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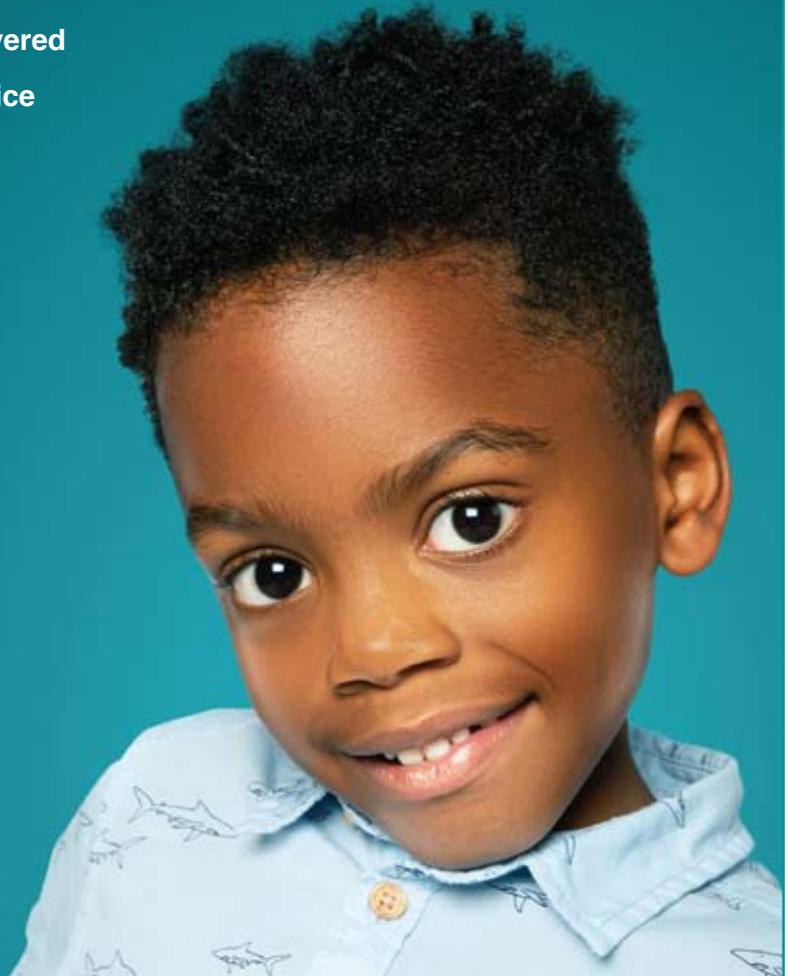


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Thanksgiving thoughts

Who doesn't love Thanksgiving? It's my favorite holiday as holidays go. It's for everyone no matter your background, religion, country of origin or ethnicity. It has universal appeal as Americans or residing in America, and celebrates our harvest, friends and family, and being fortunate to have food and sustenance. The one negative about it is that here in NY it's getting colder and that it ushers in the winter!



Still, it's a wonderful time for friends and family to share traditions and to be thankful and generous to others who may be in need. It's a terrific time to volunteer to help bring meals to neighbors who may either be alone or unable to be mobile. There are many organizations, both citywide and local, where your efforts will not go unappreciated.

Having your kids participate in volunteer projects is a wonderful learning tool and will put in motion a spirit of community that will forever impact their lives. Our article on Thanksgiving Traditions gives a number of good ideas for ways to "give back". Myrna Beth Haskell is one of my favorite of our writers and I am thankful for her. I am also thankful for the many other wonderful talented people who write for us and are on our small but devoted staff.

I am also thankful to be a parent. I have never gotten over the miracle of new life and the awesomeness of the opportunity

and responsibility inherent in this role of guide, leader and caregiver. Once again, as I often say, "love is the answer".

Wishing all of you a Happy Thanksgiving and a good month in spite of earlier darkness, colder weather and heavier clothing. The good news is pumpkin spice, sweet potato pie and roasted veggies.

Happy Holiday! Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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Brooklyn Family
November 2018

Where every child matters

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Short Stuff

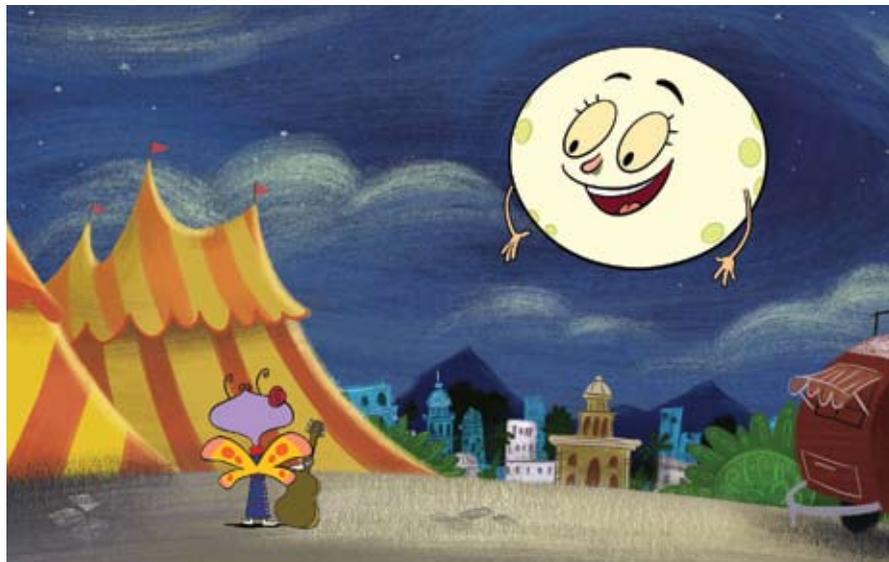
Celebrating cultural diversity

On Nov. 21, PBS Kids will premiere “Let’s Go Luna!,” a new animated series about a group of three animal friends who traverse the globe with their parents’ circus performance troupe. At each stop, the trio learns about the differences and similarities of their global community with the help of their friend Luna the Moon — voiced by Judy Greer — who shares the language, music, and culture of the local region.

With a curriculum focused on fostering appreciation for cultural diversity, promoting global stewardship, and developing social and civic skills, “Let’s Go Luna!” is multifaceted and can help parents:

Expose your kids to geography and culture. As the trio travels through cities around the globe — from London to Cairo to Beijing — the show serves as a learning tool to help preschoolers understand the many countries, faces, and cultures that make up the world.

Encourage exploration and curiosity. From celebrating the cacao bean’s importance to Mexico to learning about the different types of paper and importance of recycling in Tokyo, the show helps children recognize the cultural significance of the things they use and see every day.



Promote global stewardship. Appreciating the planet through conservation and sustainability are important parts of being a world citizen. “Let’s Go Luna!” shows the importance of regularly taking care of one’s own environment (i.e. water, plants, and animals) by demonstrating the interconnection between humans and the

natural world.

Help children understand that they may have more similarities than differences with those from other cultures. The show emphasizes the importance of encouraging compassion and understanding different cultures at an early age to promote acceptance and inclusion.



Connect with local moms

Join our Facebook sisterhood to find moms in your neighborhood for advice, community, and commiseration at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/nypmoms>

This operation was a success

The numbers are in! Volunteers of America-Greater New York announced that 20,000 children who live in New York City shelters went back to school this year with backpacks brimming with every imaginable school supply thanks to the efforts of record numbers of volunteers and corporate partners who took part in its 15th annual Operation Backpack initiative.

Operation Backpack — a community service of Volunteers of America-Greater New York — ensures that every child living in a New York City homeless or domestic violence shelter who needs one gets a new backpack filled with supplies that help them start school more confident and prepared. This year, Volunteers of America-Greater New York was proud to have expanded the program to include shelters that provide housing to runaway youth.

Throughout the summer, everyday New Yorkers and a record-breaking 2,000 volunteers and 332 corporate partners con-



tributed to the success of the program by donating money, advertising space, backpacks, school supplies, and thousands of hours of hands-on work stuffing backpacks in a cavernous warehouse space generously provided by RXR Realty. Among this year’s first-time partners were the New York City Police Department’s Transit Bureau, which sent 40 officers to the warehouse to fill and quality-control backpacks and help children from one of Volunteers of America-Greater New York’s family shelters pick out their school supplies.

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More than just a feast

Special traditions and ways you can give back this Thanksgiving holiday

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

On the first “Thanksgiving Day” in 1621, the Pilgrims and Wampanoag probably ate wildfowl, venison, and products made from corn grain, such as bread. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national Thanksgiving Day to be held each November, and, at that time, our country desperately needed a day of thanks to unite us during a time of extreme strife. The original harvest celebration between the Native Americans and the settlers has become a symbol of giving thanks for the gifts we have and celebrating family and friendship. Of course, the Thanksgiving feast has changed over the years. Typical dishes now include turkey, mashed potatoes, candied yams, and an assortment of pies for dessert.

Giving back

Families wishing to volunteer or donate to a worthy non-profit organization can find information at the following websites:

Salvation Army: <http://satruck.org/>
Provides shelter, clothing, nutritional, social and spiritual assistance through its multi-faceted programs and services.

Any Soldier: <http://anysoldier.com>
This organization sends mail and care packages to soldiers who don't receive any.

Feeding America: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-food-bank/>

Find a local food bank.

Meals on Wheels America: <https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org>

Meals on Wheels America is the oldest and largest national organization supporting the more than 5,000

However, Thanksgiving has also morphed into a celebration that is so much more than a feast. Although we often think of stuffing our faces, football, and out-of-town visits, many families across the country have opted for out-of-the-box celebrations that highlight their creativity while emphasizing their love of family and community.

The holiday can also become an important learning experience for your kids as well. Show them that Thanksgiving is about being thankful for the people we hold dear, not about money and stress.

Families share their special traditions

I spoke with many families about their special traditions and have chosen those ideas that encompass the spirit and values of our modern Thanksgiving Day,

community-based senior nutrition programs across the country that are dedicated to addressing senior hunger and isolation. Meals on Wheels delivers meals to individuals who are unable to purchase or prepare meals on their own.

Other options for donating your time or resources:

- Local nursing home — read or sing to the residents
- Local prison — usually accepts baked items
- Local children's home or orphanage
- Community clean-up

Of course, choosing a more regular schedule to offer your time or resources is a great resolution as the year comes to an end. Thanksgiving and other holidays only come once per year, but people are in need year round.



such as community service, family traditions, forgiveness, thankfulness, and sharing:

We participate in Turkey Trots. This is a 5K run or walk. There is one in Rhinebeck, New York, that benefits Ferncliff Forest. However, there are many others around New York and elsewhere. When we were in Ohio for one Thanksgiving, we participated in a Turkey Trot which benefited the Autism Society. They usually start around 9 am. If you run, you are done in about 30 minutes, and, if you walk, about 50 minutes. This still gives you time to shower and cook. We have done it several times now. Some of us walk and some of us run. Each year, we get some friends to join us.

Information about the YMCA Buffalo Niagara Turkey Trot: www.ymcabuffaloniagara.org/annual-events/ymca-turkey-trot/registration-and-runner-info/

Compton family – Hyde Park, New York

We've been holding a family and friends Turkey Bowl for decades now. We start early in the morning, and we're usually done by 11 am. We use real football jerseys, and we even have a referee. We split everyone up into teams of about 15 with both adults and kids, ages 5 to 55. This event is held in all kinds of weather, including snow. We have a pot-luck breakfast, including donuts, bagels, and cider.

DeLisio family – Kingston, New York

What can we teach boys?

Sexual assault is *typical*? Calling on men for a #NotMe movement

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

I generally refrain from commenting on social media and news-outlet posts. Don't get me wrong, it's not that I don't have opinions, just ask my husband. I simply choose not to engage in the public debate, which all too often turns ugly and counterproductive.

However, as a female, daughter, sister, wife of 33 years, mother of two sons, and aunt to 14 nieces and nephews, I cannot stand by and fail to react to the statement made in September by Gina Sosa during an interview with Randi Kaye on CNN. Sosa, sitting alongside four other women, all supporting Brett Kavanaugh's appointment to the Supreme Court after his testimony following the sexual-assault allegation by Christine Blasey Ford, made the following statement: "We're talking about a 15-year-old girl, which I respect. I'm a woman, I respect. But we're talking about a 17-year-old boy, in high school, testosterone running high. Tell me what boy hasn't done this in high school? Please, I would like to know."

Regardless of political affiliation or position on Kavanaugh's confirmation, this is disturbing. It is a statement that was casually made as if it were absolute fact. In actuality, it is merely Sosa's personal opinion. While that, in and of itself, is worrisome, what is more worrisome is the lack of public outcry or reaction. I have been waiting a month now, to hear from someone, anyone, who is as irate as I am at the notion that all 17-year-old males are perpetrators of sex-

ual assault. This unfortunate declaration normalizes behavior that is not merely unacceptable, but, in fact, criminal.

What does this suggest to 17-year-old boys? It suggests they are incapable of exercising self-control due to the presence of

testosterone in their bodies. Not only does such a suggestion invite dangerous repercussions, it is utter nonsense. And what does this suggest to 15-year-old girls? If they are around 17-year-old boys, they should just expect this to happen? I don't think so!

With all we know about the devastating consequences of sexual assault, this kind of attitude must not prevail. Surely, we have not become so immune to the depiction of violence and sexual assault in the media that we are willing to accept it as expected behavior from our sons. No thank you! Not me!

