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A close-up photograph of a young boy with freckles and short brown hair. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. In the foreground, a large slice of red watermelon is visible, partially obscuring his lower face.

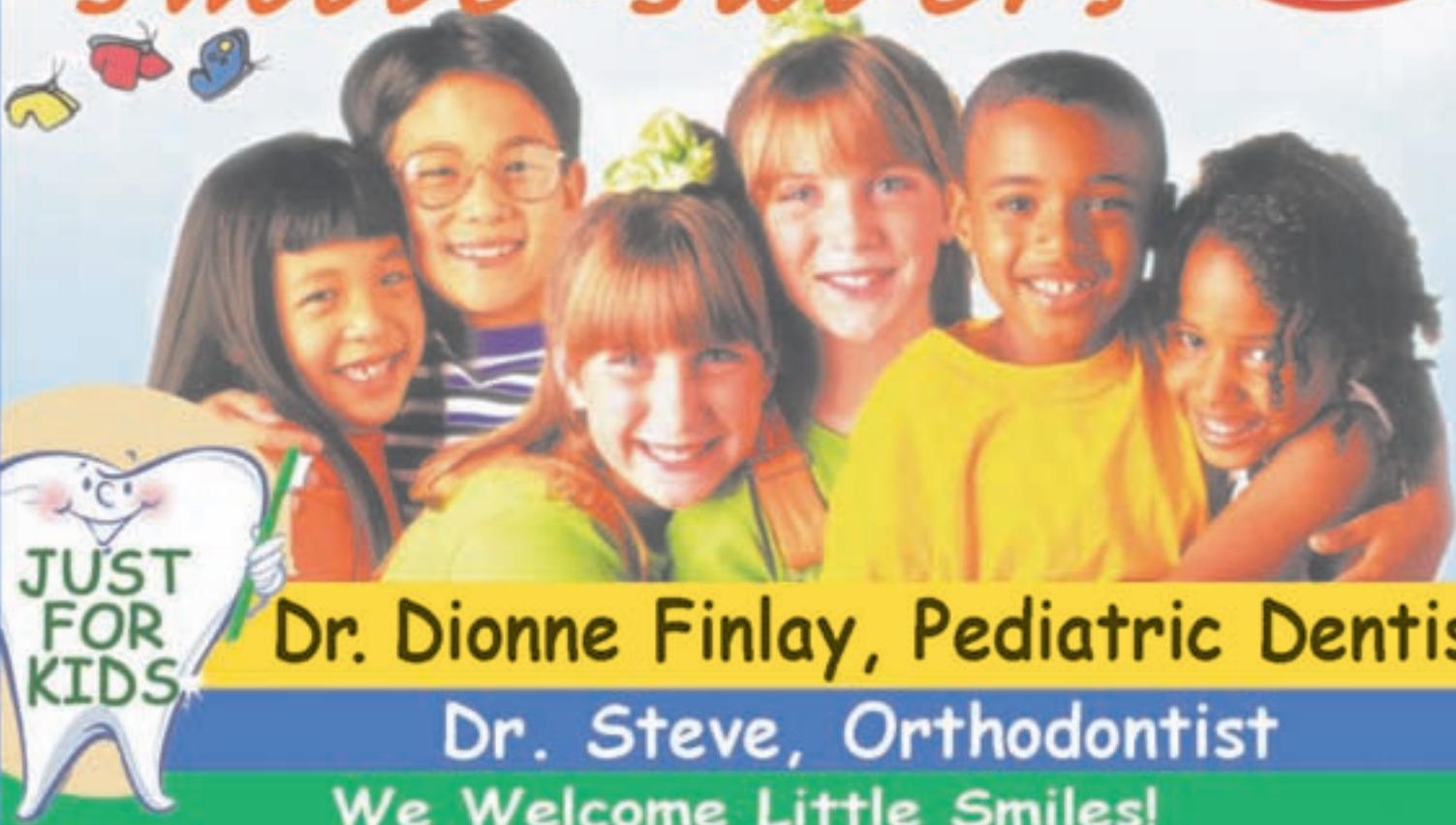
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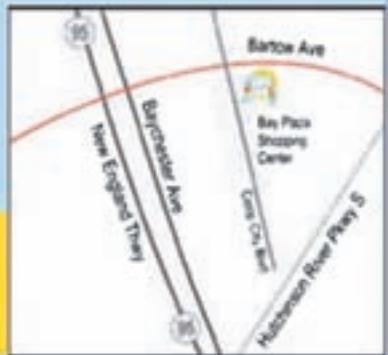
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BRONX

Family July 2010

Letter from the publisher

Here's to health!

The debate goes on about good health and how to keep it. For me, the reality is clear. I believe that eating "real food" is an essential to building the foundation of good health for all members of our families. As a result, I have the utmost concern about the "processing of our food supply" and all the additives, hormones, antibiotics and other means of mass production of food that have made us not only unhealthy, but obese.



We must give credibility to the concept that "we are what we eat", and return to whole foods, leaving behind the manufactured non-foods that populate the aisles of our supermarkets. We have to train our youngsters to eat right and not give in to the mass marketing and past 50 years of the food industry that have fattened up America and shortsighted our good health. We have to read the labels and choose carefully what is real and what is manipulated. We have to stop buying the hype.

The result of new trends in thinking is that a lot of emphasis is being given these days to promoting healthy ways to eat, cook and obtain the right ingredients to make real health happen. Our local writer, Risa Doherty, has contributed an article to this issue focusing on the many greenmarkets and organic food choices becoming more prevalent in every community. The partnership between local farmers and the consumers of our metropolitan area is ongoing and growing.

Proudly we promote this in our magazines and more will be written about this as the months go by. This is a wonderful time of year when a great assortment of fresh fruits and vegetables are readily and deliciously available. Make sure your family gets to enjoy them. Happy cooking and happy eating!

Thanks for reading and have a Happy Fourth of July!


Susan Weiss-Voskidas, Publisher



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Mind your Ps & Qs

Bronx woman
on mission
to teach
children good
manners

BY TIZIANA RINALDI

What time is it?" Barbara Gibson-La Grant pointedly asked her students. "It's manners time!" answered the cheerful group that has been faithfully attending Gibson-La Grant's workshops on social graces.

Ms. G, as she is affectionately called in her Northwest Bronx community, is known for her conviction that good manners are forever — a very serious topic that should be taught to children on a regular basis. Her passion has long fueled a tireless

honed that knowledge by refining her education and pursuing independent research to develop tools and curricula that she has taken to community centers and after-school programs in the Bronx, Harlem and other parts of New York City.

"I tell my students that kings and queens train their children, Puff Daddy and Donald Trump train [their] kids, and I train [them] because [they] are little kings and queens," said Gibson-La Grant, who believes that this type of grooming is critical to social upward mobility. The Williamsbridge branch of the NAACP recently honored her for her decades of community involvement and her extensive work in support of Bronx children.

Explaining that manners — saying "please" and "thank you" — are considered social skills, while rules of etiquette — knowing how to use your napkin at the table — are life skills, Gibson-La Grant feels that what modern children need the most is to understand basic instructions. That is, of course, beside avoiding all-time no-no's such as cursing, chewing with their mouths open or not offering their seat to an elderly person on the train.

"I teach my students that we must respect words," she said. "When someone tells you to stop, you must stop, because it can save your life."

Children must be taught to listen, she emphasized, so they can promptly correct their behavior. The community teacher has developed several props, including two pillows in the shape of an M, for "manners," and an E, for "etiquette," a board game and a rap song called "Come on crew we have a job to do," to get her point across.

On the other end of the spectrum, another powerful word often forgotten by today's youth is "yes."

"Many say 'yeah,'" pointed out Gibson-La Grant, who has plenty of field experience not only as a teacher, but also as the mother of five and the grandmother of seven.

"I [emphasize] not to use their head or their shoulders, but to use the word 'yes.'" Should the habit per-

sist, it may make a difference on a job interview down the line, she warned.

Students practice manners or etiquette rules during sessions where they are either educated about a chosen topic, or polish their behavior using mishaps that come up during class interaction. After all, "[people] make mistakes as [they] are together," said Gibson-La Grant, and her students seem to take well to that.

"I think that children need more manners," 9-year-old Jada Brown said candidly. The girl, who attends PS 41, is a regular at Gibson-La Grant's classes. "Some walk down the block saying words that aren't in the vocabulary, like 'ain't,' or 'yeah.' They [sound] like they have no home training!"

"A lot of my friends curse, scream at each other, and it is not appropriate for anybody," said Amber Dropp, a middle school student who travels to Gibson-La Grant's classes from Co-op City. She likes to learn about manners and etiquette because, she says, it will help her "go places in life."

Media, such as rap music, doesn't help matters.

"People like to hear nasty sayings and words," said Gibson-La Grant. She wants to tap into children's love of media by releasing an educational video on manners and etiquette, in collaboration with her students and MS 142, the Philip Sousa middle school, where she frequently offers her programs.

Aside from her classes, keeping up the lessons learned is key. Gibson-La Grant, who also trains adults for free, said parents must reinforce their children's good manners at home.

