping and Servicing Agent, respectively, and are responsible for day-to-day operations, including effecting transactions. The Vanguard Group, Inc. serves as the Investment Manager. Vanguard Marketing Corporation markets, distributes and underwrites the *Direct Plan*.

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New York's 529 College Savings Program currently includes two separate 529 plans. The *Direct Plan* is sold directly by the Program. You may also participate in the Advisor Plan, which is sold exclusively through financial advisors and has different investment options and higher fees and expenses as well as financial advisor compensation.

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For more information about New York's 529 College Savings Program *Direct Plan*, obtain a Program Brochure and Tuition Savings Agreement at ny529directplan.com or by calling 1-800-608-8617. This includes investment objectives, risks, charges, expenses, and other information. You should read and consider them carefully before investing.

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