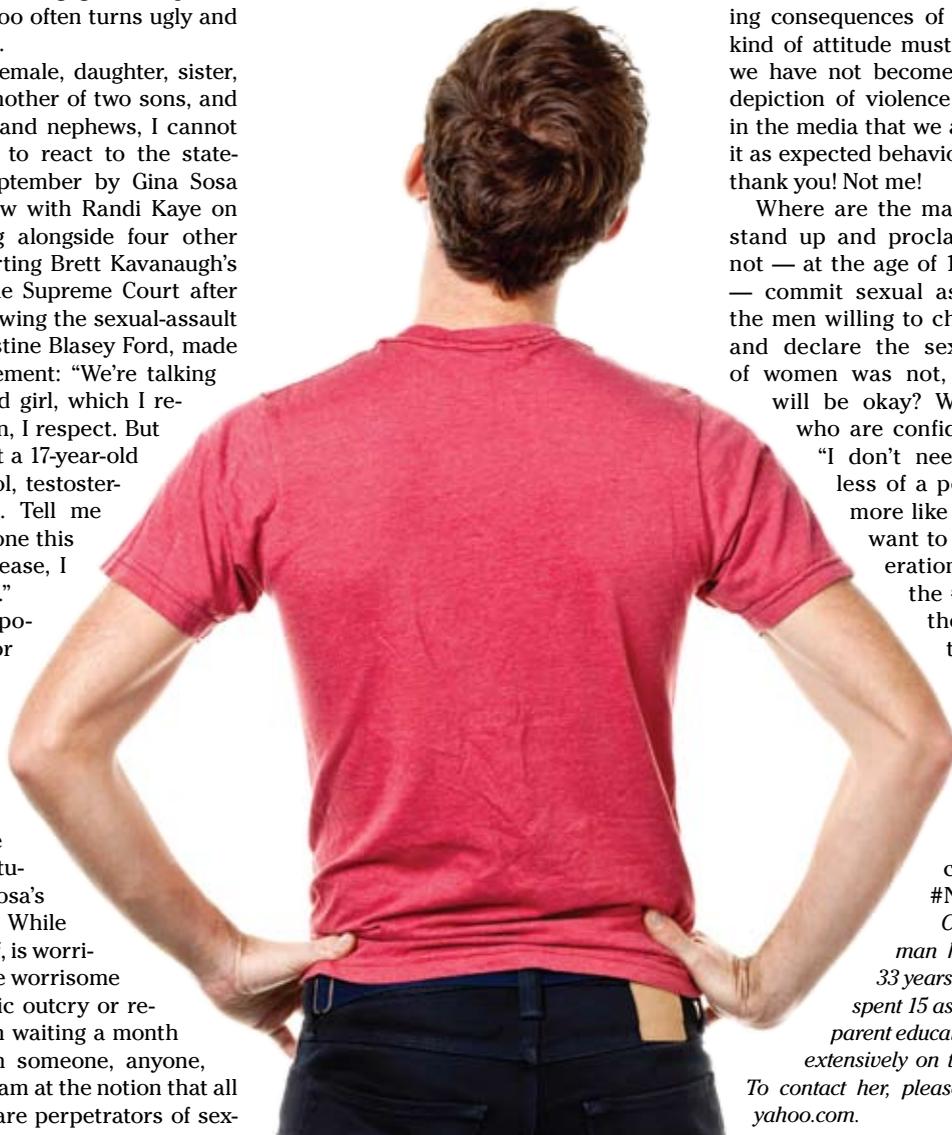
Where are the males bold enough to stand up and proclaim, "Not me! I did not — at the age of 17, or any other age — commit sexual assault"? Where are the men willing to challenge their peers and declare the sexual objectification of women was not, is not, and never will be okay? Where are the men who are confident enough to say,

"I don't need a woman to be less of a person, so I can feel more like a man"? If we truly want to prevent future generations from belonging to the #MeToo Movement, then we must include the voices of those who can proudly say, "Not me!"

The grounds for starting a movement seem clear. Gentlemen, consider yourselves challenged. #NotME #NotAt17NotEver

Carolyn Waterbury-Tiemman has been married for 33 years and has two sons. She spent 15 as a family therapist and parent educator and she has written extensively on the topic of parenting.

To contact her, please e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.



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P.S. 120

Theme: **Magnet School of Architecture, Engineering and Design**
 Address: 18 Beaver Street
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 Tel: 718.455.1000 Web: PS120K.org
 November 14 9:00 am
 December 12 9:00 am
 January 16 9:00 am

P.S. 123

Theme: **Magnet School of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM)**
 Address: 100 Irving Avenue
 Brooklyn, NY 11237 (District 32)
 Tel: 718.821.4810 Web: PS123K.com
 November 7 9:00 am
 December 12 4:00 pm
 January 9 9:00 am

P.S./I.S. 157

Theme: **Magnet School of Civic Leadership in Health and Science**
 Address: 850 Kent Avenue
 Brooklyn, NY 11205 (District 14)
 Tel: 718.622.9285 Web: franklinmagnet.org
 November 15 5:00 pm
 November 29 5:00 pm

P.S. 196

Theme: **Magnet School of Communication and Mixed Media Arts**
 Address: 207 Bushwick Avenue
 Brooklyn, NY 11206 (District 14)
 Tel: 718.497.0139 Web: 196wbms.org
 November 28 8:30 am
 December 19 8:30 am

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How safe is your food for the holidays?

As we “turn the page” to November and feel the chill in the air, our thoughts turn to special meals unique to the holiday season. But how many of us stop to consider the importance of keeping those foods safe?

For many families, the kickoff to holiday cooking is Thanksgiving; turkeys are lovingly prepared and served along with a host of side dishes and desserts. Yet, holiday cooking extends all the way to New Year’s Day. So consider these five tips as you plan your holiday cooking:

Plan ahead and make space in the fridge. For many of us, our refrigerators are crammed throughout the year. But look out when it’s time to fit in ingredients for holiday feasts. Before the big shopping trip for the holiday meal, take an inventory of what you have. Perhaps create a few meals where you can use up items and make room? Toss any expired items and wipe down all the shelves. A clean fridge with room for holiday-themed foods is safer and less stressful.

Wash your hands, but skip washing the bird. Should meat and poultry be washed before cooking? No. Many people believe washing or rinsing raw meat and poultry

makes it safer. The problem? Cross-contamination is likely to occur if raw meat is washed or rinsed, because bacteria can splash onto the sink and counters. The good news is that bacteria on the surface of meat or poultry are easily destroyed by cooking at the proper temperature.

Use a food thermometer. A tip-sensitive digital thermometer can show you the temperature of cooked meat lightning fast. It’s the most reliable way to indicate if a meat is done. Turkey should be roasted to 165 degrees, while meats such as beef, lamb, and even pork are done at 145 degrees. Ground meat, however, should be cooked to 160 degrees.

Say “no” to raw cookie dough. In addition to the well-known risk of salmonella from an uncooked egg, now raw flour is being implicated in food-borne illness. Last November, a study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* found that a type of *E. coli* bacteria can thrive in dry food such as flour. So avoid tasting uncooked flour dishes. And be sure to wash your hands in warm, soapy water after touching flour, such as when dredging meats or veggies.

Steer clear of rancid foods. Those pack-



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

ages of crackers or cookies crammed back in the pantry might be too old to serve to your unexpected guests. If you notice a grassy or paint-like odor from a packaged food item, the fat is oxidized. Oxidized fats and oils can lead to serious health problems. Other possible rancid foods include an old bag of nuts, whole-grain flour, or the huge container of vegetable oil you bought at the warehouse club that has been sitting there for too long. So give these foods the “sniff test” before serving.

Rules for leftovers

Around holiday time, I typically field questions from people about how long foods last. Here are some easy rules of thumb:

Two hours from oven to refrigerator. Refrigerate (or freeze) what’s leftover within two hours of cooking. Otherwise, toss.

Two-inches thick to cool it quickly. Store food in shallow containers two-inches deep or less to speed the chilling.

Four days in the fridge. Use up leftovers within four days, or freeze them. One notable exception is dressing and gravy, which should be consumed within only two days.

By following these common-sense rules of thumb, you can celebrate Peace on Earth with your loved ones — without getting sick from food-borne illness this holiday season.

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville, Ill.,-registered dietitian nutritionist and Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.



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ENYMKT-0398-18

Unlikely heroes teach kindness

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

The hippies were all about peace and love. And we can sure use some more of that these days. Kindness, too.

Philanthropist and “kindness advocate” Marie Unanue wholeheartedly agrees. She recently debuted her first kids’ book series, “The Adventures of Phatty and Payaso” (iUniverse), featuring a main character and hero, Max, who is a child on the autism spectrum.

In the book, which is illustrated by Edgardos Miranda-Rodriguez, an overweight tabby cat, Phatty, is best buds with Payaso, an American bobtail feline. When Phatty realizes a large hawk has plans to rob his home, he ventures into Central Park in search of the zookeeper to help him capture that feathered villain. Shortly after this daring cat leaves the safety of his cozy apartment, his worried friends head out to the park to look for him.

Readers of all ages can truly enjoy this fun, whimsical story, but the author feels it provides parents and educators with an opportunity to reinforce the concept of treating others respectfully, and to model vital character traits children need to develop so they can live more balanced lives.

“It focuses on helping kids find their own strengths and building on that,” Unanue explains. “Those parents that have read the book, or know what I have tried to do with this story, have felt the excitement and are hopeful that this will be the beginning of many stories where a child with special needs not only saves the day but is included and embraced by the other characters.”

These skills, Unanue says, are being studied by Character Lab, a nonprofit organization founded in 2013 by Angela Duckworth, author of “Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance,” Dave Levin, and Dominic Randolph. These researchers found that children today are having difficulty developing several of these skills.

“They have discovered that character strengths are malleable, and surprisingly little is known about how they can be intentionally cultivated,” she explains. “Characterlab.org has not only been instrumental in



my writing process, but they were also vital to incorporating actual character skills into my characters. They helped me understand how these skills are formed, how essential they are, and what they mean to a child’s future. My book focuses on several of these traits, with the intention to help children develop them through reading.”

These skills are:

Curiosity: Taking an interest in an ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; and exploring and discovering.

Gratitude: Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen and taking time to express thanks.

Grit: Finishing what one starts and persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles.

Self-control: Regulating what one feels and does in the service of goals and standards; being disciplined; and controlling one’s emotions.

Social intelligence: Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people, and oneself.

Zest: Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; and feeling alive and activated.

Unanue has also launched a campaign to help youngsters and families incorporate more kindness into their lives through her #LetsAllBeKind challenge. She visits schools and supports literacy initiatives all over the country with donations of books and curriculum materials, while partnering with organizations that support the welfare of families by donating profits from her books.

“We wanted to come up with a fun way for kids to get involved and came up with the ‘Kindness Challenge,’ where kids can be a kindness ‘advocate’ in conjunction with the book,” says Unanue. “I’m trying to encourage the use of social media for a positive message with hashtags such as #BeAKindnessAdvocate and #LetsAllBeKindChallenge.”

To participate, kids can post a photo of themselves with the sign and share something they did that was kind. They can work

together with their family to come up with a plan and then engage in the act of kindness together. Once they're ready, they hashtag the photo and share their story.

Having a special-needs child as the hero, Unanue says, allows children to see that they have more in common with an often marginalized group of people than they think.

"When I started writing the book, I realized quickly that it would be an excellent opportunity to show all kids that even though someone may be unique or different, they still have the same desire to be included, treated kindly and befriended," she says. "I want to stop the stigma that 'different' is a negative connotation."

And Unanue is making sure that every child has the opportunity to read this book and learn its important lessons.

"We want to make sure every library has a copy and that any child that wants to read this book, but can't afford it, has a way to get a copy, so we are also sending it to any organization that needs or wants books to give out. So far, we've been partnering with many local libraries in New Jersey, New York, and other states, with the organization 2000 Libros, the national program ReadingPartners.org, and other foundations that have a literacy-driven mission."

How to be a 'kindness advocate'

A kindness advocate, according to Unanue, is "someone that has made the decision to live kindly, be kind, and make it his or her mission to share the message and the magnitude of the importance of spreading kindness." There is no age limit, there are no restrictions, no specialized training, or reason every person can't become a kindness advocate, according to the author. Being kind feels good, costs nothing, and being an advocate means you can take a moment to do any of the following:

- Be patient with others.
- Be kind to the elderly.
- Be kind to animals.
- Be supportive of your classmates.
- Be inclusive by being sure to include everyone in your games or plans.

• Be kind to those kids that struggle to fit in.

• Be aware of what makes someone a bully and be sure never to bully or manipulate your friends.

• Be willing to volunteer.

• Be courteous and be sure to say "please" and "thank you."

• Be conscious of others and their feelings.

• Be watchful of how you talk about others. Be sure not to spread gossip or meanness.

• Be the best you that you can be.

• Be willing to make a positive difference in someone else's day.

• Be prepared to help out family and friends in need.

• Be sure to have a positive attitude.

• Be understanding, compassionate, sympathetic, and empathetic.

As for what readers will take away, Unanue says it is that kindness always wins.

"I don't care what the situation is, kindness will always come out on top. If your moral compass is always facing north, you can't go wrong. Doing the right thing and being kind isn't always the easiest road to

take, but it will be the most rewarding. The old saying of 'kill them with kindness' rings true; it's hard to fight or find fault with someone that just responds with kindness in every situation."

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



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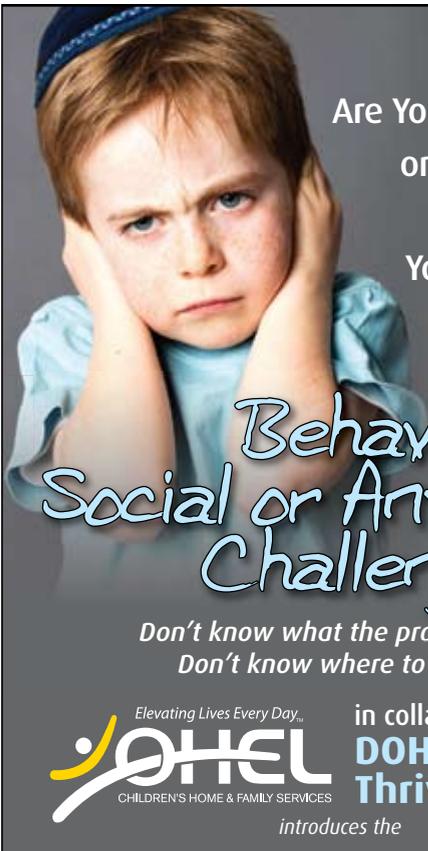
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Undoing irrevocable life insurance trusts

I created an Irrevocable Life Insurance Trust several years ago, naming my then-wife as the beneficiary. We are now in the process of getting divorced, and I want to change the beneficiary to remove her. What are my options for changing the trust?

An irrevocable life-insurance trust is a common form of estate planning. When used properly, it can help remove the proceeds of an insurance policy from one's gross taxable estate at death. When the federal tax exemption was only \$1 million, or even when it was raised to \$5 million, this was helpful for some individuals who had many millions in term-life insurance or whole-life insurance, which placed their taxable estate in excess of the estate-tax exemption. It is also helpful to ensure that these large, liquid sums were used for the purpose intended, rather than going directly to the named beneficiary outright, without restrictions on the use of the funds.

