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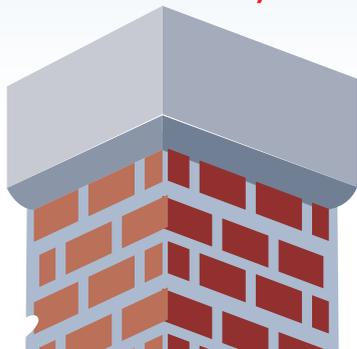


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The end of the year — a new beginning

The year 2018 is almost over and it's hard to believe how quickly it all passes. I was having lunch with my niece the other day — whose kids are 4 and 7 — and I told her to treasure every moment because it all goes so fast! One day your children are just being born, and then they're off to school, and then they're teenagers and pulling away, and then they're adults on their own and you're an empty nester.



Bronx/Riverdale, and lastly Manhattan. Recently we merged with another excellent title in Manhattan and after the end of this month, our company name will change to New York Family Media, and the magazine in Manhattan will be a blend of both of them, with the name changing to New York Family.

It will offer the continuation of the best of both editorial efforts. When you see it, please know that it's still ours. The other titles will be staying exactly as they are.

It's 20 years since we started Brooklyn Family, which was the first of our monthly titles. I was a mom in Brooklyn, and my daughter was 7 years old. Now she's a lovely grown woman. Then came Queens,

and our distributors. I want to thank all of them for the years of collaboration. Personal thanks to Tina, Erin, Leah, Courtney, Arthur, and Vinny. You've made it a real pleasure to do my work. And a big thank you to Cliff for 20 years of letting me "do my thing."

Wishing you and yours a wonderful holiday season.

Thanks for reading.

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Continued on page 10



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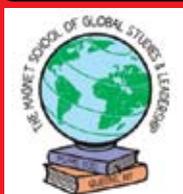
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 Wednesday, January 9, 2019 9:00 - 11:00AM



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 Friday, January 18, 2019 9:00 - 11:00AM



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Mid-Year Education

DIRECTORY

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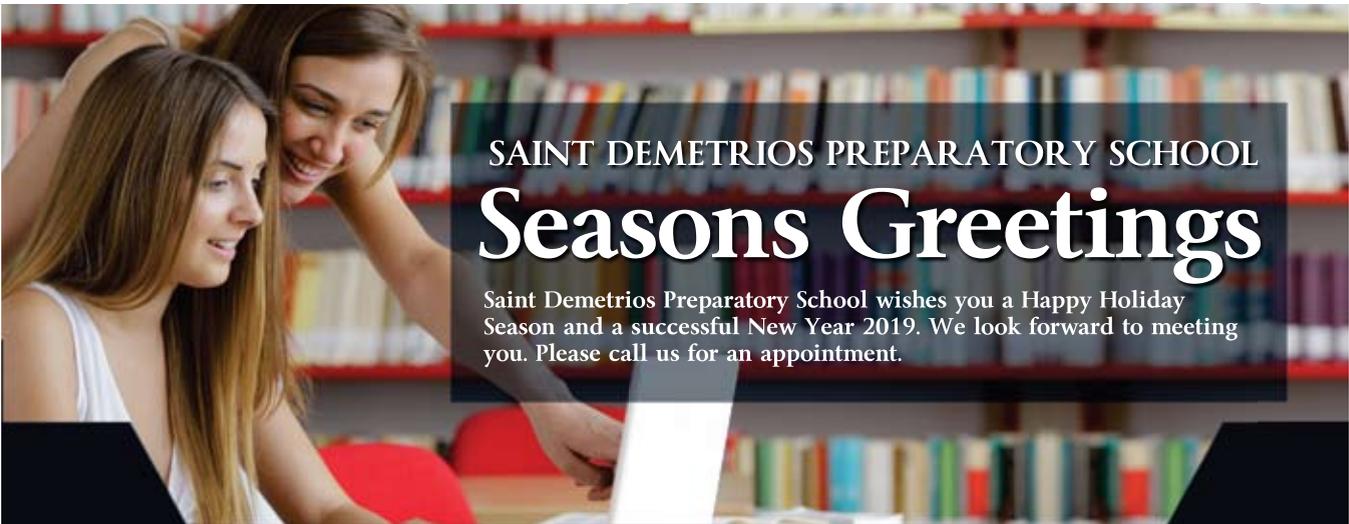
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PS 140
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PS 349
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Laying off sweets