"Those who know the rules of [proper conduct] should reinforce them with their children, and for those who don't, find out the answers, so when your children go out they will represent you well," she said.

Barbara Gibson-La Grant workshops: (718) 881-3809.

"Manners on Etiquette" community workshop [Gun Hill Playground, Magenta Street and Holland Avenue, at the end of July. Call for exact date, not available at press time (646) 765-8816].



advocacy for the cause of polite and respectful kids.

"Our children are not using manners and etiquette as often as they should," said Gibson-La Grant, a retired community coordinator for NYCHA whose free manners and etiquette courses are designed to enrich the lives of less privileged kids, particularly ages six to 16.

Gibson-La Grant said the practice of manners and etiquette was instilled in her by a mother who wanted "well-raised New Yorkers." Later in life she



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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Too tired to cook?

Finding time for parents to cook healthy meals

Too crazed to eat right? Face it. If you're a parent, you're busy. There may be days so jam-packed with everything you need to accomplish, that your well-intentioned healthy diet takes a hit. Big time. Those hoped-for nutritious meals are often replaced by meals you'd be embarrassed to show your in-laws. Or you're eating out — again.

"The challenge is great for most working parents to put a meal on the table, much less a healthy meal, even with the best of intentions," says Dallas-based registered dietitian and culinary expert Robin Plotkin. The number one reason she hears is "no time," which she says translates into "lack of planning."

Other excuses include:

- Too tired
- Overscheduled children
- Lack of cooking skills
- Don't enjoy cooking

Although health and nutrition may be important to you, convenience often wins. Surveys show even though fewer people are eating out during this recession, they're not necessarily cooking at home more. Instead, they're bringing in prepared food and warming it in their microwave ovens. What's the problem with this? Total strangers are preparing much of our food, and we lose

Q: How important are snacks in my child's diet?

A: Active children need to adequately fuel their bodies and a good way to supplement their meals is by supplying them with nutritious snacks. Try offering your child "good stuff" like fruit and veggies with dip, yogurt, smoothies, cheese, oatmeal cookies, as well as popcorn and nuts (if age-appropriate).

the control of the ingredients used and its nutritional value.

A Cornell University study last fall found that being employed can result in unhealthy eating habits. Lead researcher Carol Devine found that long hours and shift work were associated with mothers and fathers depending on mealtime coping strategies. Fathers tended to skip family meals, eat while working, or feed their families take-out meals. Mothers were more likely to skip breakfast and buy restaurant or prepared entrees instead of cooking. Overeating after a missed meal and eating in the car were two additional strategies.

Watching your weight? Late last year, a study found that well-educated women too busy to focus on food, as well as guilt-ridden dieters and impulsive eaters, are the most likely to show signs of obesity. Enough said.

Plotkin, who is a mother of one, provides some simple tips for busy parents to put a nourishing, yet inexpensive meal on the table for their families:

1. Take 15 minutes on a Sunday and plan at least three or four meals for the family. Make the shopping list and hit the store.

2. Stock up on proteins that can be frozen for use throughout the week. Pick simple veggies and starches to round out the meal.

3. Prepare fresh produce as soon as you bring it home. Wash, chop



and store properly for easy access.

4. Prepare in bulk. For example, if you are cooking chicken breasts on the grill tonight, throw on two, four, or eight more. Freeze and store for later in the week as the main ingredient for chicken salads, chicken pizza, and chicken and pasta. While the grill is on, grill extra veggies. Freeze and store. They're great for toppings on pizza, added to pastas, tossed into salads and veggie fajitas.

5. Dig out the slow cooker. It can be your best friend all year round.

Juggling work and family life can challenge even the most nutritionally-aware parents to provide healthful meals to their families and themselves. By investing a little time and effort, your family will eat better now and enjoy health benefits in the future.

Christine M. Palumbo, MBA, RD is a mother of three from Naperville, Illinois. She is an adjunct faculty member of Benedictine University. She swears by meal planning and keeping her pantry stocked with staples for those busier-than-normal days. She can be reached at 630-369-8495 or ChristinePalumbo.com.

Shredded Chicken and Avocado Pizza

INGREDIENTS

1 12-inch Boboli ready-made pizza crust
1/2 cup pizza sauce
1/4 teaspoon chipotle Tabasco
1 cup cooked shredded chicken
3/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
1 fully ripened avocado from Mexico, halved pitted, peeled and sliced

INSTRUCTIONS: Heat oven to 425°F. Place pizza crust on a baking sheet; bake crust 7 minutes.

In small bowl, combine pizza sauce and Tabasco.

Spread pizza with sauce; top with chicken, avocado and cheese.

Bake until crust is crisp on the bottom, 4 to 6 minutes longer.

Serves 4.

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Parade provides unity for Bronx African families

African United Day offers glimpse into culture for others

BY TIZIANA RINALDI

In a city of neighborhoods, the Bronx has always been a place of new beginnings. African families who have chosen it as their new home are no different than other immigrants before them.

To celebrate the African heritage and traditions, with the hope to spread joy and attract opportunity, the fourth-annual African United Day Parade and Festival will be held July 18 at Claremont Park.

The event is organized by the African People Alliance, an umbrella organization of 22 African countries, established in 2006 to bring unity, services and a voice to the African diaspora.

"Our community is growing, but with no foundation, no focus," said Djounedou Titikpina, president and founder of the Alliance, who arrived in the Bronx in 1999.

Because they work long hours — sometimes at multiple jobs, which help them provide for families here and back home, and have to deal with the legal hurdles of — immigration, some feel drained and alone, he said.

"They don't live, they survive," Titikpina said with concern and sadness. Africans are very talented, hard working and family-oriented people, he added, but when it comes to breaking out of their condition and surroundings "they can be very shy."

The parade ties them together and brings awareness to their culture, values and traditions. The event will feature African music, food and art for all ages, as well as a fashion show, dance performance, poetry and spoken word presentations.

"It's a day of rejoicing," said Titikpina, "when our people can share pride in their heritage and reconnect with their identity."

His hope for this year's parade is that more American families will reach out to their African counterparts.

"If they cross that bridge, [Americans] will be amazed. They will make friends that they will never regret!"

African newcomers, mostly hailing from the western region of the continent, reached a head count of 38,555 of all Bronx foreign-born, as per population estimates from the 2006-08 American Community Survey. This is a significant jump from 25,747 in 2000, according to data from the Bronx Data Center at Lehman College.

Like any other emerging group in this country's history, making the transition in America can be a daunting task.

"What they need most, is peace of mind," Titikpina said.

A native of Togo, where he operated a cultural exchange program with Canada, Titikpina ran a garment designer business — a trade he continues in the Bronx — and helped introduce programs to support family planning and literacy. Titikpina knows the hardship of growing new roots. Giving a hand to another is high on his list of putting people on the path of developing productive, vibrant lives.

"[Families] go to work, to school, send money back home, but they feel isolated," he said.

Thus, after gaining recognition in 2006 for advocating immigration reform on behalf of the African

The event will feature African music, food and art for all ages.

community, he decided to create a strong network of support designed to boost hope and foster a sense of belonging, while providing action and real services.

"We've helped at least 10 people get a green card," said Titikpina with pride. His organization offers legal, health, employment and ESL assistance.

The parade is the cultural aspect of the Alliance's outreach to the community, and a chance for all Africans to be looked at with new eyes.

"It's a day when all New Yorkers can embrace different African countries, foods and learn about our traditions," said Zainabu Sesay-Harrell, a native of Sierra Leon who grew up in New York, but maintains strong ties to Africa. "They can see what the African community has to offer."

Sesay-Harrell, founder of the Sierra Leon Nurses Association, travels often to Africa with her two young children and husband, and is very proud of her cross-cultural African and American upbringing.

"There are so many [African] countries represented in the Bronx alone. All kinds of restaurants, clothing stores, cultural centers and events," she said, emphasizing the richness of traditions and opportunities for human exchange that are worth exploring.

The African United Day Parade and Festival will be held at Claremont Park in the area between the Grand Concourse and Webster Ave., Mount Eden Ave. and 170th St., July 18 from 11 am to 8 pm. For info, email africanpeople-alliance@yahoo.com



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Remember: you are what you eat

In a confusing food culture, why bother 'going green'?



BY RISA C. DOHERTY

Will your child still be eating chicken nuggets, pizza and bagels by the time she gets to college? Are you concerned about your child's diet now and are looking to do something about it?

Childhood obesity is a serious problem in our country. Whether or not your child is currently obese, most parents would like to give their children the best and set them on the road to a healthy lifestyle. Parents can shape their children's palates for the rest of their lives.

The reason so many don't is simple — it seems so inconvenient and more expensive. And, if you are anything like me, you might think, "Why bother?" That was my attitude; I was a "Doubting Thomas." When Melissa, my then pre-teen daughter, asked me to buy organic foods, I thought it was a waste of money, but I indulged her. To my surprise, the apples were meatier, the carrots tasted better, and so did the milk.