As the name indicates, an irrevocable life insurance trust's terms cannot be amended after it is created. Maybe, as in this case, the grantor no longer wishes to provide for one or more of the beneficiaries of the trust, or wants to change its dispositive terms. In the State of New York, "irrevocable," means that it is "less flexible," since even irrevocable trusts can be modified or amended in accordance with the statutory law if, and only if, all of the interested parties (beneficiaries, the grantor, and the Trustees) agree in writing to the modification. If any of those interested parties will not agree to the proposed modification, or if any of them are not adults of majority age, amendment by agreement may not be possible.

What then are the options for adjusting this trust after a change in circumstances? What is a grantor to do if she is no longer happy with the terms of her trust?

A grantor can always stop making gifts to the trust, let the existing policy lapse, and start over with a new trust and a new policy. But, retaining the current policy may be preferable for health or economic reasons. The irrevocable life-insurance trust can

sell the policy back to the grantor-insured, who then assigns it to a new irrevocable life-insurance trust, but that will start the running of a new three-year rule (under IRC Section 2035(a)). If the trust permits, the policy can be distributed to one or more of the beneficiaries. But, absent a trust, the policy beneficiaries would not be protected from creditors, ex-spouses, or estate taxes. Here are a few options:

Let the policy lapse

If the grantor can still obtain a new policy for essentially the same premium amount, an easy option may be to let the policy lapse and simply obtain a new policy. This will likely require a new application for life insurance, and a new medical exam, but assuming that a new policy can be placed at or about the same premium amount, this may be a feasible option. This option will likely work best with a term policy or a whole policy that has not accrued much of a cash value.

Convert or exchange the policy

If the trust instrument authorizes the Trustee to convert or exchange the policy for another policy of equal or lesser value, the Trustee can "swap out" the policy in the trust for one that is already outside of it. If the grantor already owns another policy outside the trust, he can exchange it, assuming that there is supportable documentation showing that the policies are of approximate value.

Purchase the policy

Assuming the grantor has the cash available, or other property of approximately the same value as the policy in the trust, the grantor can purchase the policy from the trust. Assume, for example, that the irrevocable life-insurance trust has a 30-year term policy for \$2 million in the trust, and that is about two years into the policy. The grantor can get a valuation estimate of the cost of the policy, and pay that amount into the trust in exchange for the policy. If the trust instrument contains the power to sell the policy, this can be an option.



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Decanting

Just as a bottle of wine decants into a separate receptacle, a trust can be decanted into another trust instrument containing the desired terms. Again, the trust instrument must permit the Trustee to decant into a new instrument under the law, which in New York permits such decanting with certain restrictions. (See EPTL 10-6.6(b)). The new trust may not reduce any fixed income rights; it must provide for one or more of the beneficiaries of the existing trust; and the interest of the remainder beneficiaries cannot be extended beyond a permissible time limitation.

Based on IRS Revenue Rulings (Rev. Rul. 2007-13), a grantor of an existing irrevocable life-insurance trust can create a new one with the new desired beneficiaries and provisions, and then gift or loan the new trust with sufficient assets to enable the new trust to buy the policy from the old one. However, there are various precautions that will need to be followed in order to engage in such a transaction properly and avoid scrutiny from the taxing authorities. It is also critical to avoid future claims by the affected beneficiaries against the grantor's estate or the Trustees. There are many tax and non-tax issues specific to each person's situation that must be examined carefully before embarking on a change to any trust, particularly an irrevocable life-insurance trust. Trustees and grantors should proceed with caution and with legal advice before engaging in this type of transaction.

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The upsides of battling nightmares

BY SANDI SCHWARTZ

It's the middle of the night, and you're in a deep sleep. You hear a loud cry of "Mommy!" or feel a touch on your arm. At first, you're not sure if this is all part of your dream. Eventually, you wake up and realize your child is frightened and needs you. Then, you stumble into her room in a total daze, faced with the challenge of needing to comfort your little one after she's had a nightmare.

Given this middle-of-the-night drama, it may be shocking to learn that nightmares in childhood are actually normal and play a positive role in kids' emotional growth and coping skills. About half of all young children experience nightmares,

especially 2- to 6-year-olds. Children are particularly prone at these ages, because this is when they're developing fears and imagination, and trying to learn the difference between fantasy and reality. Nightmares tend to peak by 10 years of age, and then they usually decrease.

Children's nightmares stem from many different types of experiences that cause emotional responses, such as hearing a scary story, watching a frightening movie, worrying about school, struggling socially, or reacting to a family change or crisis like a new sibling or divorce. Facing new milestones — potty training, moving out of a crib, learning to ride a bike — can also cause bad dreams. Eating too close to bed-time, some medications, and sleep prob-

lems can also lead to nightmares. What is also interesting is that experts have found that fear is not the only emotion that can trigger nightmares; confusion, guilt, disgust, and sadness are also culprits.

Nightmares typically happen in the second half of the night, during rapid eye-movement sleep. Because of this timing, children usually can remember their dreams when they wake up. REM sleep stimulates the parts of the brain used in learning. Some scientists believe that dreams are the cortex's effort to find meaning in the signals received during this stage of sleep. This process could be beneficial to our children, even if they may be scared temporarily from a troubling dream.

As a reaction to stress, nightmares help our children work through their emotions or traumatic events. They consolidate bad feelings into a concrete memory that can be more easily processed, filed away, and forgotten. Michael Nadorff, assistant professor of psychology and sleep behavior medicine specialist at Mississippi State University, equates nightmares to having our own exposure therapy to review and confront experiences, so we can overcome our fears about them. A recent video published by New York magazine effectively presents how nightmares transform fears into something positive.

In addition, when our children have bad dreams, we can gain insight into their deepest thoughts and concerns. Rosalind Cartwright, PhD, professor emeritus of psychology at Rush University in Chicago, explained how nightmares are like having an internal therapist, helping surface one's deep-rooted emotions and fears. It's almost like revealing a secret emotional code that we may not be privy to during the day. By connecting with our children after a nightmare, we can help them work through their issues so that they feel better.

Comforting our children in the moment is important, so they can express how nightmares make them feel and realize that they're okay. When they're upset, go

to their bedroom and give them physical contact like a hug or back rub until they calm down. Ask them to talk about the nightmare, but don't push too hard if they don't want to discuss it. Console them verbally by saying, "I understand your dream must have been scary, but it was not real. Mommy sometimes has bad dreams, too. You're okay. I am here to comfort you. I love you, and you are fine."

If they want to check under the bed or in the closet for monsters, go along with this exercise. Once they have calmed down, tuck them in with their favorite blanket or stuffed animal and reassure them that you will be down the hall if they need you again. If they argue with you about going back to sleep, explain that they need to get their rest, so they can enjoy the next day. Provide an example of something fun for them to look forward to.

You can continue to address the nightmare the next day by encouraging them to express themselves. Consider getting creative like drawing or painting pictures, journaling, reading stories and discussing them, or acting them out with puppets. Look for patterns in the themes of their nightmares to try to understand what the stressor may be. The most important thing is to encourage your children to talk it out, so that they address what's bothering

them while they're awake.

How do we know when nightmares become a problem? There are nightmares, and then there are chronic night terrors and Nightmare Disorder. Here are some signs to look out for to make sure your kids aren't experiencing something more serious:

- Are the nightmares significantly interfering with sleep?
- Are your kids avoiding bedtime, because they are so worried that they will have a nightmare?
- Are the nightmares getting worse and occurring more frequently?
- Are they impacting your child's school day and interaction with family and friends?
- Are they repeatedly waking up with detailed recollections of long, scary dreams that involve threats to their survival, security, and physical well-being?

If you notice these issues persisting, then it's important to speak to your pediatrician about what is going on. It may be time to explore treatment options such as therapy to address stress and anxiety, or a sleep study for a more detailed evaluation.

Sandi Schwartz is a freelance writer and blogger and mother of two (www.happysciencemom.com and www.sandischwartz.com).



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Are you thinking of going vegetarian?

Five reasons why it may be a good idea

There are many ways to maximize your health, and most of them include revamping eating habits. With tasty recipes for meatless meals and improved veggie substitutes on the market, you might be on the fence about going vegetarian. It's a well-established fact that healthy-eating regimens include limiting red meat in the diet. If you are considering cutting out all meat from your eating plan, there are several benefits to embracing the vegetarian lifestyle:

Being a vegetarian can have long-term, positive health benefits. Eating a diet high in meat has been shown to increase blood pressure, and also contribute to heart disease and cancer. A steady diet of meat raises cholesterol, and builds up plaque in the arteries. Fresh fruit and vegetables not only taste good, but they

give you energy and vitality as opposed to the weighed down and sluggish feeling that often comes from eating meat. They also raise the good cholesterol levels (HDL), which is an important health objective.

Meat is pumped with hormones. Let's face it, the beef industry is a money-making business, and its goal is to get the most profit from each animal. Consequently, adding hormones and antibiotics to cows, pigs, and chickens results in larger animals that won't succumb to disease. However, the same hormones being forced into the animals go directly into bodies of those who consume the meat — particularly our kids. Many experts blame the excess of hormones on the earlier onset of puberty in children. Hormones in beef and milk have recently



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

been directly linked to reproductive and childhood cancers.

You'll save money. Simply put, meat is expensive. For the same \$10, you can get either one steak or a whole bagful of fruits, grains, and veggies that could very well give you enough ingredients to make meals for a few days. Farmers' markets are plentiful around the country and offer good deals for fresh produce. If you have a green thumb and a small outside space, you can easily grow your own fruits and vegetables to save even more money.

It's humane. The conditions of beef, chicken, and pig farms are cruel enough to make even hardened meat eaters reconsider their position. Farms are extremely overcrowded and animals basically live their short lives in packed and filthy conditions waiting to be killed. Many animals live their entire lives crammed so close together, they can barely turn around. Countless animals become crippled or lame from lack of movement.

Going vegetarian helps the environment. Meat consumption has been linked to serious negative environmental consequences and even global warming. Simply put, there are great areas of land around the world that are destroyed to make room for livestock farms for the sole purpose of profit. Furthermore, mass amounts of water are necessary to raise farm animals. According to "The Food Revolution" by John Robbins, it takes about 5,000 gallons of water to produce just one pound of meat. Yet, to grow one pound of wheat requires just 25 gallons of water.

Danielle Sullivan is a writer living in New York City. Follow her on Instagram @Deewrite.

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Lost voices

Why victims of sexual harassment don't speak up

BY CHERYL MAGUIRE

People want proof. Due to the popularity of true-crime TV shows, juries expect to see hard evidence like DNA, blood splatter, or ligature marks to prove the accused is guilty. In cases of sexual harassment or abuse, there may not be any forensic evidence available. This lack of proof can leave the victim feeling like it's not worth telling anyone about the incident or even wondering if a crime actually occurred.

Consider the following situation: A young woman had a casual, consensual sexual relationship with her boss. She ends up dating someone else, but her boss continues to send her sexually explicit text messages. When she doesn't respond, her boss embarrasses her during a business meeting. He then promotes someone she supervises. A reporter who is privy to this encounter, asks the woman if she experienced sexual harassment. It isn't until this moment that she begins to consider, "Was I sexually harassed?" Even though this is the premise of the recently released fiction paperback, "Startup," by Doree Shafir, similar scenarios have occurred in workplaces across America.

Sexual harassment and abuse can be difficult to identify. Often, the harassment starts out gradually with a sexual joke or seemingly innocuous comment about another person. It may then evolve to touching, grazing, or "accidentally" brushing up against a woman's body. This slow progression leaves the victim feeling confused and even accepting of the inappropriate behaviors since it occurred over time.

A meta-analysis of 10 years of research about workplace sexual harassment conducted by Lilia Cortina and Jennifer Berdahl found that "less than one-third of victims informally discuss sexual harassment with supervisors, and less than 25 percent file formal sexual harassment complaints with their employers."

If sexual harassment is considered a crime, then why do victims fail to report it when it happens? There are a variety of reasons why women don't speak up, according to research studies and feedback from victims:

They blame themselves

Supermodel Ashley Graham recently

revealed that she experienced sexual harassment at the young age of 10, by the son of her parent's friend. She never told anyone about the incident when it happened. At the time, she asked herself, "Did I do something to provoke that?" Lady Gaga had a similar reaction when she experienced sexual assault at age 19. She thought to herself, "Did I do something wrong to bring this on myself? What did I do?"

This is a common question victims ask themselves. In an interview with LiveScience, Yolanda Moses, an anthropology professor at the University of California, Riverside, stated, "There's an outdated cultural belief that good women don't get raped. Such beliefs can lead victims to think that the sexual assault might have been their own fault."

They feel embarrassed

Research published by Marjorie R. Sable in the Journal of American College Health in 2006, found one of the main reasons women fail to report sexual assault is due to feelings of "shame, guilt, and embarrassment." In American culture, children are taught to regard their genitals as private. Many parents even refer to it as "private parts."

This belief causes some women to feel embarrassed when they are sexually harassed or assaulted. Furthermore, the assailant may use offensive or degrading language, which the victim may feel embarrassed to repeat to other people, resulting in not reporting the incident.

They fear that no one will believe them

In 2017, Bill Cosby was on trial for sexually assaulting Andrea Constand, but it resulted in a mistrial. More than two dozen women have accused Cosby of drugging and raping them. Barbara Bowman claims she is one of the women who was raped by Cosby. Bowman told a lawyer about the incident, but he accused her of making the story up. She continued to tell people for over a decade, yet no one believed her. In 2006, her story was in People Magazine and, later, in Newsweek, yet no one seemed to care. People didn't want to believe Cosby could be capable of raping someone, since he was a famous and respected actor.

Behavior is considered acceptable

In some work environments, men's inappropriate or illegal sexual behaviors towards women are considered acceptable, which only perpetuates their actions. Since July 2016, more than 20 women, including hosts Gretchen Carlson and Megyn Kelly, stated they experienced sexual harassment while working at Fox News.

During the lawsuit, Andrea Tantaros stated, "Fox News masquerades as a defender of traditional family values, but behind the scenes, it operates like a sex-fueled, Playboy Mansion-like cult, steeped in intimidation, indecency, and misogyny." Research supports Tantaros' perception. In a 2010 research paper in the Journal of Social Issues, Illinois State University Professor of Psychology John B. Pryor found sexual harassment is more likely to occur in workplaces where men perceive the social norms as permitting such behavior.

Lack of consequences

There are situations when the assailant of sexual harassment or abuse receives either little or no ramifications. In March 2016, Brock Turner, a Stanford University student, was convicted of three counts of sexual assault. Despite these serious charges and a 12-page victim-impact statement, he was only sentenced to six months in jail, but released after three months. This lenient sentence sends a message to women that it might not be worth reporting sexual harassment or rape, being subjected to invasive medical exams, and reliving the experience in court, if the accused doesn't receive any significant consequences.

Another example of a person receiving no consequences for their alleged sexual misbehavior is the actor Casey Affleck. Two women filed sexual harassment suits against him in 2010. People were outraged over the fact that he won an Academy Award despite the sexual claims. They took to Twitter with comments such as one by Feminist Frequency who stated, "People who commit sexual harassment should lose their jobs, not be celebrated with honor and prestige." Another person on Twitter, Preston Bradsher, commented, "Women get fired for reporting sexual harassment and men win awards for committing it."



where the harasser won't find it and attempt to destroy it.

Even if you are unsure if you want to report it, document everything, so you have a record of it. Having an account of what happened, can increase your likelihood of winning a court case.

Report it. If you decide you want to file a sexual harassment claim in court, you need to first report the incident to either your human resources department or a similar person in management. If the incident occurred in a school setting, the procedure can vary depending on the state you live in. According to Title IX of the Educational Amendment of 1972, all schools receiving federal funding must investigate sexual harassment complaints. In order for this to occur, you must report it to a school official. If nothing results from the complaint, you can file one with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.

File a complaint. If you reported the incident to the proper person at your workplace and nothing improved, then your next step would be to file a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. It will either attempt to resolve the issue for you or "issue you the right to sue."

Talk to a lawyer. After you have completed the earlier steps and you still are experiencing harassment, try discussing the case with a lawyer who specializes in sexual harassment cases. A lawyer can file a sexual harassment claim against your employer on your behalf. If you win the lawsuit, you could receive reinstatement of your job (if you lost it), lost wages, damages for emotional distress, attorney costs and fees, and requirement of the employer to implement sexual harassment policies and training.

...

If more women reported sexual harassment and assault, it would be less stigmatized in the United States. Also, when women come forward, it gives other women the courage to admit it, as was seen in the case of Bill Cosby or Fox News with dozens of women coming forward in each case.

Bradsher's comment on Twitter, "Women get fired for reporting sexual harassment, and men win awards for committing it," speaks to the current cultural norms in our society. The best way to change these perceptions is by having more women openly discussing and reporting sexual harassment.

This article was originally published in BloodandMilk.com.

Cheryl Maguire holds a master's degree in counseling psychology, and she is the mother of three children (Twitter: @CherylMaguire05).

Fear of retaliation

A common reason women don't report sexual harassment in the workplace is due to fear of retaliation. In a New York Times story about the sexual harassment cases at Fox News, more than a dozen women admitted to experiencing sexual harassment but didn't report it due to fear of retribution or of being fired.

There is a valid reason women fear losing their job, since some women actually do get fired after making a claim. In 2002, researchers Mindy E. Bergman and Patrick Palmieri of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign published their finding in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* that reporting sexual harassment often does trigger retaliation, which can cause the victim to experience lower job satisfaction and psychological distress.

What can you do if you experience sexual harassment or assault?

Even though it may be difficult to report sexual harassment, it is important to do so to prevent it from continuing to happen to you and other people. The more people speak up, the less acceptable sexual harassment behaviors will become.

Here are some steps you can take if you experience sexual harassment or assault:

Document it. If you experience sexual harassment, it is important to document as much information as possible. You should write down the date, details of what happened, where it happened and people who were present. If there are sexually inappropriate written documents such as e-mails or text messages, print copies of them. You should keep all the information at home or a safe place

Costly mistakes to avoid when applying for financial aid

In my experience, most parents believe that once their child has started college and received her financial-aid offer, they can stop paying attention to future financial aid requests. Often overlooked is that financial-aid offers generally are in effect for one academic year and must be renewed every year. Simply put, families must reapply for financial aid each year a child will be in college.

Making a single incorrect financial decision during your child's college years could upend years of proper planning. These are some of the most common mistakes that should be avoided:

Making withdrawals from IRA accounts

Normally a distribution from a traditional Individual Retirement Account prior to age 59.5 would incur a 10-percent penalty. If the distribution is used for qualified higher education expenses, it is exempt from the early distribution penalty. However, income tax on the distribution would still need to be paid. Additionally, the income from the IRA distribution would increase your total taxable income and decrease your potential financial aid.

For a ROTH Individual Retirement Account distribution, a similar policy applies. There would be no penalties incurred or income tax due, but the distribution would be considered non-taxed income on the following year's Free Application for Federal Student Aid form and could potentially decrease your potential financial aid.

Under both of these scenarios, the withdrawal of funds from your traditional or ROTH Individual Retirement Account would increase your total income (taxable and non-taxable). This would increase the amount of your Expected Family Contribution and could decrease the amount of aid you might receive.

Liquidating assets at the wrong time

The application bases Expected Family Contribution on income and tax data of the prior-prior year before attending college. This is referred to as the base year. What



is the prior-prior year? Rather than looking back just one year at a family's financial information to determine the contribution number, tax information from two years ago (prior-prior year) is reviewed to determine aid.

That means that the base year now runs from the second half of your child's high school sophomore year through to the first half of the student's junior year. Put another way, the base year is the calendar year before a student enters his senior year of high school. Parents who have invested for years in stocks, mutual funds, and other investments who plan to liquidate these assets to pay for college need to take special care of the timing of the sale of these assets. Depending on when assets are sold, this could affect the amount of aid available to your child in future years. Why? Because when an investment is sold, and a capital gain is realized, that gain will be included in the parent's following year income tax return. That capital gain amount will increase the parent's earning and thus their contribution number.

Grandparent gifts at the wrong time

It's nice when a grandparent wants to help her grandchild pay for college. But if a grandparent gives money to a grandchild



FAMILY FINANCIAL PLANNING

ANTHONY N. CORRAO

from a 529 plan at the wrong time, it can have a dramatic impact on the amount of aid a student can receive.

A 529 plan owned by grandparents is a useful college-planning tool. Assets in a grandparent-owned 529 plan are not reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, but some colleges may ask a student to include them in the College Scholarship Service Profile, the financial aid division of the College Board. Research the difference when applying for financial aid.

When a grandparent withdraws funds from a 529 plan to pay for a grandchild's tuition, that amount is reportable the following year as the student's non-taxable income on the application. The student's non-taxable income would increase the amount of his Expected Family Contribution, which could lower the amount of aid available to him. The best advice here is to have open conversations with your child's grandparents in order to best coordinate timing to maximize financial-aid benefits.

Planning for college costs is an ongoing process. One simple mistake or oversight could ruin years of savings and careful planning. Consult with me, another financial advisor, or your accountant for advice before making a costly mistake.

Anthony N. Corrao is president of wealth management and director of corporate education at Manhattan Ridge Advisors. For more than 25 years, he has helped families towards their financial goals by developing financial, educational, and retirement-planning strategies.

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Type 1 diabetes: How to care for your child

My oldest child has recently been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. Is there a difference between Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes? There is so much we need to learn about options for insulin, counting carbohydrates, etc. that we are overwhelmed. What can we do to manage his diabetes and what advice do you have for transitioning into this new “normal” and avoiding further health complications?

The diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes in children can be overwhelming at first. Type 1 diabetes in children is an autoimmune condition in which your child’s body no longer produces an important hormone called insulin. Your child needs insulin to survive, so you’ll have to replace the missing hormone. Type 1 diabetes in children requires consistent care, but advances in blood-sugar monitoring and insulin delivery have improved the daily management of the condition.

There are several options for insulin delivery, including using a syringe or injection pen, which is a device that looks like an ink pen except the cartridge is filled with insulin. A third option is a device about the size of a cellphone that is worn

on the outside of the body and called an insulin pump. A tube connects a reservoir of insulin to a catheter inserted under the skin of the abdomen to directly input insulin in the body.

As you probably know, there are several blood tests for Type 1 diabetes in children — the primary screening being a blood sugar test taken at a random time. It’s likely that a pediatrician will recommend additional tests to confirm the type of diabetes that your child has. It’s important to distinguish between Type 1 diabetes and Type 2 diabetes, because treatment strategies differ.

Type 2 diabetes is more commonly associated with adults. In fact, it used to be called adult-onset diabetes. But Type 2 diabetes in children is on the rise, fueled largely by the obesity epidemic. Children who are overweight, have high blood pressure, or have a family history of diabetes are at risk of developing diabetes. Children with Type 2 diabetes have varying levels of dependency on insulin and other medication.

Children with Type 2 diabetes may develop the autoimmune disease gradually. Symptoms of both Type 1 and Type 2



FAMILY HEALTH

DR. PRAMOD NARULA, MD
Chairman of Pediatrics
NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn
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diabetes include increased thirst and frequent urination, weight loss, fatigue, and blurred vision.

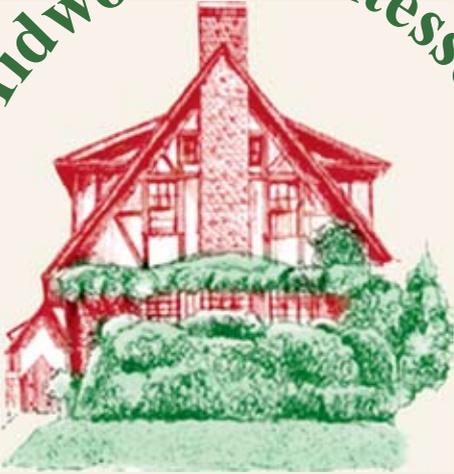
Complications of Type 1 diabetes can develop gradually if blood-sugar levels aren’t well-controlled over a prolonged period of time. This can lead to diabetes complications eventually being disabling or even life-threatening. They can include heart and blood vessel disease, osteoporosis, and damage to the nerves, kidneys, and eyes.

For parents of a child with newly diagnosed Type 1 diabetes, the main change is learning to frequently check and adjust blood glucose levels (also called blood sugar). It may need checking 10 to 12 times a day. How much insulin your child needs will depend on the timing of meals, the types of food eaten, and her activity levels.

Nutrition and exercise play a significant role in the management of Type 1 diabetes. Your child’s dietitian will likely suggest that your child — and the rest of the family — consume fewer animal products and sweets. Sugary foods are OK once in a while, as long as they’re included in your child’s meal plan. Kids with Type 1 diabetes can still play sports, just be sure to check blood sugar levels before and after they are very active. Bring snacks along at all times “just in case” as a way to help keep ranges normal.

Your lives will change with your child’s Type 1 diabetes diagnosis, but in time, you’ll get more comfortable with the process to keep him healthy and active. As you make adjustments, you can take comfort in knowing this autoimmune disease doesn’t have to limit your child.

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1. Walsh JE et al. Genet Med 2008;10(7): 508-514
2. Kellmann A et al. J Inher Metab Dis 2012; 35(2): 343-351

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Six ways to help out local dogs right now

The bond between a dog and his owner is a strong one, built over many years. It is an attachment that might only be understood by those that have experienced the unconditional love and support that dogs provide. Most of us cannot imagine treating our dogs with anything but caring and love, but sadly, that is not always the case, and many dogs silently suffer at the hands of their owners. Yet we can all work to help abused and abandoned dogs right in our own neighborhood. Here are six ways to start!

1. Look around. The first step in helping stop abuse is in noticing that it is taking place. Take notice of the sometimes subtle signs of animal abuse and cruelty. Do you see a dog that is out all the time, even during scorching hot temperatures or incredibly freezing temps? Do you notice there is a dog that looks extremely skinny and never has water available? Do you have a neighbor that always seems to be screaming at his dog? If something doesn't seem right, it probably isn't.

Trust your instincts.

2. Tell someone. When you see abuse, report it to the proper authorities in your area. In many cases, that will be the police. In certain areas, there are special organizations, such as the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which will investigate your report. Write down every occurrence in detail. Note the date, time, and weather conditions. The more detailed and accurate you can report your claim, the better chances of immediate help and possible conviction. Remember that the use of social media often helps, too. So if you are reporting a company that is harming their animals in some way, you will most likely get immediate attention through the use of social media. Even private cases have been recognized and helped in this way.

3. Get vocal. Join animal organizations to help pass humane laws to help improve the lives of animals. Get vocal on Twitter and Facebook, join online groups, and attend meetings in your area. When speaking with family and friends, let them know



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

about ways they can help animals — or at the very least, not hurt them.

4. Support rescue-dog organizations.

There are so many agencies that do outstanding work to help animals, and they all need our support. There are also many organizations dedicated to rescuing, rehabilitation, and re-homing abused dogs. By patronizing or donating just the cost of a few cups of coffee per month, you can help fund food, medical care, and basic necessities for many dogs. Monetary donations are always welcomed, but often, these organizations are in dire need of practical items, such as disinfectants, blankets, paper towels, tissues, dog food, etc.

5. Teach a child to love animals. Most dog owners fondly remember growing up knowing the love of their dogs. Children learn so much from having pets. They also learn how to treat those animals from watching their parents and family. When you teach a child that animals are beautiful beings that need our protection, you not only change the life of a child, but also the life of every animal that child encounters over a lifetime.

6. Volunteer. Dog rescues need people to help, plain and simple. Most are publicly funded and just do not have the manpower needed to handle the large volume of animals they take in. You can walk dogs, clean cages, and speak with potential adopters. Every little bit helps when it comes to helping get homeless dogs into permanent homes.

Dogs do so much for us; it's only right that we do all we can for them!

Danielle Sullivan is a writer living in New York City. Follow her on Instagram @Deewrite.

How much homework help is too much?

My daughter is in fourth grade. I want to be a homework support for her, but how much help is too much?

Homework is meant to be done with a certain amount of autonomy. At the elementary level, teachers typically use homework as both a form of assessment and review, so they really want to see what the child can do — not the parent.