When I was growing up, I thought vegetables grew in the freezer, but I also knew that an assortment of fruit and vegetables came in cans. They were mostly tasteless, or in the case of fruit, covered in sweet, sugary syrup. We did have Red Delicious apples, carrots, melon, bananas and occasionally some other fresh vegetables or berries in the summer, but I was just not interested.

Kids growing up today in New York City have a disconnect as to where the food on their plates originates, according to Michael Hurwitz, Director of the Greenmarket Program at GrowNYC. GrowNYC offers programs to educate children with respect to nutrition, as well as growing practices, through

interactive experiences. Even adults are often unaware of the incredible diversity of products and the hundreds of varieties available at farmer's markets. Your child can taste many varieties of a fruit or a vegetable and will either find a new favorite, or learn to eat something that she did not think she'd ever like, as different varieties of the same item tend to have differing flavors. Given more choices, children can select the variety that most appeals to their palate.

When children visit a farmer's market for the first time, the rich colors and flavors of such a vast array of incredibly fresh produce astonish most kids and they really have fun. A knowledgeable staff teaches the children how the food is raised and how to make the best use of it.

These days we are all in a hurry and have gotten used to the convenience of pre-packaged and fast food that is so readily available. But these foods are laden with hidden calories and invariably higher in sugar, salt and fat, explains Ellen Walk, a registered dietitian at Jacobi Medical Center. Even when we are trying "to be good" and eat healthy, we buy 100-calorie packages of snack food, pre-cut fruit in containers and pre-cut salad in bags. Of course, these are not the worst choices we can make, and yet, surprisingly, they are also not the healthiest. The pre-cut salad greens may have been washed with chemicals to keep them looking fresh. Even the fruit that may have been cut at your local market cannot be as fresh without its natural covering or rind, and often sits in the store for days. According to Walk, this is not the freshest or healthiest way to eat.

However, food purchased at the farmer's market is "nutritionally ma-

ture, sold within 18 to 20 hours of being harvested," explains Hurwitz. It's also better for you. Hurwitz says "there is no better value," referring not only to the reasonable prices, but to the longer shelf life associated with the produce from the farmer's market.

As consumers, we now have more information than ever before on food labels and even calorie and ingredient composition at some restaurants and fast food establishments. And yet, we gravitate to whatever seems quick and easy.

Walk reminds us that fast foods are fast in more than one way — they are readily available and they are eaten fast. Fast food requires very little chewing, unlike, for example, an apple. So, not only are fast foods unhealthy because of their content, but we are often guilty of mindlessly consuming them. Consequently, we eat more than we should.

Walk says that when children, like Melissa, ask to eat healthy, they are exhibiting a respect for food and pride in what they put in their body, and parents should be responsive.

Still, there is more to eating healthy than eating organic produce. According to Hurwitz, by purchasing produce at a farmer's market we are addressing three separate health concerns — personal, community and environmental. Personal health involves eating the freshest fruits and vegetables, as part of a balanced diet. Farmlands are often replaced by housing developments, and not vice versa, and by community health, we are demonstrating the virtue of building a local economy. For him, environmental health includes not only the smaller carbon footprint to which "locavores" (people who eat locally raised food and produce) as-



pire, but biodiversity in growing, to keep the land healthy and fertile. Produce from foreign markets is often treated with chemical preservatives, and, as Walk indicated, may come from countries which do not have the same standards and regulations with respect to pesticides. GrowNYC farmers work to preserve the water shed, evidencing a true sense of responsibility with the ecological community

and protecting NYC water, explains Hurwitz. He says that their farmers limit chemical use and do not "blanket spray" their fields. Part of the mission of GrowNYC is to educate "the next generation of stewards [environmental leaders]."

This month, check out the wide selection of apples, tomatoes, Kirby cucumbers, zucchini blossoms, squash, cherries, scallions, spinach,

kale, lettuce, peaches, sweet peppers, raspberries, blueberries, melons, cabbage and cauliflower.

Walk was eager to note that the healthier, local, organic foods taste better and can be prepared simply. It can be easier and healthier to cook with just a touch of seasoning to bring out the the fresh flavor, without adding heavy sauces or using complicated recipes. She recommends

roasting vegetables in the oven with a little bit of salt and olive oil. Finger foods can include fresh carrots, green beans, celery and sliced apple.

Today "going green" is more accessible than you think. To find a farmer's market near you in the five boroughs, or on Long Island, go to www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/CommunityFarmersMarkets.asp. to learn about Greenmarkets, their locations, and even request one in your neighborhood.

In addition, more and more people are becoming more participatory in the going green movement and are joining "CSAs" (Community Supported Agriculture groups). There is The Garden of Eve in Carroll Gardens, the Chelsea CSA, Biophilia Organic Farm in Jamestown, NY, and the Long Island City CSA. Check out www.localharvest.org. for a more complete listing and information. When you buy shares for a season in a CSA, you have an opportunity to visit the farm it is affiliated with and can agree to work for a set number of hours on the farm. When kids go to the farm and put their hands in the dirt, they create a personal relationship with the earth. It becomes more than just a fun outing and they may have a more positive relationship with food as they grow up.

You may instead opt to join a food co-op, like the Park Slope Food Coop, which boasts 14,000 members. Queens will get its first food co-op in the Fall of 2011. Go to www.queensharvestcoop.com or visit them on Facebook. Core group members at food co-ops and CSAs often get discounts.

You can also check out the Greenfest in Mattituck, Long Island, on July 24 and 25 by going to www.eastendgreenfest.com or calling (631) 734-5894.

Don't do it just because it is politically correct right now. Your job as a parent is to open doors for your child. If you don't want to commit to a CSA or food co-op, start by just eating some organic, locally grown produce and make a few healthier meals each week. See how your family reacts. Fresh does taste better and you may be surprised when your children's palates become accustomed to fresher, healthier food, and they scoff at frozen and canned produce.

Risa C. Doherty is an attorney and freelance writer.

When the diet hits a wall

New struggles as I get closer to my weight-loss goal

BY KATHY SENA

Plateau" is a lovely word that dieters despise. After four months of following a weight-loss plan, I have to admit that I've hit the wall. My motivation isn't as strong as it was when I started, and I need a boost.

The bad news? I lost only 1.2 pounds this month. The good news? I went on vacation and didn't gain weight overall for the month. I'm sure I gained some the week I was gone, but I was able to stick to my plan the rest of the month for a net loss — but just by the skin of my teeth!

But, how could I not with all those restaurant meals? I wasn't able to just do Raisin Bran, banana and skim milk every morning when there were ranchero omelets to be had. And not every dinner was fish and steamed veggies. (Does veggie pizza count? At least I skipped the pepperoni!)

And, isn't it maddening how one over-the-top restaurant meal seems to be enough to set you on your heels? I can be "good" for many meals in a row, but one night out with too much fat and salt and it really sets me back. (Just multiply that on vacation...)

Fortunately, a friend told me she liked this column because I took a share-the-warts-and-all approach to my weight-loss experience. "Other women can relate to your ups and downs," she said, knowing that some weeks would be easier than others. "So you need to blog about your weight gains as well as losses."

OK, enough of the pity party. Time to get back on the horse. I'm going to walk more this month, drink more water and pay more attention to registered dietitian and Food Network star Ellie Krieger's "usually," "sometimes" and "rarely" food lists. I know that one night's garlic bread-and-pasta fest isn't going to put me — permanently, at least — on the road to ruin. Also, I'm back to keeping my food diary.

Here's my weight loss so far:

- Weigh-in number one: **147.0 (my starting weight)**
- Weigh-in number two: **144.6 (lost 2 pounds total)**
- Weigh-in number three: **139.0 (lost 8 pounds total)**
- Weigh-in number four: **135.6 (lost 11.4 pounds total)**
- Weigh-in number five: **134.4 (lost 12.6 pounds total)**

Looking at the big picture, I'm really happy with how this is going. I've lost 12.6 pounds and I've gone from a size 12 to a size 10. Would I like to be a six? Sure! But I wasn't even a size six in high school, so a number of years and a baby later, I'm guessing that's not in the cards.

But, a size eight? Bring it on! That's a goal I can reasonably work toward, and a size I can expect to maintain if I stay vigilant over the long haul. And, let's get real: That's the true challenge, as we all know, to keep up the healthy eating and workouts as time goes on — even through plateaus like the one I'm on now.

Fortunately, Krieger, author of "Small Changes, Big Results," has worked with many clients who have felt the same pressure regarding maintenance as they started to get close to their goal weight. And they weren't any more perfect at this than you and I are.

Here are Krieger's suggestions for dealing with these fears — and com-



WEIGHING IN

Part 5 of a series

ing up with a plan to handle those inevitable relapses:

- Remember that you don't need to be perfect. Did you indulge a bit too much on vacation? Get back on your plan again when you get home. Did work deadlines keep you from

exercising last week? Start again this week.

- Keep stress at bay. If you're feeling whipped by stress (and if it's sending you to the fridge a bit too often) do some yoga, meditation, stretching or deep-breathing exercises. Stress can make any of us overeat. Concentrate on slowing down and getting back to eating mindfully.