Many children like to know that someone is around for them in case any questions do arise, so being in close proximity to your child while she is completing her homework is a good idea. Look it over after she has completed it by herself. Doing so holds her accountable while still upholding her feeling of independence. Keep in mind, having a few questions per assignment is appropriate. It is okay to help your child if you feel that she is struggling with



something and to have her go back and look something over and try to correct it. However, if you find that she is having a hard time independently answering 50 percent of the homework assigned more than 50 percent of the time, this is a good time to reach out to the teachers and let them know the amount of help she is needing at home.

In general, if you're ever worried that you may be helping your child too much



TIPS FROM A TEACHER

LAUREN ROSEN

or too little, reach out to the teachers and ask them their homework-help policy. Then, you can work together to make sure your child is getting the most out of her homework.

Lauren Rosen (MrsLRosen@gmail.com) has been teaching in Manhattan private schools for 10 years, and she lives in Manhattan with her husband and daughter.

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Keep the bond

Nurturing long-distance grandparent relationships

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

I grew up with grandparents who lived in another state. Although New Jersey was not exactly the other side of the continent, our home in New York was a two-and-a-half-hour car ride, so visits had to be planned in advance. When my brother and I were toddlers, my parents took us almost every weekend for visits. Once we were teenagers, my retired grandparents usually made the trek due to harried schedules on our end.

At the time, I didn't think of the relationship with my grandparents as a long-distance one. It was the only one I knew, and we all made it work. We shared birthdays, holidays, and special occasions. We also talked by phone regularly. I had friends whose grandparents lived up the street, but I never felt that the relationship they had with their grandparents was more special than mine.

According to an AARP Bulletin, "A little over four in 10 (43 percent) of grandparents have to travel over 200 miles to see their grandchildren who live furthest away from them." The number one reason for grandparents not seeing their grandchildren enough was distance (67 percent). Yet, this same study indicated that most grandparents feel they play a very important role in the lives of their grandchildren. Therefore, it seems that many grandparents are finding creative ways to bridge the distance.

Special circumstance: When grandparents reside in a nursing home or assisted-care facility

As an expert in the eldercare industry, Carla Sutter suggests some preparation for children before visiting grandparents in a nursing home:

Bridge item: Give the grandchild something they can "hand" to Grandma, such as a drawing or painting he made. This helps to break the ice but can also serve as an alternative to a hug that the child might not be comfortable with in this unusual environment.

Use books to educate: Show pictures to the grandkids ahead of time. A nursing facility will have lots of residents

in wheelchairs, hooked up to oxygen, etc. Prepare them visually for what Grandpa will look like, so it is not a surprise.

Why grandparents are special

According to KidsHealth (Nemours Foundation, kidshealth.org), "Establishing a bond with grandparents can benefit kids in many ways. Grandparents can be great role models and influences, and they can provide a sense of cultural heritage and family history. Grandparents provide their grandkids with love, have their best interests at heart, and can make them feel safe."

"Parents have to make sure kids are doing the right things," says Dr. Laura Markham, a parenting expert and author of "Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids" and "Peaceful Parent, Happy Siblings" (TarcherPerigee). "When grandparents are not the permanent caregiver, they can be the child's cheerleader without getting involved with everyday rules and expectations, such as doing homework and eating vegetables," Markham adds.

Carla Sutter, master of social work, director of Franchise Operations at Synergy HomeCare Franchising, LLC (www.syner-

gyhomecare.com), explains, "The grandparent relationship is that one extra-special bond that can really make a difference in a child's life. Grandparents don't have the same ego, because they're not directly involved. If something goes wrong, they are not the ones who are viewed as messing things up."

Sutter describes a moment when a parent might say, "You never let me go out wearing that!" "Grandparents are not as uptight about the little stuff," explains Sutter. She also points out that a positive relationship with a grandparent translates to strong relationships with older adults in the community and an understanding and comfort with aging.

Grandparents are the link to family traditions. They also serve as historians. Grandparents are interesting, because to the grandkids, they lived so long ago, that their past is retro cool, so grandkids want to hear all about it. I used to love when my grandma would tell me stories about her childhood — especially when she'd regale me with secrets about her first crushes and sneaking out to go to a dance even though she was grounded.

Long-distance: The positives and negatives

"It depends on how often you see the child and which end of the continuum you are on," Markham explains. "There are different challenges for all grandparents. For those far away, there is a huge challenge to maintain intimacy. On the other hand, a grandparent who provides regular care has to enforce the parents' rules, even if a little TV or sugar is okay in her own mind."

Sutter agrees. "There are positives and negatives to all relationships. If the role is to discipline and be a structure-maker, you might lose some of the 'sparkle' of that grandparent relationship. Instead of looking at long-distance relationships as a negative, find opportunities to engage with your grandchild in special ways to make sure the relationship is maintained."

Staying connected

"Technology is key," Sutter states. With Skype, FaceTime, and other apps, grandchildren can talk face-to-face with grandparents who live far away. However, many



grandparents are not tech savvy. Parents and older children can serve as guides when it comes to making grandparents comfortable with technology, Sutter offers.

Markham describes creative ways to use technology for communication.

"Sometimes grandparents don't know what to say to a child they don't see often." She advises asking the parents to suggest a book their child loves. Grandma can read the book to her grandchild online. "Kids need the visual. Sing songs to them such as 'Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes' — something silly. Laughter is a great ice breaker."

Another idea is to share mealtime. "Schedule your video call during a meal. Conversation is more natural during meal time when kids are comfortable and used to conversing." Markham also recommends online games that grandparents and grandchildren can participate in together, such as chess or fantasy sports leagues.

Technology isn't the only way that grandparents can nurture a long-distance relationship, however. It just takes a little effort and ingenuity.

"You don't always want your connection to be about stuff. I'm a big believer in

writing," Sutter shares. "There's something special about getting snail mail. Everyone's lives are extremely busy, and many grandparents are still working. I like the idea of doing a postcard back-and-forth to share knowledge and experiences."

Sutter suggests sending postcards with photos of animals or locations that might be very different from where grandchildren live. "Send these to your grandchildren with a line about the animal or place you've seen." She says grandkids can make scrapbooks of the postcards. For young children, grandparents can ask Mom or Dad to send a postcard back with the grandchild's drawing of something she saw.

Markham also advocates snail mail as an alternative way to stay connected.

"Grandparents can start a progressive story. They write the first paragraph. The grandchild responds with the second paragraph, and so on." She also recommends sending cartoons and jokes back and forth via snail mail. Parents can fax or text photos and answers back. This is easier on busy parents with young children who can't handle the correspondence on their own.

Markham proposes working on long-distance projects together as well. If a

grandchild likes to sew, for instance, collaborate with her on a quilt project. Sew individual squares remotely. During a visit, sew the squares together to make a complete quilt.

Of course, whenever possible, schedule in-person visits.

"Plant a tree for your grandchild. Each time he visits, take his photo by the tree." Markham reports that this is a great way to show a grandchild that he is special and to document his growth and maturation.

How the parents can help

Parents play an integral role in nurturing long-distance grandparent relationships. Sharing stories about their parents and revealing their own emotional connection helps kids learn the importance of staying connected with family.

Parents can help by preparing their children for visits with Grandma.

"Before the visit, you can use Skype to help the child warm up to the grandparent before they arrive," Markham recommends. "After the visit, send along the photos you took. Parents can also laminate picture books for their children to flip through."

Older kids love to be in charge. Markham reports, "Ask teens and older kids to print out the photos and make a book out of them." Older kids are also great with photo apps and can make collages and post on Instagram.

Markham advises that one-on-one time with a grandparent is extremely important, and parents should encourage it. She says this helps to develop a unique bond.

"Parents are a key factor. However, grandparents should try not to burden the parents with the responsibility," warns Sutter. Instead, she suggests that grandparents encourage simple ways to respond to gifts and messages. For instance, if a grandparent sends a gift, instead of expecting the parent to help their young child write a thank you note, you can ask them to snap a photo of the child with the gift.

Many parents have the additional challenge of having local grandparents on one side of the family and long-distance grandparents on the other. In this case, Sutter proposes setting up special time to reconnect with the grandparents your children haven't visibly seen. "At the holidays, for instance, ask the long-distance grandparents to arrive ahead of time to rekindle the relationship before everyone else arrives."

Myrna Beth Haskell is an award-winning author, columnist, and feature writer. Her work has appeared in publications across the U.S. as well as internationally (www.myrnahaskell.com). She is also co-founder and managing editor of Sanctuary (www.sanctuary-magazine.com).

Rapping possibilities

Dee-1 and loan company teach college planning in Queens

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

National hip hop recording artist, motivational speaker, and former middle-school teacher Dee-1 joined forces with Sallie Mae to tell students at Hillcrest High School in Queens about the importance of college planning and financial literacy.

Dee-1 and representatives from Sallie Mae paid a visit to Hillcrest in September as part of the Bridging the Dream Tour, a nationwide journey to promote college applications and saving for higher education. Sallie Mae's Bridging the Dream Scholarship Program was introduced as well.

The New Orleans native, born David Augustine 29 years ago, performed his hit song, "Sallie Mae Back" (which he wrote to celebrate paying off his student loans), as well as his newest single, "Intelligence," for the nearly 2,000 high-school students. Sallie Mae employees also offered advice and resources to the teens.

Dee-1 started rapping as a student at Louisiana State University. During the mid-2000s, the artist released his first two mixtapes, then a third the year he graduated and began teaching mathematics at a middle school in Louisiana.

In 2009, he decided to stop teaching and follow his passion: music. That led to his self-released "David & Goliath" debut album. After several more mixtapes, his popularity grew big time. Fans couldn't get enough of that down-to-earth underdog vibe, which made his music unique.

In addition to being a featured speaker for corporate events, church programs, youth groups, and industry events, the rapper has appeared on "The View," ESPN, Fox News, and hundreds of local TV, radio, and digital outlets across the country.

His seven-state, 10-city tour with Sallie Mae began on Sept. 18 in California and concluded on Oct. 5 in Greenville, S.C. In total, Team Dee-1 reached more than 10,000 high school students with his positive message.

He spoke with NY Parenting readers about the tour and why it's so important for young people to be financially literate and start college-planning early.

Tammy Scileppi: Please tell our readers why you became involved with the Bridging the Dream Tour.

Dee-1: I've spoken to high-school students all over the country, and they are



Rapper Dee-1 and Sallie Mae spread the word about planning and saving for college.

hungry for information about going to college, but that's not enough. We need to give them the tools and knowledge to create a game plan to pay for it, and ultimately, graduate. And that's what this tour is all about. Together, with Sallie Mae, we are committed to empowering and inspiring students to develop that plan, better understand what's out there to help pay for college, and how to borrow responsibly.

TS: What was your experience like?

Dee-1: Already, we've visited schools out west, in the south, and now, the northeast, and the energy, interaction, and reception have been amazing. We have met some incredible students with great potential. Most of them will be the first in their families to attend and graduate college. However, too many of them have concerns about how to pay for college, whether they're ready, and general fears about the unknown.

It's such a rewarding feeling to see and experience how my story and message resonates with so many of them. By the

end of my show, not only are they inspired and motivated, they realize that college is within reach, and if Dee-1 can do it, so can they.

TS: What was your message?

Dee-1: Using my own story and experiences, I spoke about the importance of planning for college and managing finances responsibly. I also want these kids to understand it's not just about going to college; it's about graduating from college! During the tour, I talked about scholarships, which are available for just about any interest, and encouraged high-school counselors and community leaders to nominate deserving juniors or seniors for Sallie Mae's \$25,000 Bridging the Dream Scholarship.

The Bridging the Dream Scholarship program recognizes students who have excelled both inside and outside of the classroom, but whose financial circumstances or other obstacles in life may not allow them to pursue a college education. Recipients will be announced later this year.

TS: Describe the reaction at Hillcrest.

Dee-1: Hillcrest has raised the bar for other schools on this tour. The engagement, participation, and overall enthusiasm of the staff, faculty, and students was just incredible.

The students were hyped! They were a little shy at first, but they came around, and we had a good discussion about the importance of a college education.

TS: Talk about your collaboration with Sallie Mae.

Dee-1: It sounds like an unlikely partnership, but the reality is, we both share the same mission: inspiring our young people to reach college. We've visited high schools and youth groups across the country to promote college planning and financial literacy and we've awarded \$190,000 in scholarships and student loan payments.

TS: Any advice for our parent readers?

Dee-1: My message is simple: Support and encourage your child's desire to attend college by helping them to create a plan for saving and paying for college. That plan should include filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, researching and applying for scholarships, and having a basic understanding of the costs associated with attending college.

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based writer, parent, and regular contributor to NY Parenting.

Preparing for college

Antoine Oakley, director of corporate communications at Sallie Mae, shared his advice about how parents and teens can prepare for college.

"We know that families who have a plan to pay for college are better prepared to meet the costs of college and ultimately, they save more and borrow less," he said. "Sometimes, the hardest part is simply getting started. The good news is there are free resources out there, like Sallie Mae's college-planning calculator, that can get you on the right track."

In general, he said, Sallie Mae advises students and families to follow a three-step approach to paying for college:

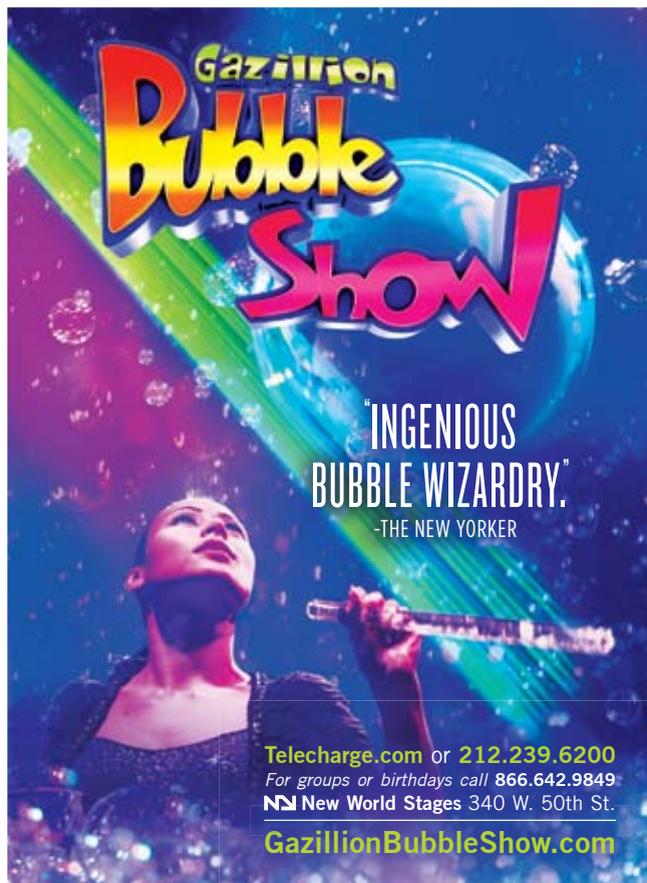
Start with money you won't have to pay back. Max out on money that doesn't have to be paid back, like scholarships and grants. Apply for as many as possible and do it early. Check out free resources like Scholarship Search by Sallie Mae (<https://www.salliemae.com/college-planning/tools/scholarship-search/>), home to more than five million scholarships collectively offering more than \$24

billion, as well as the College Planning Calculator (<https://www.salliemae.com/college-planning/tools/college-planning-calculator/>), which can help students and families create a customized plan.

Next, explore federal student loans. Get in line for the more than \$120 billion the government sets aside in scholarships, grants, and federal student loans by completing the FAFSA.

Consider a responsible private student loan to fill the gap between your available resources and the cost of college. If you need to borrow for college, do it responsibly. Understand how much you need to fund your education, not a lifestyle. Look at the starting salary of whatever career you plan to pursue, and don't let your debt exceed that amount.

"Financial literacy and college planning are keys to saving, planning, and paying for college, and parents can play an important role in their child's future by discussing finances, setting expectations, and developing a comprehensive plan to help them figure out how to make the dream of a higher education a reality," Oakley said.



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Calendar

NOVEMBER



Rock for all ages

Stomp your feet and sing along at the Brooklyn Bowl when the Rock and Roll Playhouse presents music of the Grateful Dead and Phish on Nov. 11 and Nov. 25.

The Rock and Roll Playhouse makes rock concerts a family affair in this weekly children's music workshop-series. Created by entrepreneur and owner of The Capitol Theatre and Brooklyn Bowl, Peter Shapiro, and Amy Striem, a certified early childhood and elementary teacher, the Rock and Roll Playhouse

uses music to educate children and explore their creativity.

The Music of the Grateful Dead featuring the Barton Hills Choir, on Nov. 11 at 11 am.

The Music of Phish, featuring Uncle Ebenezer, on Nov. 25 at 11 am. Tickets for both performances are \$12 and free for children under 1. Concerts are suitable for kids 1 to 100.

Brooklyn Bowl [61 Wythe Ave. between N. 11th and N. 12th streets in Williamsburg, (718) 963-3369; www.brooklynbowl.com].

Never miss a great event!

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Calendar

Submit a listing

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

Send your listing request to brooklyncalendar@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!

THURS, NOV. 1

IN BROOKLYN

Kids' Discovery Stations: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10:15 am to 12:15 pm; Free with garden admission.

Explore plants and use real science tools alongside Discovery Docents at our hands-on activity stations throughout the Discovery Garden. This is a drop-in program for camp groups and families with children of all ages. All programs are outdoors and canceled in inclement weather.

Little Maker Space: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11 am to 3 pm; Free with museum admission.

The studio is filled with all new activities for young artists and their caregivers to explore together. Activity stations invite tots to build and refine their motor skills; engage in sensory exploration of materials, and learn how to share with others. There is no such thing as a bad mess in this space, which is tailored to children 6 and younger.

Sensory Room: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2 pm to 2:30 pm; 2:45 pm to 3:15 pm; 3:30 pm to 4 pm; and 4:15 pm to 4:45 pm; Free with Museum Admission.

In this inclusive space, children of all abilities can explore their senses through play, including sensory mats, objects, and swings. The Sensory Room is designed to meet the needs of children with sensory sensitivities or who are on the autism spectrum. Space is limited to 10 children and their caregivers for each session, first come, first served.

FRI, NOV. 2

IN BROOKLYN

Block Lab: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10 am to 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

The museum invites visitors of all ages to develop spatial reasoning, engineering, and



Rocking in the bookstore

Let the magic begin! Come to Dan Zanes's House Party with Claudia Eliaza at Books are Magic on Nov. 10.

The children's artist presents a collection of folk songs along with inspiration to start your own family band. In this new songbook, he has curated a rich selection of folk songs that comprise an essential musical cross-section of the American experience and its multicultural, immigrant underpinnings.

The selections include the standard songs we all know and love, along with folk classics. Each song is

accompanied by a brief narrative on its historical context, followed by lyrics, notation, and chords.

It also includes informational sidebars throughout to give families the basics needed to pick up instruments and learn to more fully enjoy music as a family band. And in the back of the book, you'll find chord charts for guitar, ukulele, banjo, and mandolin.

Dan Zanes's House Party, Nov. 10 from 11 am to noon. Free. For all ages.

Books Are Magic (225 Smith St. at Butler Street in Brooklyn Heights; www.booksaremagic.net).

language skills through block play.

Kids' Discovery Stations: 10:15 am to 12:15 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Thursday, Nov. 1.

SAT, NOV. 3

IN BROOKLYN

Discover Gardening: Brooklyn Botanic

Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

Drop in and practice gardening skills alongside Discovery Docents in the Hamm Children's Learning Courtyard inside the Discovery Garden. Water and weed fruit and vegetable beds, plant a seed, and learn about what's growing! Create a plant-inspired craft

Calendar

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to take home. This is a drop-in program for families with children of all ages. All programs are outdoors and canceled in inclement weather.

Farmer's Market: Wyckoff House Museum, 5816 Clarendon Rd. at Ditmas Avenue; 11 am to 3 pm; Free.

Join the Wyckoff farm team as we share our harvest with the community. Stop by and grab your veggies, fruits, herbs, seeds, and local crafts at affordable prices. Make a day of it and check out other events that may be happening that day, including workshops, family day, or hands-on skill building.

Back 2 Back Storytime – Alexandra Penfold and Lisa Anchin: Books Are Magic, 225 Smith St. at Butler Street; www.booksaremagic.net; 11 am to noon; Free.

The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators presents Back 2 Back, a series celebrating veterans and newcomers in the industry. This month, we welcome Alexandra Penfold and Lisa Anchin. Follow a group of children through a day in their school, where everyone is welcomed with open arms. A school where kids in patkas, hijabs, and yarmulkes play side-by-side with friends in baseball caps. A school where students grow and learn from each other's traditions and the whole community gathers to celebrate the Lunar New Year.

Brooklyn Music School at BRIC House: BRIC House, 647 Fulton St.; (718) 638-5660; www.brooklynmusicsschool.org/calendar/2018/11/3/bms-bric-house-party-nov-2018; Noon to 5pm; Free.

Brooklyn Music School presents this fun workshop covering everything from how we grow our food to how we treat our neighbors, everything on this planet is connected! Through art-making, live performances, and more, join us as we explore the different ecosystems of our lives, and what we can do to better care for one another and the place we call home. The day will culminate in a chance to dance together at an all-ages dance party, presented by Party Like Brooklyn, Baby.

Sylvia's Story Corner: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3 pm to 3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Join a museum Educator for this interactive story time. Books will focus on nature, compost, and sustainability.

SUN, NOV. 4

IN BROOKLYN

Storytime with Jon Burgerman – "How to Eat Pizza": Books Are Magic, 225 Smith St. at Butler Street; www.booksaremagic.net; 11 am to noon; Free.

How do you eat pizza? Do you pick the biggest slice? Add hot pepper flakes? Use your hands? Do you know how your pizza slice feels about that? He thinks it's disgust-



Spectacle for the holidays

It's dazzling, it's spectacular, it's the "Cirque Dreams Holidayze" show at the Kings Theatre, running from Nov. 29 to Dec. 2.

"Cirque Dreams Holidayze" lights up the 2018 holiday season with this popular and electrifying stage spectacular offering the audience a Broadway musical and Cirque adventure wrapped into one holiday gift for the entire family.

"Cirque Dreams Holidayze," Nov. 29 to Dec. 2. Thursdays and Fridays, 8 pm, and Saturdays and Sundays, 2 pm and 7:30 pm. Tickets range from \$29.50 to \$99.50. The show is suitable for all ages.

Kings Theatre [1027 Flatbush Ave. between Beverly Road and Tilden Avenue in Flatbush; boxofficekings@theambassadors.com; www.kingstheatre.com].

ing. There are so many other things you could eat — that aren't him. Bright, bold artwork and real-kid humor create a recipe for laugh-out-loud, finger-licking fun.

Family Discovery Weekends: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 1 pm to 3 pm; Free with garden admission.

Experiment, learn, and play together in the Discovery Garden. Hands-on stations throughout the garden's meadow, woodland, and marsh habitats, and in the vegetable garden, encourage families to explore nature together. Create a nature-based craft, artwork, or invention with Discovery Docents. This is a drop-in program for families with children of all ages. All programs are outdoors and canceled in inclement weather.

Gede Celebration: Cumbe Center for African and Diaspora Dance, 558 Fulton St. at Flatbush Avenue Extension; (718) 935-9700;

www.cumbedance.com; 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm; \$20.

In this special celebration, you'll learn the traditional dances of Banda and Maskawon, mostly known as Yanvalou Gede, in a dynamic dance workshop. To enhance the experience, dancers can wear black, white, purple, or silver outfits and bring props like a cane, dark glasses, and a tall black top hat. Come celebrate life and death with the Gede spirits through song, dance and drums.

TUES, NOV. 6

IN BROOKLYN

Kids vote too!: Lefferts Historic House, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Noon to 5 pm; \$3.

Join the Prospect Park Alliance at the Lefferts Historic House after voting this Election Day where kids vote, too! All children under 18 are welcome to cast their votes for na-

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tional and local representatives. Polls close at 4 pm.

CityParks Street Hockey: Sunset Park, 50th Street and Fourth Avenue; (718) 760-6999; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2018/11/06/cityparks-street-hockey; 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm; Free.

City Parks Foundation, in partnership with the New York Islanders, is offering free, weekly instructional street hockey program for kids ages 8 to 12 in local neighborhood parks. Youth will learn basic hockey skills such as stickhandling, passing, shooting and core life skills, such as safety, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

WED, NOV. 7

IN BROOKLYN

CityParks Street Hockey: St. John's Recreation Center, 1251 Prospect Plaza; (718) 760-6999; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2018/11/06/cityparks-street-hockey; 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm; Free.

Brooklyn Traditional Slow Jam: Old Stone House at JJ Byrne Playground, 336 Third Ave. and Fourth Avenue; (718) 768-3195; 7 pm to 9 pm; \$5.

This is acoustic instrumental meet-up focuses on tunes in the Irish, English, New England Old Time, French Canadian, American Southern, and Scandinavian traditions. Tunes are those that are typically suitable for contra dancing or other traditional fiddle tunes. It's fun and can be challenging, but is a great way to improve your playing. You don't have to be a great player, play in tune, or know the songs to give it a shot. If you want to suggest a song, you should either know the song well enough to play it on repeat or we can see if anyone else does!

THURS, NOV. 8

IN BROOKLYN

Little Maker Space: 11 am to 3 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, Nov. 1.

Sensory Room: 2 pm to 2:30 pm; 2:45 pm to 3:15 pm; 3:30 pm to 4 pm; and 4:15 pm to 4:45 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, Nov. 1.

FRI, NOV. 9

IN BROOKLYN

Block Lab: 10 am to 1 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Nov. 2.

Tot Shabbat Services followed by dinner: Congregation Beth Elohim Early Childhood Center, Eighth Avenue and Garfield Place; (718) 768-3814 X 210; www.congregationbethelohim.org; 5:30 pm; \$18 for adults, \$7 children, and free for children under 2 years old.

Join families from across the Congrega-



Discover Oz in Brooklyn

Follow the Yellow Brick Road to On Stage at Kingsborough for "The Wizard of Oz" on Nov. 17.

Young and old alike will enjoy this performance of the enchanting adaptation of the timeless tale of Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion and the Scarecrow traveling to see the Wizard. Presented by the award-winning Vital Theater Company, the

one-hour production is suitable for children of all ages. After the performance, kids will have the opportunity to meet the cast.

"The Wizard of Oz," Nov. 17 at 2 pm. Tickets \$13.

On Stage at Kingsborough [200 Oriental Blvd. at Oxford Street in Manhattan Beach, (718) 368-5596; www.onstageatkingsborough.org].

tion community on select Friday evenings throughout the year for Tot Shabbat services. Together we will light the candles, sing, dance, and play — all before bedtime. And, on extra special nights, we'll have dinner together, too! Please visit cbebk.org for up-to-date information and to RSVP.

"Musica Mystica": St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St. at Clinton Street; (718) 875-6960; 7 pm; \$20 (\$15 students and seniors).

Grace Chorale of Brooklyn performs the music inspired by religious faith. With the Saint Ann's School High School Chorus.

SAT, NOV. 10

IN BROOKLYN

Storytime with Sharee Miller – "Don't Touch My Hair!": Books Are Magic, 225 Smith St. at Butler Street; www.booksaremagic.net; 11 am to noon; Free.

It seems that wherever Aria goes, someone wants to touch her hair. In the street, strangers reach for her fluffy curls; and even under

the sea, in the jungle, and in space, she's chased by a mermaid, monkeys, and poked by aliens, until, finally, Aria has had enough! Author-illustrator Sharee Miller takes the tradition of appreciation of black hair to a new, fresh, level as she doesn't seek to convince or remind young readers that their curls are beautiful — she simply acknowledges black beauty while telling a fun, imaginative story.

Dan Zane's House Party – A musical storytime with Claudia Eliaza: Books Are Magic, 225 Smith St. at Butler Street; www.booksaremagic.net; 11 am to noon; Free.

The children's artist presents a collection of folk songs along with inspiration to start your own family band. In this new songbook, he has curated a rich selection of folk songs that comprise an essential musical cross-section of the American experience and its multicultural, immigrant underpinnings. The selections include the standard songs we all know and love, along with folk classics.

Sylvia's Story Corner: 3 pm to 3:30 pm.

Calendar

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Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 3.