- Cut yourself some slack. Don't beat yourself up when you fall off the wagon. What purpose does that serve? Just get back on track and move on.

- Look at your life. If you're slipping back into old habits, ask yourself what's going on in your life to derail your progress — is it work? Family? Try to figure out why you are struggling.

- Make a new plan — and stick with it. Deciding, "I'll walk for 10 minutes tonight after work" beats doing nothing. Tomorrow, make it 20. Before you know it, you'll be back on track.

PS: I recently found this photo of myself when I was a kid, happily messing around on the swing set in our backyard. It made me realize that I once viewed being active as something fun, not a chore on a to-do list. I'm going to put that photo on the fridge to remind myself that it still can be fun!

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



Kathy as an active kid.

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FAMILY HEALTH

BY RAJAN SENGUTTUVEAN, MD
and MAGDA MENDEZ, MD
Lincoln Medical and Mental
Health Center

Summer safety tips

The summer months are for fun and play time; children across the nation are happy. Schools are closed and long vacations are beginning. Parents are upbeat and they want to experience joyful moments in the summer sun, too. Let us share tips to make this summer pleasurable and safe for your family.

Our goal is to remind parents of basic safety information that allows them the freedom to have a good time instead of spending some of these long-anticipated summer days in the hospital with their children.

The usage of sunscreen lotions should be kept to a minimum with infants and young children. They need to wear long pants and long sleeve shirts. For older children, the first line of defense is to cover exposed skin, preferably with cotton clothing and a hat. Use sunglasses to protect their eyes. Select a sunscreen that is SPF 15 or greater. Apply it 30 minutes prior to going out and reapply it every two hours.

It is important to limit outside activities to 15 minutes when the heat and humidity are very high. Children need to take breaks while exercising to avoid heat stress. The intensity and duration of exercise can be limited initially and then gradually increased. Children should drink plenty of water before any prolonged activity begins. Make sure they keep drinking it every 20 minutes. Select clothing that is lightweight and reflects the light.

The first step to keeping your kids safe while swimming is adult supervision. Make sure your child has flotation devices appropriate to his or her age. Teach them not to swallow pool water and practice good hygiene. If any children or adults have diarrhea, we recommend that they stay out of the water.

Everyone needs to take a shower before swimming and they need to wash their hands after using the bathroom. With young kids, it is important to take them on regular bathroom breaks to change diapers and wash them thoroughly with water and soap before stepping into the pool again. Moms, when you are washing your hands after changing



the baby's diaper, use this as an opportunity to remind children to always wash their hands after using the bathroom.

A summer camp, whether it is a local day camp or a sleep away camp, can be a great way to keep children occupied over the summer. As much fun as a summer camp can be, we recommend parents not over schedule their children's daily activities. It may seem like a great idea to take children from one camp to another, but it is important to allow free play. Free play helps a healthy brain develop and allows children

to use their creativity and develop their imagination, as well as developing other strengths.

Remind adolescents to speak with you first before venturing out. Remind them not to go to malls, movies, parks, or video arcades alone. If they feel lost, remind them not to panic and to identify a safe place where they can go and find help. Safe helpers could be a uniformed law-enforcement or security officer, a store salesperson with a nametag or a mother with children. Remind them to check in with you regularly.

Enjoy your summer the safe way!

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Photos: Aaron Epstein

When mom power plugs into the Web

Social media is creating a digital back fence for today's moms

BY KATHY SENA

When U.S. Air flight 1549 landed in the Hudson River, Gwen Poth wanted to be glued to the TV. "We live in Charlotte, North Carolina (where the plane was originally headed) and I knew there was a good chance we knew people on the plane — and it ended up that we did," she says. "But I didn't want to risk my 3- and 4-year olds seeing the plane on TV."

So she did what many moms are doing these days: She turned to Twitter (www.twitter.com), where she could follow the story, find news links and see the amazing photo of the passengers on the plane's wing. Through Twitter (as opposed to just going to an online news site), Poth was able to be in the virtual company of other moms as the whole country held its breath, waiting to learn the fate of the passengers — while she was also at home with her preschoolers.

"It's something I'm surprised people don't talk about more — the value of Twitter to moms who are very tied to the house because of their children, but who want to still keep up on current events without scaring their kids with newscasts,"

says Poth.

If you're not already tweeting away, you're probably wondering — what exactly is Twitter? It's a free social-networking and micro-blogging service that allows users to send and read other users' updates, known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters.

The digital back fence

Blogs, Facebook, Twitter — there are many ways for moms to connect these days that weren't even around when today's middle schoolers were born. (Boy, could I have used Twitter back then! Probably would have shared way too many adorable baby pics on Facebook, too.)

"Social media is raising the back fence for moms once again by giving them a place to commiserate, kvetch and compare notes — virtually," says Jen Singer, creator of MommaSaid.net, and author of "Stop Second Guessing Yourself — The Toddler Years" (HCI, 2009). The two-way nature of social media "combines the camaraderie of the local playground with the practicality of the community parenting class — minus the carpool," she adds.

Sometimes moms turn to social

media to help their children — and in the process they help a lot of other families, too. Boston-area mom Jennifer B., who has two kids ages 8 and 5, started her blogs, Free to Enjoy Baseball — Peanut-Free and More (www.peanutfreebaseball.com) and Food Allergy Buzz (www.foodallergybuzz.com), because her youngest child is allergic to peanuts. She also co-founded the Facebook group You Don't Need Nuts to Fly with another food-allergy mom blogger.

On her blog, A Deaf Mom Shares Her World (deafmomworld.com), Karen Putz, a mom of three deaf and hard-of-hearing kids, has made friends all over the world, and has helped educate other parents about issues such as hearing-aid insurance coverage and coming out of what she calls the "deaf/hard-of-hearing closet."

There's a lot of trust that builds among moms on social media as the tweets fly, communities spring up around popular blogs and Facebook keeps us not only involved in favorite causes, but in touch with other moms at times when we may be struggling to work (or these days, perhaps, to find a job), keep hearth and home together and have some family time.

Kindred spirits — most of the time

Of course, it's not all hearts, flowers and mom bloggers sitting around singing "Kumbaya" by a virtual campfire. Why, you may be wondering, does Jennifer B. keep mum about her last name, both

here and online? She has received nasty comments from some moms who say she's raising her peanut-allergic child in a bubble and that she should just "give him peanuts and see what happens."

"I'm just amazed at how emotional

Moms go green with social media

San Pedro, California mom Jennifer Taggart is passionate about green and non-toxic issues, particularly when they relate to kids. The mother of a 6-year-old son and a 4-year-old daughter blogs at The Smart Mama (www.thesmartmama.com).

"I'm a founding member of the Green Moms Carnival, a group of

amazing green-blogging women," says Taggart. "Once a month, we have a topic-specific blogging day, where we unite our voices to focus on a particular subject," she adds. "We are also active on Twitter as a group and won the Shorty Award for best green content."

Among other things, Taggart

and her fellow mom bloggers have brought their voices together to demand BPA-free products and to get a children's clothing manufacturer to respond to moms' concerns about the issue of skin burns caused by tagless tags.

Want to learn more? Visit healthyygreenmoms.com/blog.

people can get in a discussion with a total stranger on the internet," Jennifer says. If you've ever followed the sometimes-heated comments following a controversial blog post (on either side of the issue) on home schooling, breastfeeding or childhood vaccinations, you know what she means.

Moms on social media definitely will let you know when they disagree with you — sometimes in large numbers. When Facebook recently tried to ban the posting of breastfeeding photos, several moms from the U.S., England and Australia teamed up to create a Facebook group: Hey Facebook, Breastfeeding is Not Obscene! Apparently its more than 225,000 members agree.

Social-media moms demand change, find lost shoes — and even try wine tasting

It's amazing how social media has grown in so many unexpected directions. "TwitterMoms (www.twittermoms.com) are a powerful bunch," says Megan Calhoun, founder of this social-networking site where moms come together to connect on a wide range of topics and to share their expertise.

"TwitterMoms organized a petition (containing 12,853 signatures) to get Chris Brown removed from the Kid's Choice Awards and were successful," Calhoun adds. (Brown was charged with two felony counts of assault and making criminal threats following his alleged altercation with girlfriend Rihanna on the eve of this year's Grammy Awards.) After the petition was created, "Chris withdrew his name from the nominations," she says.

Wine Tasting on Twitter? Why not? (I will admit to a bit of confusion, at first, as to how this would actually work.) The Twitter Wine Moms (twittermoms.ning.com/group/twitterwinemoms) on TwitterMoms select a reasonably priced bottle of wine that everyone cracks open at the same time. Members' tasting notes — and lots of other fun comments — are then shared on Twitter. The group



has nearly 400 members so far. That's some virtual girls' night out! (And no babysitter required.)

Some of the best uses of social media are local, however. "I subscribe to a Yahoo! group called Hoboken Moms," says Rosemary Ostmann, the mom of a 20-month-old daughter from Hoboken, New Jersey. "While our town is just one square mile, there are 2,500 moms actively posting about everything from breastfeeding and potty training to a lost shoe and stroller-friendly restaurants," she adds. "There are usually about 2,000 messages posted each month."