SUN, NOV. 11

IN BROOKLYN

The Music of Grateful Dead: Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Ave. between N. 11th and N. 12th streets; (718) 963-3369; www.brooklynbowl.com; 11 am; \$12 (Free for children under 1).

The Rock and Roll Playhouse is hosting this fun event for kids, featuring Barton Hills Choir.

Storytime with Eva Chen – “Juno Valentine and the Magical Shoes”: Books Are Magic, 225 Smith St. at Butler Street; www.booksaremagic.net; 11 am to noon; Free.

Juno Valentine's favorite shoes don't light up. They don't have wheels. They are, to be perfectly honest, the tiniest bit boring. But they're still her favorite muddy-puddle-jumping, everyday-is-an-adventure shoes. One day, when they go missing, Juno discovers something amazing: a magical room filled with every kind of shoe she could possibly imagine! Juno embarks on an epic journey through time and space, stepping into the shoes of female icons from Frida Kahlo and Cleopatra to Lady Gaga and Serena Williams.

“The Muppets Take Manhattan”: BAM Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave. between Ashland Place and St. Felix Street; www.bam.org; 2 pm; \$7 children (\$10 adults and seniors).

BAMkids Movie Matinee presents this 1984 animated flick, recommended for children 5 years and older, featuring the Muppets with delightful music and Broadway dreams. Approximately 94 minutes.

“Musica Mystica”: 3 pm. St. Ann's Church. See Friday, Nov. 9.

MON, NOV. 12

IN BROOKLYN

Race around the farm yard: Lefferts Historic House, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; 2 pm to 4 pm; \$3.

Get out and get moving in the Lefferts yard! The whole family can participate in potato sack races, spoon races, stilts, and other old-fashioned games.

TUES, NOV. 13

IN BROOKLYN

ECC Drop-in Center Opens! Congregation Beth Elohim Early Childhood Center, Eighth Avenue and Garfield Place; (718) 768-3814 X 210; www.congregationbethelohim.org; 10 am; Free.

The tots drop-in center is place for children ages birth to 24 months and their parents or

Celebrating Haitian dance

Celebrate Gede at Cumbe Center for African and Diaspora Dance on Nov. 4.

In this special celebration, you'll learn the traditional dances of Banda and Maskawon, mostly known as Yanvalou Gede, in a two-hour dance workshop. To enhance the experience, dancers can wear black, white, purple, or silver outfits and bring props like a cane, dark glasses, and a tall black top hat.

Come celebrate life and death with the Gede spirits through song, dance, and drums. Kwa Simibo! After class, join fellow revelers for some light refreshments and mingling to top off our celebration.

Gede Celebration, Nov. 4, 2:30 pm to



5:30 pm. Tickets are \$20. All ages are welcome.

Cumbe Center for African and Diaspora Dance [558 Fulton St. at Flatbush Avenue Extension in Clinton Hill; (718) 935-9700; www.cumbedance.com]

caregivers to explore, learn, and have fun! Drop in for play with age-appropriate toys and activities in our social hall (large indoor space).

Soap Making 101: Brooklyn Neighborhood Health Action Center, 259 Bristol St.; (212) 602-5300; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2018/11/13/soapmaking-101; 5:30 pm to 7 pm; Free.

Make your own soap using an easy melt-and-pour method with herbs and essential oils from your garden. Each person will take home their own bar of herbal soap. Facilitated by Marcia Denson, Phoenix Community Garden, and GreenThumb. Limited to 20 participants.

FURTHER AFIELD

Little Playtimes: LEGOLAND Discovery Center, Westchester, 39 Fitzgerald St., Westchester; (866) 243-0770; <https://westchester.legolanddiscoverycenter.com>; 10 am-2 pm; \$24 for an adult and child, children 2 and under free.

Have a LEGO play date! Little ones build their curiosity with LEGO bricks while parents mingle together. Activities include story time, animal bingo, and farmers workshop. Check website for schedule.

THURS, NOV. 15

IN BROOKLYN

Little Maker Space: 11 am to 3 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, Nov. 1.

Sensory Room: 2 pm to 2:30 pm; 2:45

pm to 3:15 pm; 3:30 pm to 4 pm; and 4:15 pm to 4:45 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, Nov. 1.

FRI, NOV. 16

IN BROOKLYN

Block Lab: 10 am to 1 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Nov. 2.

SAT, NOV. 17

IN BROOKLYN

Farmhouse Family Day: Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum, 5816 Clarendon Rd.; (718) 629-5400; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2017/12/16/farmhouse-family-day; 11 am to 3 pm; Free.

Explore New York City's oldest house for a unique hands-on making activity. Seasonal activities inside the historic house and around the gardens include scavenger hunts, artifact investigation, gardening, self-guided exploration, and hands-on activities. Activities are designed for families with kids ages 4 to 10. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Storytime with Diana Schoenbrun – “Take Your Octopous to School Day”: Books Are Magic, 225 Smith St. at Butler Street; www.booksaremagic.net; 11 am to noon; Free.

When it comes to show-and-tell, Sam is in it to win it. But no matter how hard he tries, one of his classmates is always showing him up with a slightly better costume or a slightly cooler object to share. His teacher says it's not a competition, but just once Sam would

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

like to be the best — which is why he's so excited when Take Your Octopus to School Day is announced. Sam is pretty sure he's the only kid with a real live pet octopus to bring, and Thurgood, his eight-tentacled best friend, is excited too.

"The Wizard of Oz": On Stage at Kingsborough, 2001 Oriental Blvd. at Oxford Street; (718) 368-5596; www.onstageatkingsborough.org; 2 pm; \$13.

The award-winning Vital Theatre Company will perform the enchanting adaptation of the timeless tale of Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion, and the Scarecrow travelling on the yellow brick road to visit the Wizard. This one-hour work is suitable for children of all ages. After the performance kids will have the opportunity to meet the cast.

Sylvia's Story Corner: 3 pm to 3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 3.

TUES, NOV. 20

FURTHER AFIELD

Little Playtimes: 10 am-2 pm. LEGOLAND Discovery Center Westchester. See Tuesday, Nov. 13.

THURS, NOV. 22

IN BROOKLYN

Sensory Room: 2 pm to 2:30 pm; 2:45 pm to 3:15 pm; 3:30 pm to 4 pm; and 4:15 pm to 4:45 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, Nov. 1.

FURTHER AFIELD

Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade: Macy's, 34th Street and Broadway, Manhattan; 9 am to noon; Free.

Get ready to enjoy the best-known parade in the city. The balloons will fly high as dancers, twirlers, and, of course, celebs walk the walk down Broadway — and bringing up the rear will be the jolly old elf himself, Santa, along with Mrs. Claus.

FRI, NOV. 23

IN BROOKLYN

Block Lab: 10 am to 1 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Nov. 2.

SAT, NOV. 24

IN BROOKLYN

Sylvia's Story Corner: 3 pm to 3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 3.

SUN, NOV. 25

IN BROOKLYN

The Music of Phish: Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Ave. between N. 11th and N. 12th streets; (718) 963-3369;

Muppets in the big apple

Take a trip with Kermit, Miss Piggy, and the whole gang and go see "The Muppets Take Manhattan" at the BAM-Kids Movie Matinee on Nov. 11.

The 1984 animated flick follows the "It's not easy being green" Kermit the Frog and his friends on a trip to New York City to get their musical on Broadway — only to find it's a more difficult

task than they anticipated.

"The Muppets Take Manhattan," Nov. 11 at 2 pm. Run time is approximately 94 minutes and is suitable for children 5 years and older. Tickets are \$7 and \$10 for adults and seniors.

BAM Peter Jay Sharp Building (30 Lafayette Ave. between Ashland Place and St. Felix Street in Fort Greene, www.bam.org).

bowl.com; 11 am; \$12 (Free for children under 1).

The Rock and Roll Playhouse is hosting this fun event for kids, featuring Uncle Ebenezer.

Colorful Quilts - An Event for Children with Autism: Lefferts Historic House, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; 11 am to 2 pm; Free.

Join Prospect Park Alliance at Lefferts Historic House for an exclusive event for children with autism spectrum disorder. The museum will open an hour early for you and your family can view our annual show with the Brooklyn Quilters Guild and make your own glued quilt to take home or add it to our community patchwork.

Faces and Stories of Prospect Park: Lefferts Historic House, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Noon to 5 pm; \$3.

Join Prospect Park Alliance and Virginia L. S. Freire Photography at the Lefferts Historic House for Faces and Stories of Prospect Park. A photo testament to the individuals, couples, families, friends, and even canines that make up the vibrant landscape of Pros-

pect Park.

Winter on a Flatbush Farm: Lefferts Historic House, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; 1 pm to 3 pm; \$3.

Get ready for winter as locals did in the 19th-century farming village of Flatbush. Learn how to make a candle, watch a master spinster spin wool thread, and enjoy Dutch treats made at our outdoor hearth from a Lefferts family recipe. St. Nicholas will visit at 3 pm!

"Mary and the Witch's Flower": BAM Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave. between Ashland Place and St. Felix Street; www.bam.org; 2 pm; \$7 children (\$10 adults and seniors).

BAMkids Movie Matinee presents this dazzling new adventure from animator Hiromasa Yonebayashi, suitable for children 8 years and older. Run time is approximately 103 minutes.

TUES, NOV. 27

FURTHER AFIELD

Little Playtimes: 10 am-2 pm. LEGOLAND Discovery Center Westchester. See

Calendar

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

Tuesday, Nov. 13.

WED, NOV. 28

IN BROOKLYN

Having Trouble Paying Your Student Loans?: Fort Hamilton Branch Brooklyn Public Library, 9424 Fourth Ave.; (718) 748-6919; 6 pm to 7:30 pm; Free.

This one-hour workshop includes a presentation, question-and-answer session and helpful brochures and takeaways on repayment plans, forbearance, deferment, loan consolidation, rehabilitation, loan forgiveness, how to bring your loan out of default, and how to stop wage garnishment.

THURS, NOV. 29

IN BROOKLYN

Sensory Room: 2 pm to 2:30 pm; 2:45 pm to 3:15 pm; 3:30 pm to 4 pm; and 4:15 pm to 4:45 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, Nov. 1.

"Cirque Dreams Holidaze": Kings Theatre, 1027 Flatbush Ave. between Beverly Road and Tilden Avenue; boxofficekings@theambassadors.com; www.kingstheatre.com; 8 pm; \$29.50 to \$99.50.

Cirque Dreams Holidaze lights up the 2018 holiday season with its popular and electrifying stage spectacular.

FRI, NOV. 30

IN BROOKLYN

Block Lab: 10 am to 1 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Nov. 2.

"Cirque Dreams Holidaze": 8 pm. Kings Theatre. See Thursday, Nov. 29.

LONG-RUNNING

IN BROOKLYN

Ocean Wonders – Sharks!: New York Aquarium, 602 Surf Ave. between W. Eighth and W. Fifth streets; (718) 265-3448; www.nyaquarium.com; Daily, 10 am; Free with admission to the aquarium.

The new exhibit will amaze visitors as they journey through nine galleries breathtakingly eye-to-eye with sharks, rays and hundreds of species of ocean wildlife.

Totally Tots: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays, Wednesdays – Saturdays, 10 am to 4:30 pm, Sundays, 10 am to 5:30 pm, until Sun, Nov. 25; Free with museum admission.

This pint-sized paradise is designed for our youngest visitors, featuring nine different sensory play areas including water, sand, music, dress up, blocks, and more. Totally Tots is for children ages birth to 6.

Escher NYC – The Exhibit: Industry City, 34, 34th Street, Building 6; Daily, 10 am to 7



Associated Press / Diane Bondareff

Leading up to the turkey

Get ready for the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, ushering in the holiday season on Nov. 22.

The giant event features balloons, floats, marching bands, performance groups, and loads of entertainers.

The 2.5-mile march kicks off at W. 77th Street and Central Park West, winding its way downtown to the viewing stands in front of the world-famous Macy's of Herald Square.

Children of all ages will love watch-

ing the marchers and goggling at the giant balloons floating high above the avenue. Bringing up the rear as always is the ever-popular Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus, with Rudolph at the head. Santa and sleigh heralds the end of the parade and the beginning of the holiday season.

Thanksgiving Day Parade, Nov. 22 from 9 am to noon. Free.

Macy's Herald Square (Broadway and W. 34th Street in Midtown).

pm; until Sun, Feb. 3, 2019; \$6-\$25.

In addition to the Escher works on display, the exhibition includes scientific experiments, play areas and educational resources that will help visitors of all ages to understand the impossible perspectives, disquieting images and seemingly irreconcilable universes which Escher combined to create a unique artistic dimension.

Transit Tots: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.nytransitmuseum.org; Thursdays, 10:15 am to 11 am, until Thurs, Dec. 20; Free with admission to the museum.

Stories, games, and surprises for our youngest transportation fans! Free with admission. For ages 2-5 and adult companions.

Craft room: Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833; www.jcm.museum; Sundays – Thursdays, 11 am to 3 pm, Thurs,

Nov. 1 – Thurs, Nov. 29; Free with museum admission.

Get creative with a variety of Jewish-themed crafts to choose from!

Aleph Bet Ship: Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833; www.jcm.museum; Sundays – Thursdays, Noon to 4 pm, Thurs, Nov. 1 – Thurs, Nov. 22; Free with Museum admission.

Climb aboard! Discover and explore the Hebrew Alphabet through an interactive and hands-on experience. For children 2 and older.

ColorLab: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Thursdays, 2 pm to 5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am to 5 pm, until Sat, Nov. 17; Free with museum admission.

This new art-making space is where artists of all ages can explore, make, and celebrate art! We value discovery, artistic process, free-

dom of expression, and creative collaboration with others. ColorLab's rotating programs feature the work and artistic processes of African-American, Afro-Caribbean, and African contemporary artists. Each session lasts about 45 minutes. Space limited to 15 children per session and their caregivers.

Out On A Limb – Recent Sculpture

by Jon Bunge: NU Hotel, 85 Smith St. between State Street and Atlantic Avenue; Daily, 6 pm; until Fri, Nov. 30; Free.

Celebrate the opening of Out On A Limb: Recent Sculpture by Jon Bunge. On view concurrently will be works on paper by Kathleen Migliore Newton. Out On a Limb explores how we view the use of materials from nature to create fine art, and touches on themes of spirituality, intuition and humanity's relationship to nature. Bunge utilizes honeysuckle, hydrangea and curly willow vines to create distinct, abstract shapes.