Designed to fit your day

One of the best things about social media is that it works around a mom's crazy schedule. Up with the baby at 2 am? It might be too late to phone a friend, but there's always another mom to chat with on Twit-

ter. Home with a sick preschooler — and not feeling so hot yourself? Pop on over to Facebook for a little pity-party status update. Wondering if anyone else ever wanted to ship her 'tude-laden 'tween to Siberia? Come on over to my blog, Parent Talk Today (www.parenttalktoday.com), and you'll know you're not alone.

Jen Singer probably sums it up best for many of the Twittering, blogging, Facebook-loving moms out there: "Social media makes it easy to find and keep up with like-minded moms," she says. "Best of all, nobody sees the grape jelly on your sleeve!"

Kathy Sena is a mom, a blogger (www.parenttalktoday.com) and a freelance journalist who frequently covers parenting and social-media topics. Follow her on Twitter at @kathysena. She also covers consumer issues of interest to moms for Consumer Reports on Twitter at @CReporter.

Moms on social media definitely will let you know when they disagree with you — sometimes in large numbers.



PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

Explaining healthy eating to children



Dear Mom,

Confusing messages about food are everywhere. Many people, including Michelle Obama, are trying to change some of these messages, but change often comes more slowly than we would like.

Generally, I think it is important for parents to be as clear as possible about what they think should happen in their home. Since our environment is full of processed foods that many children like, our little ones often get upset with our requests for healthier choices.

Parents set guidelines and limits on many issues. When convincing a child to agree to something difficult to do (avoiding processed food is difficult for most children) it is useful for parents to be sympathetic to the difficulty, ready for the possible complaints that ensue and most im-

portantly, clear, calm and relatively brief in their explanation.

Getting input from your children about foods they might enjoy can also be helpful so that conversations don't become power battles, which usually don't end well, between adult and child. A child might want to make a list of things he particularly likes to eat, select some items at the grocery store or be given some leeway about food on special occasions. All of these things can help reduce tension.

It can also be good to have someone outside of the immediate family offer perspective if things at home get repeatedly argumentative. A trusted pediatrician, relative or babysitter can sometimes play a helpful role. As with many parental decisions, there will often be mothers or fathers who think differently. That, of course, is annoying, but to be expected, especially if your thoughts are different than those of the families around you. In your case, an adult's personal reaction was shared with your child. That makes things

Dear Sharon,

I want my kids to be healthy and I am determined to beat the "peer and social pressure" of eating processed foods. Can you advise a parent, like me, how I can convince my children to follow our good eating program (not boring but fresh and real food)? A parent of my son's friend told my son that we were "depriving" our kids of trips to McDonald's, etc., which really annoyed me.

particularly complicated. Many parents I know who have been in similar situations have offered this simple but usually effective explanation: "Our family is different than others and that is OK."

I think one key to having "limit setting" conversations go well, is the strength of a parent's relationship with her child. If there is already a communicative and loving relationship between parent and child, then a conversation about diet is likely to go relatively smoothly.

If a parent and child argue often, then decisions about diet will be harder to put in place. I often tell parents to spend some time enjoying their children before tackling difficult topics such as food choices. It is usually much easier for parents to successfully help their children when they are feeling relaxed and pleased with them.

Setting healthy eating patterns in a family is usually not easy for children or adults, but I believe it can be done thoughtfully over time and can work well for everyone.

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

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

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GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS



Bully-proofing your child this summer

The end of the past school year was marred by several high profile suicides that seem to have been caused by online bullying. At the time, school officials were criticized because they hadn't taken action to stop the harassment. During the summer, when school is out, kids will have more time for social networking, and parents become the ones responsible for intervening to stop the mean behavior that has become epidemic online.

Obviously, most parents worry most about how to keep their own

ations. Music and movies often revolve around violence or the threat of violence. In this context, it's not surprising that young people are confused about how to create rewarding relationships.

Summer is a good time to regroup. Think about the friendships that have been meaningful in your own life. How can you help your child develop the same kind of warm, supportive network both online and off?

Here are some suggestions:

- **Look in the mirror.** You, of course, are the most important role model for your child, so a little self-examination is in order. How do you behave towards other people? How do you talk to your child when you're angry? How do you argue with your spouse? What do you say about neighbors, politicians or opinions you don't like? If your children see you behaving respectfully towards others — even under trying circumstances — they will have a repertoire of strategies to use in on- and offline relationships.

- **Brush up on the basics.** Comcast and McAfee have teamed up to produce two succinct and up-to-date family Internet contracts that cover basic rules for safe and responsible online fun. Even the most Web savvy parents and kids will benefit from reviewing these rules. One contract is for teens and one for younger children. Each includes pledges for both parents and kids. Find them at [www.alturl.com/okdk](http://alturl.com/okdk).

- **Strengthen offline networks.** Summer is an ideal time to help kids develop face-to-face friendships. Look for settings in which kids have fun that doesn't involve belittling other people. In particular, pay attention to the tone set by adult leaders including coaches, camp counselors and even church youth group leaders. Be sure they model the kind of fairness, decency and respect you want from your kids.

- **Diversify online networks.** Facebook still dominates but some teens are migrating to other social networks. Unfortunately, some of

these networks bring out the worst in kids. Formspring, for example, has garnered a lot of attention because it lets people post anonymous answers to questions, a practice that seems designed to encourage viciousness. Fortunately, there are also social networks that are specifically designed to encourage creativity or community service. Encourage your teen to investigate sites like www.crowdrise.com, a site that encourages teens to network for good causes.

- **Monitor as needed.** The best monitoring technique is a conversation with your child about what he or she is doing online. If you're worried that your child isn't being candid about online activities, consider subscribing to www.Safetyweb.com, a new service that monitors every crevice of the social Web and alerts to what's being said about your child as well as what your child says about others.

- **Reiterate old rules.** Don't worry about sounding like your own parents. The Golden Rule definitely applies online. It's also worth repeating another old-fashioned chestnut — if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all. Simply following this rule would eliminate most of the hurtful remarks about everything from bad hair days to weight and sexuality.

It would be nice to think that summer could be a vacation from problems like cyber bullying. Since that's not a realistic option, parents should take advantage of the extra time with their kids to find out what's actually happening in their online lives. Then they can help kids enjoy the latest social networking trends without abandoning the old-fashioned family values of respect, fair play and kindness.

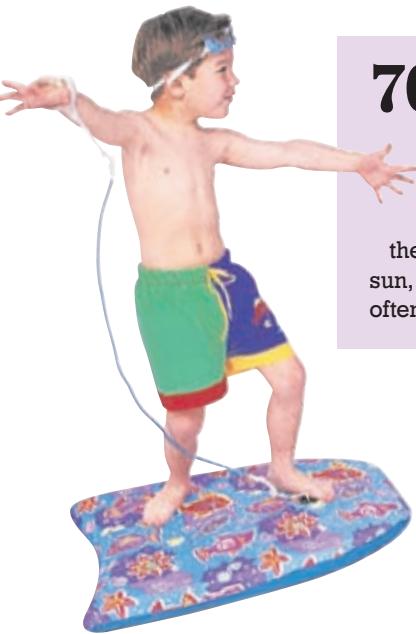
Carolyn Jabs, MA, has been writing about families and the Internet for over 15 years. She is the mother of three computer-savvy kids. Other Growing Up Online columns appear on her Web site www.growing-up-online.com.

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It figures

BY CYNTHIA WASHAM

SUMMER SNIPPETS



70 Percent of people who apply sunscreen only after they're in the sun, when it's often too late.

20,000 Record-breaking number of camping reservations Reserve America took for the 4,000 nationwide campgrounds it represents during one 24-hour period in February 2009.

21 Percent of KOA campers last year who were first timers, the highest rate in 18 years.



34,000 Number of hotel rooms in the cities of Moscow, Stockholm and Toronto.

34,000 Number of hotel rooms in Walt Disney World.



30 Number of towns and cities in the U.S. with "liberty" in their name.

11 Number with "independence."

More than 6 million

Number of children who go to camp every summer in the U.S.

95 Percent of children away at camp who experience some homesickness.

20 Percent who experience moderate to severe homesickness.



36 Gallons of liquid a 100-pound human would have to drink in one sitting to mimic a single blood meal of a hungry female mosquito.



1,120,000 Approximate number of mosquito bites needed to drain all the blood from an average adult.

1,104,120,000,000 Estimated number of bug zappers needed to kill every bug in the world.

Sources: Census.gov, Prevention, Time, Four-H, Harper's Magazine, Marketing Week, Summercamp.org, Scouting

Healthy kids take all their vitamins

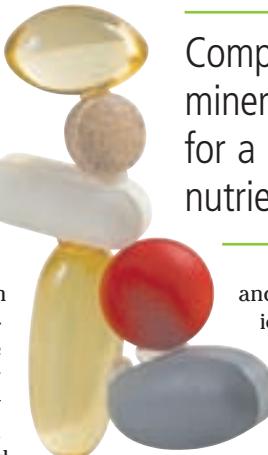
So says the conventional wisdom. But should they?

BY LAURA J. VAROSCAK

All parents want their children to eat a healthy, well-balanced diet. Nutritious food is vital to maintaining optimal growth and development.

Mothers who breastfeed ensure their baby receives enough at each feeding. When solid foods are introduced, parents read labels and choose products that are all natural or organic. Eventually, more variety is added as children experiment with selections from the five food groups. Children who enjoy trying new healthy foods, including whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, lean meats and fish benefit from the many vitamins and minerals they contain. Those who refuse to sample foreign cuisine and limit their diet to fistfuls of Cheerios or Mac-n-Cheese may not take in as many nutrients as the more daring, but are they in danger of becoming undernourished?

The vitamin industry would like parents to believe they are in danger. It knows how important vitamins and minerals are to satisfy the nutritional needs of children's growing bodies. It also understands that changes in eating patterns, including the rejection of wholesome foods, are common throughout childhood and adolescence. Companies that promote vitamins and minerals target worried parents looking for a magic pill to make up for the missing nutrients in their children's diets. According to a report in the October 2007 issue of "Archives of Pediatrics



Companies that promote vitamins and minerals target worried parents looking for a magic pill to make up for the missing nutrients in their children's diets.

and Adolescent Medicine," one-third of American children between the ages of 2 and 18 take a daily dietary supplement even though the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) does not recommend them for children, especially under 12 years old.

The Academy advocates a diet based on the Food Guide Pyramid as the best source of nutrition for healthy children, but also recognizes special situations where vitamins may be necessary. Children who are exclusively breastfed or suffer from eating disorders often need supplements. Dietary supplements are vital to support children with liver disease or other chronic medical problems. Parents with concerns about deficiencies should always consult a health care provider before selecting a vitamin for their child. Pediatricians can screen individual children and determine whether or not supplements are needed and in what dosage. Too many yummy-gummy vitamins that claim good health may not only prove ineffective but harmful. An accidental overdose of vitamin and mineral supplements can cause adverse effects in

children, including nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, liver abnormalities and nerve problems.

If a dietary supplement is recommended, parents must be careful of their selection. Many kid-friendly products are advertised without having been tested. Unlike medications, dietary supplements are not held to any set of federal standards to ensure purity and quality. Some companies claim their products help to treat specific childhood disorders like ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). A safe, natural alternative to prescription drugs appeals to parents who wish to avoid the side effects of medication. Replacing a proven effective drug like Ritalin with a natural dietary supplement may cause more damage than good. Natural does not necessarily mean safe. Parents must be cautious of any product claiming to be a scientific breakthrough or a miracle pill. Promoters may succeed in luring innocent parents to buy their fraudulent cure-alls by bombarding them with medical terms that cannot be supported by scientific evidence or undocumented success stories.

Dr. William Sears, a pediatric practitioner for over 30 years, recommends a multivitamin containing the following ingredients: omega-3



fats, calcium, iron, zinc, and vitamins C and E. Vitamin D is also important, especially for children who do not drink milk or have limited exposure to sunlight. Surprisingly, most over-the-counter multivitamin-mineral supplements do not contain this combination of essential vitamins and minerals!

Why are these vitamins important?

- Omega-3 fats are beneficial to brain development and nervous system function (tuna, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, canola and flax oils)

- Calcium is necessary for the development of strong, healthy bones (milk, cheese and yogurt)

- Iron contributes to the development of strong muscles and the production of blood (meats, poultry, fish, leafy greens, legumes, iron-enriched white bread, pasta, rice and cereals)

cereals)

- Zinc is an important mineral, especially for adolescents, because it helps with growth and sexual maturation (shellfish, wheat germ, wheat bran, All Bran cereal, pine and pecan nuts)

- Vitamin C can support a healthy immune system and connective tissue (fresh fruits and veggies, especially oranges, cantaloupe, strawberries, tomatoes, broccoli, cabbage and sweet red peppers)

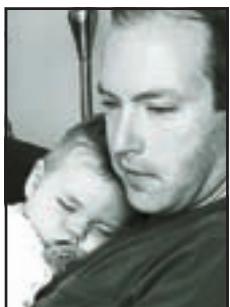
- Vitamin D is crucial in building strong bones and maintaining the immune system (milk, salmon, tuna, cheese and egg yolks)

- Vitamin E assists with maintaining a healthy immune system (asparagus, avocado, egg, nuts and seeds, vegetable oils and whole grains)

In 2002, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey re-

vealed that children and adolescents who were more active, ate a healthier diet and had better access to health care were more likely to take multivitamins and minerals. Ironically, those who faced the greatest risk for vitamin and mineral deficiencies, those with less healthy nutrition and activity patterns, higher levels of obesity, lower income, poor health and less health care access, were those who took supplements less.

Despite the money parents spend to enhance their child's well being, no research exists which proves supplements can lead to improved health. While it is true that vitamins and minerals are essential, especially for growing children, a diet consisting of a variety of wholesome foods, not pills, is the safest and most effective way to maintain good health.



NEWBIE DAD

BRIAN KANTZ



self? A rocket. An honest-to-goodness "Model Rocket!" with "Quick Assembly!," a "Real Rocket Engine — Sold Separately!" and, by the way, "!WARNING: Product Contains Lead." (You know a product is super-cool when it can get away with placing an exclamation point after the words "sold separately" and before a warning about a poisonous metal).

As soon as I unwrapped the gift, my 5-year-old and his 3-year-old

For my 37th birthday, my 5-year-old son picked out the exact present that he wanted to give me. Wait a second, let's be perfectly honest here. Those last three words are completely unnecessary. The first sentence of this column should read: For my 37th birthday, my 5-year-old son picked out the exact present that he wanted.

Which is A-OK by me.

Heck, I think the little guy caught on to my own present-buying schemes. Like the pair of primo baseball tickets I bought my wife for her birthday. Or the surround-sound speakers she received last Christmas.

So, what did my son buy him-

brother began tearing at the box like a couple of Gollums going after the ring. They had faithfully kept the rocket under wraps for two whole weeks, and couldn't last one more second — they wanted to see what that bad boy really looked like.

What it looked like initially — to their disappointment — was a bunch of small plastic parts and a long list of instructions. Apparently, they thought a fully assembled Space Shuttle Atlantis was going to drop out of the box. Quickly, I tried to rally the troops.

"C'mon, guys, this is going to be great! What an awesome present! Building the rocket together will be half the fun," I said, only half-believing that myself.

Turns out, building the rocket was pretty fun. I waited until my 3-year-old went on a playdate (I was pretty sure that he would just run off with key parts and hide them behind the couch if allowed to help) and then sat down with the older boy to piece the rocket together. I read the instructions and he did the mechanical work. We talked about whether the rocket could make it past the clouds and all the way to the moon. We joked about strapping the 3-year-old to the rocket. Slowly but surely, we built that rocket and pride beamed from our faces.

As advised, we left the rocket's engine — an insert the size of a crayon that is filled with who-knows-what kind of propellant — inside its packaging until launch time — T-minus 21-hours.

The next morning, the boys, who became interested in rockets and space thanks to their Grandparent's proximity to Cape Canaveral (and the fact that Grandma always buys them space-themed toys) popped out of bed ready, in their words, to "light that candle."

On this special day, I figured you can never have too much of a good thing. So, I popped in my DVD of "October Sky," the real-life tale of a boy named Homer Hickam who grew up in a West Virginia mining town and built a rocket with the help of some friends (the self-proclaimed "Rocket Boys"), which eventually earned him

a scholarship to college, a job with NASA and the respect of his father. Not bad. I fast-forwarded to a thrilling scene late in the movie when the boys launch one of their rockets. My sons watched in awe, then asked excitedly, "Can we go launch our rocket now?"

With blue skies overhead and still, warm air, it was a perfect day for launch. We set up the pad in the middle of a local baseball field complex. I inserted the engine into the base of the rocket and connected the wiring. We were go for launch. My wife dutifully videotaped the proceedings for later review by mission control.

My 5-year-old counted, slow and steady, "TEN... NINE... EIGHT... SEVEN... SIX... FIVE... FOUR... THREE... TWO... ONE..." Pressing his finger on the black-and-white striped launch button, the rocket jumped from the pad with a THHHSSSTTT noise and climbed into the sky. We followed it with our eyes as it accelerated, went into its climb phase, reached its apogee... and failed to eject its parachute.

The rocket crashed back to earth and the recovery team — whooping with sheer joy despite the glitch — sprinted across the field to assess the flight.

After I loosened the parachute inside the body of the rocket, we tried again. This time, our 3-year-old sent the rocket on its way with the touch of a button and the vehicle performed its task — all systems nominal, in NASA-speak.

A thrilling lift-off turned into a majestic flight, which turned into a soft, parachute-aided descent.

That night, when the boys went to bed, they each rolled over on their back, whispered the countdown sequence, and knifed their hands up toward the ceiling, replaying the launch. Soon, they would close their eyes and dream about the day they became the Rocket Boys.