Train Operator Workshop: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.nytransitmuseum.org; Fridays and Saturdays, 1:30 pm, until Thurs, Dec. 20; Free with museum admission.

Drop by our Computer Lab to take control of a subway car and operate it over virtual miles of track, using some incredibly realistic software! Space is limited, recommended for children 10 years and older.

Discovery Room: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.nytransitmuseum.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am and 3:30 pm, until Sun, Dec. 30; Free with admission to the museum.

We're opening up the Education Center to our youngest fans to explore our favorite puzzles, books, toys, and building materials! For ages 2-5.

"The Snow Queen" and "The Emperor's New Clothes": Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; www.puppetworks.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm, until Sun, Dec. 16; \$11 (\$10 Children (\$9 for groups of 20 persons or more)).

This fall presentation presents two classic stories from Hans Christian Andersen. Both will be presented at each performance. Adapted for the marionette stage by Puppetworks' artistic director, Nicolas Coppola, "The Snow Queen" tells the story of a mysterious lady who throws ice into the heart of a child, making him cold and mean, and of his friend Gerda who sets out to rescue him. "The Emperor's New Clothes" is the tale of a foolish Emperor who buys invisible clothes from a clever tailor, only to march down the street in his underwear. Suggested for children 3 years and older.

Nature Exploration: Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Sunday, Nov. 4,



A tale about a lost tail

Aesop's Fable comes to life at the 14th Street Y theater when "Fox Fables" hits the stage on Nov. 3 and 4.

Theater for Young Adults and WonderSpark Puppets presents this puppet adaptation of an Aesop's Fable — about a fox who loses his precious tail and, with it, his identity. He tries to be

several other animals instead — with hilarious results — before realizing the moral lesson of this ancient story.

"Fox Fables," Nov. 3 and Nov. 4, at 11 am and 1 pm. Tickets are \$14. For all ages.

14th Street Y Preschool [344 E. 14th St. in the East Village, (646) 395-4325].

10 am to 1 pm; Monday, Nov. 12, Noon to 4 pm; Friday, Nov. 16, Noon to 4 pm; Saturday, Nov. 17, 10 am to 1 pm; Sunday, Nov. 18, 10 am to 1 pm; Thursday, Nov. 22, Noon to 4 pm; Friday, Nov. 23, Noon to 4 pm; Saturday, Nov. 24, 10 am to 1 pm; Friday, Nov. 30, Noon to 4 pm; Free.

Join Prospect Park Alliance for nature education programs at the Prospect Park Audubon Center, the first urban Audubon Center in the nation. Discovery Pack, Prospect Park Alliance invites you to get inspired by nature with our Discovery Packs, ready-to-go kits filled with nature activities for families.

Creativity Lab: Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org; Sunday, Nov. 11, 4 pm to 5:30 pm; Sunday, Nov. 25, 4 pm to 5:30 pm; Sunday, Jan. 13, 4 pm to 5:30 pm; Sunday, Feb. 10, 4 pm to 5:30 pm; Sunday, March 10, 4 pm to 5:30 pm; Sunday, April 14, 4 pm to 5:30 pm; Sunday, May 12, 4 pm to 5:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Welcome to the Lab! Drop by our studios and explore your creative side. In this drop-in workshop for all ages, take inspiration from our galleries and get messy, experiment with materials, and learn artistic techniques with a new project each month. Bring the whole

family and stay as long as you'd like!

FURTHER AFIELD

"Frozen" on Broadway: St. James Theatre, 246 W. 44th St., Manhattan; (866) 870-2717; frozenthemusical.com; \$100 and up.

A musical worth melting for! If you loved the movie "Frozen," you'll love seeing Anna, Elsa, Kristoff, and Olaf come to life on stage to tell the timeless tale of two sisters who are pulled apart by a mysterious secret. Of course, there's the classic song "Let It Go," plus many new numbers for this new production.

GingerBread Lane: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 9:30 am to 5 pm, Saturdays, 10 am to 6 pm, Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Sat, Nov. 10 – Mon, Jan. 21, 2019; Free with general admission to the hall.

Visitors marvel at homemade gingerbread houses made entirely of edible gingerbread, royal icing, and candy. The houses are drafted, designed, baked, planned, built, and decorated by creator Jon Lovitch over the course of an entire year. GingerBread Lane has won the Guinness World Record for 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 for the largest gingerbread village.



VOTE

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Each year we honor the best family-friendly businesses, services and attractions.

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- Dance Class • Gymnastic Class • Music Lessons • Tennis Program • Birthday Party Place
- Local Bakery For Birthday Cakes • Pizza Place • Private Schools • Martial Arts • Hospital/Birthing Centers
- OB/GYN • Dentist • Orthodontist • Hair Salon for Kids • Museums for Families • Optometrists • Pre-Schools
- Foreign Language Schools • Urgent Care Centers • Day Camps



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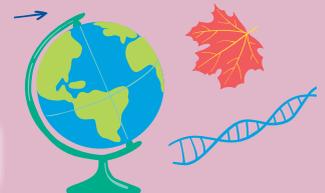


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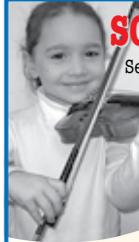
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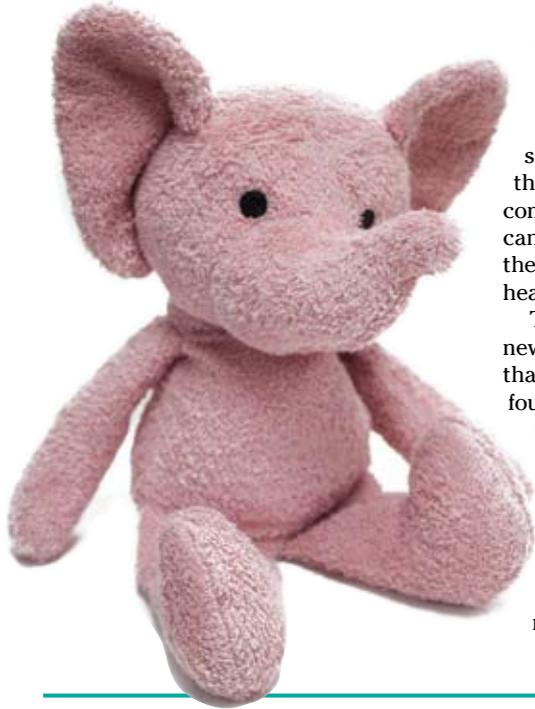
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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS



Creature comforts for kids' aches

Whether a child is sick, injured, or even afraid of the dark, Thermal-Aid stuffed animals leap, gallop and hop to the rescue with some warm — or cold — comfort. The terry-cloth stuffed animals can be cooled in the freezer or heated in the microwave to create an ice pack or heating pad that can be hugged.

The animals' bellies are filled with "a new, dry, and hardened corn material that is mold-resistant," said Thermal-Aid founder Matthew Mills. "It evenly maintains hot and cold temperatures longer than any other natural heating pack."

We adopted Ollie the Koala from the Thermal-Aid Zoo and couldn't be happier with its ability to soothe a child who was fearful of sleeping alone, warm a cold bed on an autumn night, or relieve a stiff neck.

With just 30 seconds in the microwave,

Ollie's belly was warmed up and ready to snuggle! The cuddly, gray animal is a comfort for children of all ages, and their aching parents, too! Other animals waiting to be adopted from the Thermal-Aid Zoo include Tiny the elephant, five teddy bears in a variety of colors and names, Baxter the bunny, Happy the hippo, and JoJo the monkey. There are also travel-sized Zoo Minis (pictured) which can be heated in just 10 seconds.

These are a fantastic gift for a new parent that will be used again and again. (Although for any child under 3, close parental supervision is required, because if the animal were to become ripped or torn, the pieces of corn could be a choking hazard.) Otherwise, this is a must-have for every family.

Thermal-Aid Mini Elephant, \$7.99, ThermalAidProducts.com.

Elect to play

As the midterm elections draw near, why not have a family game night with Eeboo's United States Geography Bingo and learn more about our regions, industries, states' capitals, and more?

But in a fun way.

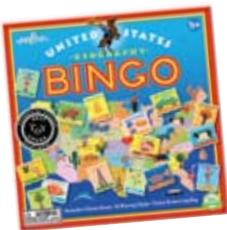
Everyone loves the nail-biting suspense of bingo, so, in a flash of genius, Eeboo has harnessed the talents of il-

lustrator Dan Yaccarino (who has dazzled kids with his picture books and animated television series "The Backyardigans" and "Oswald") to

create a colorful bingo game that celebrates the geography of the U.S.A.!

Players ages 5 and older scan their card and place the matching tile on their board. The game continues until a player fills all of the tile spaces on the winner's card. Prizes — supplied by parents — could cement the sweetness of being more civic minded.

United States Geography Bingo by Eeboo, \$16.95, PapyrusOnline.com.



Thankful for this

The Mini Maker Tube is filled with all of the colors of Plus-Plus pieces needed to make an adorable, 3-D turkey. Whether a child is filling time at the airport or needs an activity to bond with his grandparents, this clever kit is a feathered friend indeed! The pieces are stored in a portable, reusable container that includes easy-to-follow directions to make one turkey. The 70 Plus-Plus pieces are made in Denmark from "BPA-free and phthalate-free European plastic" and fit together smoothly. Recommended for kids 5 to 12, Plus-Plus tubes placed at each setting of the Thanksgiving table will be a favor they'll be grateful to receive.

Turkey Mini Maker Tube by Plus-Plus, \$7.99, Amazon.com.

Feast or family

In "The Great Thanksgiving Escape" children's book, cousins Gavin and Rhonda — no longer babies and not yet addicted to screens — team up to escape the adults in an exciting Thanksgiving caper by author-illustrator Mark Fearing. It will make parents nostalgic for chilly holidays inside a house burgeoning with casserole dishes of favorite, traditional foods. Kids ages 5 to 8 will laugh at the "wall of butts," a seemingly impenetrable barrier of adults watching television. Our two brave heroes dodge kisses from the aunts and a basement filled with teens before making their escape to the backyard — triumphant and rain-soaked. Fearing's story illustrates the importance of creating your own good time with a little imagination and a cousin — now a dear friend.

"The Great Thanksgiving Escape" hard-back book by Mark Fearing, \$15.99, Candlewick.com.

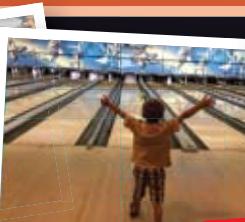




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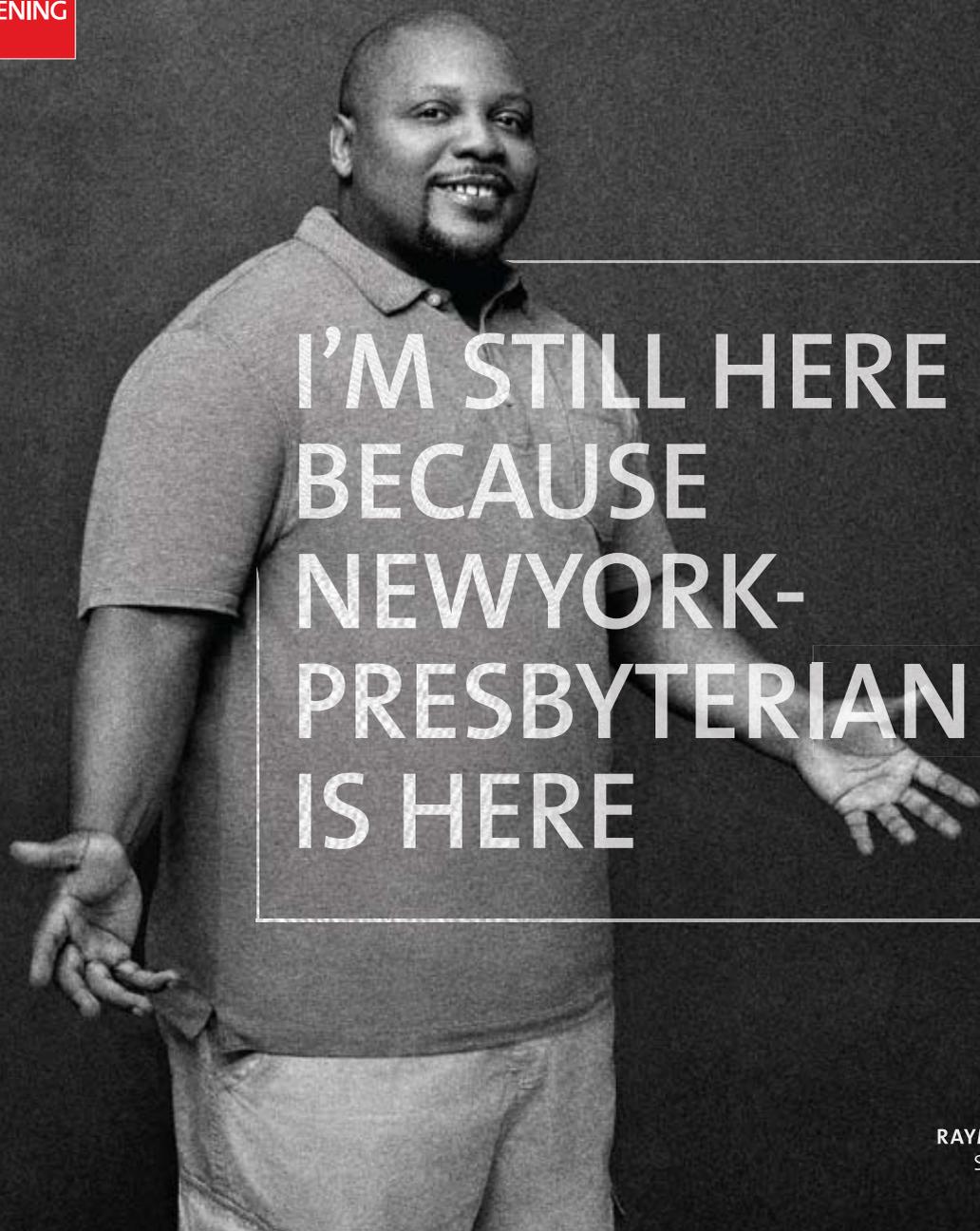
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