Brian Kantz's only previous experience launching model rockets came with those pump-and-shoot water rockets that went about 20 feet in the air, then broke. Remember those? Visit Brian online at www.briankantz.com or drop him a note at thenewbiedad@yahoo.com.

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cinematters



LAURA GRAY

Spy hiding behind suburban screen

The Spy Next Door

Rated PG

Your beach vacation gets cut short when your daughter plops down on a broken bottle hidden in the sand. Almost worse than the wound itself is its location on her body; it's a little more information than she wants to share. So when her friends ask what happened, she begins to "embellish" the story.

Soon, she's forgetting what she told whom, and mass confusion ensues! Rumors fly, feelings get hurt and your daughter has some fences to mend. She finds that telling the truth is sometimes more painful — but it's all worth it in the end.

Being truthful is always the best choice, as the characters in "The Spy Next Door" learn at the conclusion of their harrowing adventure. Watch it with your family and discuss it with our Talk Together points. Then, play "Truth Detectives" to reinforce this valuable lesson.

Now available on DVD, "The Spy Next Door" features a Chinese spy, Bob, who is on loan to the U.S. government. As part of his cover, he lives in a suburban neighborhood where he has fallen for Gillian, the single mom who lives next door with her three kids. Bob keeps his real job a secret, so Gillian thinks he's just a nice, geeky guy. Bob wants to move to the next step in their relationship as soon as he completes one last



Bob tracks down his young charge, Nora, when she gets lost in the mall.

Colleen Hayes, Lionsgate Entertainment. All Rights Reserved.

mission; then he is retiring from the spy business.

When Gillian must leave home to help her ailing father, Bob offers to watch the children. There's only one problem: they hate him! The kids — rebellious teen Farren, awkward 'tween Ian and cutie-pie Nora — plot to get rid of Bob once and for all. And Bob, who has no experience dealing with children, quickly finds himself in over his head.

At Bob's house, Ian downloads a file off Bob's computer. He thinks it's a concert that will impress the bullies at school. Actually, it's a formula created by a Russian terrorist to help him take over the world's oil supply. When the terrorists discover their file has been intercepted, they trace it to Bob and set out to get it back, at all costs. Using his impressive spy

moves, Bob rescues the children from the terrorists' clutches.

To protect Gillian's children, Bob thinks he must keep his true identity — and the threat of the Russian terrorists — to himself. But Gillian is so angry and upset that he has endangered her kids she ends their relationship. By now, the children have seen a different side of Bob, one that inspires love and respect. So much so that they join forces to help Bob when the terrorists trap him in an abandoned building. The bad guys are caught, the formula is recovered and Bob and Gillian — with her kids' encouragement — form a new family. Their relationship is now based on honesty, not deceitfulness.

Talk together

Farren, Ian and Nora seem to dislike Bob right from the start. Why? What do they hate about him? Is there anything Bob could have done to change their opinion before their adventure?

Bob sees his babysitting job as a chance to "make" Gillian's kids like him. Can you really make someone like you? Why not?

Take a break from the summer heat with a family movie night! Check out our archives at www.Cinematters.com and get some great ideas for fun with your favorite films!

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Play together: Truth detectives

Become a super snooper to discover the truth!

You will need:

- Stone, block or other small object
- Marker
- Blindfold

Write the word "thruth" on the stone and set it aside. (You may

also write it on a strip of tape and put it on the object.) Choose one person to be the snooper and one person to be the snoop-ee. Blindfold the snooper while the snoop-ee hides the truth stone in the room. When the object is hidden, remove the snooper's blindfold. The snooper may then ask up to 25

yes-or-no questions of the snoop-ee to discover the whereabouts of the truth stone. For example, "Is the truth in this room?" Take turns looking for and hiding "the truth." Your family will get a not-so-subtle reminder that it's much easier to find "the truth" when it is right out in the open!

Going Places

LONG-RUNNING

Support Group: Single Parents Connection, PO Box 1203; (718) 796-1227.

Single Parents Connection is a non-profit organization that offers single parents an opportunity to meet for dinners, brunches, and local trips. Meets in the Riverdale and Yonkers area. For information, dates, times and location write to Single Parents Connection; PO Box 1203; Riverdale, NY; 10471; or call David.

Lizards and Snakes - Alive: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; \$24 adults; (\$14 children; \$18 for seniors/ students).

See a diversity of legged and legless lizards representing more than 20 species from all over the world.

Bird Watching: Van Cortlandt Park, Enter the park at W. 246th Street and Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; Free.

The Van Cortlandt Bird Club invites you to watch and count with them each week through August. You never know what will fly. Beginners and experts welcome. Bring lunch, water, comfortable shoes and of course binoculars if you have them.

Race to the End of the Earth: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5100; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am-5:45 pm; Donations suggested.

The exhibit recounts the most stirring tales of Antarctic exploration: the contest to reach the South Pole in 1911-1912. Highlights include photographs, paintings, and rare historical artifacts as well as actual items of clothing and tools; life-sized models of portions of Amundsen's and Scott's base camps; and a diorama featuring the largest of all penguin species alive today, the emperor penguin. There are also interactive and hands-on activities for all ages.

Cinderella: Galli's Theater, 38 West 38th Street; (212) 352-3101; www.gallitheaterny.com/Cinderella.html or www.gallitheaterny.com; Saturday, July 3, 3 pm; Saturday, July 10, 3 pm; Sunday, July 11, 3 pm; Saturday, July 17, 3 pm; Sunday, July 18, 3 pm; Saturday, July 24, 3 pm; Sunday, July 25, 3 pm; \$20 (\$15 2-17 years) Workshop \$20, \$15 for siblings.

The play, for kids from 3 and up is followed by a one-hour after-show workshop.



Ride the Wave Hill

From bees to brunch to stories in the garden, Wave Hill in Riverdale offers loads of family friendly activities.

Wave Hill sits on a 28-acre public site overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades. It is open all year, Tuesdays through Sundays and most holidays from 9 am — 5:30 pm, with extended hours on select summer Wednesdays.

One of the park's most enjoyable programs is "Stories in the Garden," where children 3 and up (accompanied by an adult) enjoy listening to a nature story read by a mystery staff member in a shady nook of the beautiful gardens. Ses-

sions are outdoors and only as weather permitting. Participants meet in the Perkins Vistor Center each Tuesday at 11 am.

Sunday Brunch provided by Great Performances is also available.

Admission to the grounds is free to members and children under 6, \$8 for adults, \$4 for students and seniors and \$2 for children 2 to 18. Free on Tuesdays and Saturdays until noon.

Wave Hill [West 249th Street and Independence Avenue in Riverdale, (718) 549-3200]. For additional information visit their Web site at www.WaveHill.org.

Children's Club: Fort Independence Houses' Community Center, Bailey Avenue and West 234th Street; (646) 358-6096; Daily, 6:30 – 9 pm; Free.

Boys & Girls Club of Moshulu Monefiore Community Center offers after-school activities for children ages 12 and one-half to 16. Activities include basketball, indoor, soccer, boys to men group, girl talk, keystone club, crafts, computer, theater group, help with homework, school projects, cooking and more. There is also a lounge and a game room. Potential participants do not have to live in the Fort Independence houses

to join, but must live in the surrounding community. To register, students should bring school ID and proof of age. Monday through Friday at 6:30 p.m. or call Israel Rosario.

Training Group: The Animal Medical Center, 510 East 62nd St. (854)-230-6406; rsilverman@guidingeyes.org; www.volunteer.guidingeyes.org; Free.

Guiding Eyes for the Blind seeks volunteers to foster future guide dog puppies. All training, support and veterinary expenses are provided free of charge. Pre-placement classes are held at the

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!

Dog Spa in Chelsea at 32 West 25th Street. Required weekly raiser classes are held on Sunday evenings at the Center. Call for specific location & time.

"Captain Marbles and his Acting Squad": Theatres at 45 Bleeker - Green Room Theater, 45 Bleeker Street; (212) 260-8250; www.iseats.net; Sundays, 11 am, Now – Sun, Aug. 29; \$20.

Dancing, singing, acting and audience participation. For children three and up. (no show July 4).

Sunday Brunch: Wave Hill, West 249th St. and Independence Ave. (718) 549-3200 X395; wavehillcafe@greatperformances.com; www.wavehill.org; Sundays, 11:30 am–1pm, Now – Sun, Aug. 29; \$22 pp, not including admission to grounds (Children under 3 free, 3-8 years old \$6.50 and 8-12 years old \$13).

Catered by Great Performances. Reservations required by 4 pm on the Friday before. *no brunch on July 18.

SAT, JULY 3

Canoeing: Van Cortlandt Park, Golf House - Van Cortlandt South and Major Deegan Expressway; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

Learn basics of canoeing for ages 8 and up.

Nature workshop: Pelham Bay Park (playground), Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 885-3467; www.gov/parks/rangers; 2 pm; Free.

Explore the shore at Pelham Bay Park.

SUN, JULY 4

Art workshop: Wave Hill (Ecology Building), 675 West 252nd Street; (718) 549-2055; www.wavehill.org; 10 am–1

Continued on page 26

Going Places

Continued from page 25

pm; Free with Admission.

Playful Petals is a mixed media project. Free with admission to the grounds.

July 4 Workshop: Van Cortlandt Park, West 246th Street and Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

Explore Van Cortlandt Park, where Washington's troops visited.

History workshop: Crotona Park, Charlotte Street and Crotona Park East; (718) 378-2061; www.gov/parks/rangers; 2 pm; Free.

Learn about Native Americans.

Tribute to Michael Jackson: Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West; (718) 960-8833; www.LehmanCenter.org; 8 pm; \$45, \$35, \$25, \$20.

A spectacular multi-media homage to the greatest entertainer of all time.

WED, JULY 7

Secret Agent 23 Skidoo: Pelham Bay Park (playground), Pelham Bridge Road and City Island Road; www.CityParksFoundation.org; 11 am; Free.

Hip hop music for kids.

The Big Quiz Thing: 92Y Tribeca, 200 Hudson Street at Canal Street; www.bigquizthing.com; 7:30 pm; \$10 pp.

Live game show with cash prizes.

THURS, JULY 8

Artists' Circle: Wave Hill, West 249th St. and Independence Ave. (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am–1 pm; \$10 (\$15 non-members).

Outdoor workshop, weather permitting. Register at Perkins Visitor Center.

FRI, JULY 9

Family Yoga: Wave Hill, West 249th St. and Independence Ave. (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10–11 am; \$15 (\$20 non-member), One parent, one child, \$5 each additional child.

Suitable for all fitness levels, wear loose, comfortable clothing and bring your own mat. Register at the Perkins Visitor Center at 9 am.

SAT, JULY 10

Canoeing: Canoe and Kayak Launch, Corner of Orchard Beach Park Lot; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

The lagoon at Pelham Bay, for children 8 and up.

Nature workshop: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, West 246th Street and Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.gov/parks/rangers; 1 pm; Free.

Explore the flora that thrive in summer.

Swimming lessons

Wether you're a tot or a teen — Parks and Recreation and the City Parks Foundation want you to learn how to swim.

In partnership with the American Red Cross, the annual Learn to Swim program teaches tots (ages 1 to 5) and children (6 to 14) to back stroke, breast stroke and stay afloat.

The three course session is offered free at city pools throughout the five boroughs.

Registration for session one, July 7 through July 23, is July 6 from 9 to 11 am.

Registration for Session two,

July 27 through August 11, is July 26 from 9 to 11 am.

Registration for session three, August 13 through August 27, is August 12 from 9 to 11 a.m.

Crotona Swimming Pool — 1700 Fulton Avenue, (718) 822-4440;

Claremont Swimming Pool — East 170th Street and Clay Avenue, (718) 901-4792;

Mapes Swimming Pool — 2100

Mapes Avenue, (718) 364-8876;

Mullaly Swimming Pool — 40 East 164th Street, (718) 538-7083;

Floating Pool — Tiffany Street and Viele Avenue, (718) 430-4601.

For additional information visit www.nyc.gov/parks or call 311.

West 246th Street and Broadway; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 2 pm; Free.

Prizes for children 12 and under.

THURS, JULY 22

Artists' Circle: 10 am–1 pm. See Thursday, July 8.

FRI, JULY 23

Family Yoga: 10–11 am. See Friday, July 9.

SAT, JULY 24

Canoeing: 11 am. See Saturday, July 3.

Seashore Safari: Pelham Bay Park (playground), Section 2 of Orchard Beach; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 2 pm; Free.

Visit the wild-side of Orchard Beach.

SUN, JULY 25

Living Log: Pelham Bay Park (playground), Section 2 of Orchard Beach; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

Visit the forest and explore the floor.

Fishing: Barretto Point Park, Barretto Street and Tiffany Avenue; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 2 pm; Free.

Equipment supplied. For children 8 and up.

THURS, JULY 29

Artists' Circle: 10 am–1 pm. See Thursday, July 8.

FRI, JULY 30

Family Yoga: 10–11 am. See Friday, July 9.

SAT, JULY 31

Ancient Remedies: Crotona Park, Charlotte Street and Crotona Park East; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

Learn about herbal remedies.

Fishing: Van Cortlandt Park, West 246th Street and Broadway; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

Perch, bass and catfish are there aplenty.

SUN, AUG. 1

Colonial games: Van Cortlandt Park, West 246th Street and Broadway; 311; www.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

Find out what the children played.

Canoeing: noon. See Sunday, July 18.

SAT, AUG. 7

Fishing: 11 am. See Sunday, July 25.

PARTY PLANNERS

A black and white cartoon illustration of a clown. The clown has a large, bulbous nose, is wearing a dark tuxedo with a bow tie, and is holding several balloons. The background features large, stylized, semi-transparent letters spelling out "ALL IN ONE ENTERTAINMENT INC.".

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New & Noteworthy

Toys that snap!



They're turtles by design!

"Reptangles" are geometric-shaped tortoises that snap together to form different shapes. Connectable building blocks, they can give children a colorful toy to play with, while also helping them explore geometry and design.

With the help of an activity book, or just by using their own imaginations, children can snap and slide

their Reptangles in over 80 different ways, from circles to squares to rectangles to truncated octahedrons. Light enough to travel, pack them along on the next car ride for hours of stimulating entertainment.

Reptangles are for children ages 6 and up. For more info, visit www.fat-brain-toys.com.

An egg-cellent new toy

They're egg-dorable!

These plump, egg-shaped toys by Asher Jasper are made from pure merino and mohair needle-felted

wool, so they're super soft, sturdy and fun. With a variety of different wool people to choose from, a favorite is the Alice in Wonderland set, featuring characters from the beloved story, including Alice and the Cheshire Cat.

Other themes include fairy tales, animals and holidays like Halloween. For little ones not yet ready for imaginative play, there's also a monkey rattle ball.

These little toys are so precious, you just might want one for yourself.

For more info, go to www.asherjasper.etsy.com.



Bee-autiful party favors

Jazz up that next birthday party with these adorable paper goodies.

The Art Of Joy specializes in original illustrations for party favors, stickers and invitations.

For your little one's big day, go with customized favors that have all the guests' names on them, with designs ranging from sweet bumblebees



to toy-like robots.

When expecting, choose from among stork-adorned invitations and favor tags with a baby theme.

If you're planning at the last minute, even better: upon purchase, the designs are e-mailed to you, so you can print as many as you need.

For more information, go to www.etsy.com/TheArtOfJoy.

Easy fun with EZ Fort

Rather than let the kids make a mess of your living room building a fort this summer, have them do it outside.

With EZ Fort, your children can build their own fort or playhouse that's more permanent than one constructed from sheets and pillows — and there's no cleanup.

Part of the fun is making it, and the EZ Fort kit comes with 54 pieces that can be used for a number of creations. All you then need to supply is the sheet.

Construction isn't that compli-



cated, so your child can be at play in no time.

EZ Fort is geared towards children ages 3-7. For more, visit www.ez-fort.com.

For little drummer kids

Does your little one like to make a lot of noise? Then trade the pots and wooden spatula for a miniature drum set, courtesy of PlanToys.

With the Musical Band toys, kids can show their musical appreciation from an early age, with instruments including a drum, as well as tambourine, clatter and oval xylophone.



These simple toys are a great way to introduce children to playing music, as well as develop sensory perception, fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination and cognitive development. Plus, it'll help keep your pots and pans in the kitchen, where they belong.

For more information, visit www.plantoy.com.

www.webfamilyny.com



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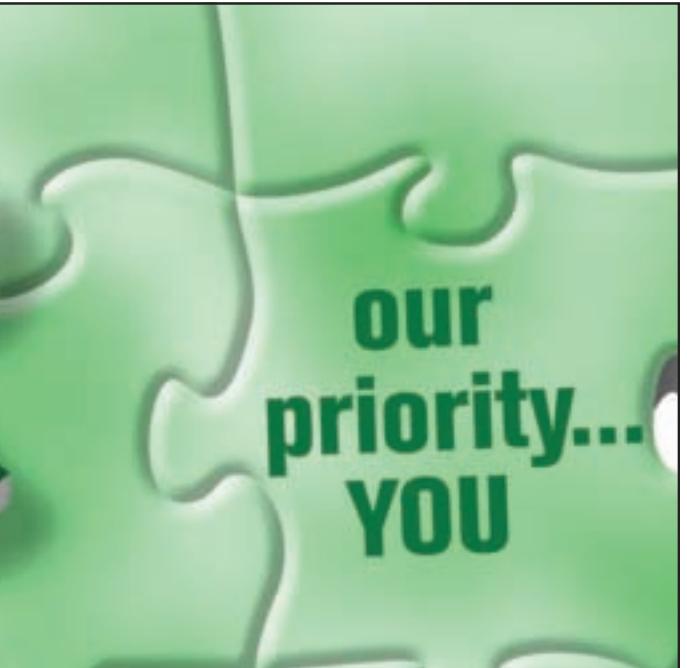
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