How to help your kids reduce their sugar intake

BY JAMIE LOBER

If you have a child with a sweet tooth, you are not alone. And this time of the year can make it particularly difficult for anyone to watch how many sugary holiday treats they indulge in.

"It is always more challenging to keep sugar intake under control from Halloween through New Year's because there will be a heightened exposure to sugary foods," said Laurie Simon, registered dietician at Midtown Nutrition Care.

But watching sugar intake is important regardless of the time of year, and it's up to parents to teach kids to make good decisions. To start, try to make it a family affair to eat better by reading labels together.

"You should have under 25 grams of sugar a day, and aim for things that have at least 3 grams or more of dietary fiber," said Simon.

Offer a variety of foods so that your kids can make good choices when at school or at a party.

"Have his palette exposed to all types of foods so sugar is not the only taste he is after," said Simon.

Feel free to play around with your recipes. For instance, substi-

tuting applesauce or banana for sugar in recipes may go unnoticed.

"Fruit is a natural way to satisfy some of the sugar craving, and you can camouflage them in dishes by pureeing things into smoothies, sauces, baked goods, or casseroles," said Simon. Remember, when you wear the chef's hat, you are controlling what is going into your child's food.

To increase fiber content, and in turn omega-3s, Simon suggests adding, "chia seeds or ground flax seeds to bread crumbs when making chicken cutlets, or put them in breads or muffins."

And be aware of where sugar may be hiding. Sometimes there are sneaky sources of sugar, such as in yogurts, granola bars, or cereals.

If your child is struggling to maintain a healthy weight, you may want to negotiate how often he will indulge in sweets, and help him incorporate healthy snacks into his regimen.

"Do not have the same snack every day. Try to introduce new foods," said Simon.

But remember that weight is affected by more than what you eat.

"Getting good sleep, exercise, and hydration are factors that come into play with weight management," said Simon.

So encourage your kids to get active, get a good night's sleep, and increase water intake.

The pediatrician should familiarize you with the growth curve, and you'll want to keep a watchful eye to be sure your child's weight does not go up greater than his height. You also want to be vigilant of pre-diabetes and signs of insulin resistance.

Keep in mind that you, as the parent, are your child's biggest role model, and he is always paying attention to your behavior.

"Parents want to be proactive and good role models, so if you are sitting down and eating a brownie when you are telling your child he cannot have the same thing, that is not good nutritional etiquette, in a sense," said Simon.

Most of all, talk about why monitoring sugar matters. Explain to your child that sugar is part of a balanced diet, but needs to be kept under control. Teach him that everything he eats affects his body in some way, and too much sugar can have negative consequences.

"Sometimes too much sugar makes people fatigued, and without physical activity, you will gain weight," said Simon.

This should help him understand and get on board.

"It should be educational, where your child learns about how food affects mood and how it is important for your immune system, for growth and development, for bones, for energy, and when you put good quality ingredients in your body, it runs, feels, and develops at its best," said Simon.

But remember that your child is more likely to have a better relationship with food and sugar if it's not forbidden altogether.

"It does not mean you cannot indulge in sweets, but rather that they should be enjoyed in moderation," said Simon.

Jamie Lober, author of "Pink Power" (www.getpinkpower.com), is dedicated to providing information on women's and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at jamie@getpinkpower.com.

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Your family's New Year's resolutions

A group effort to improve relationships and well-being

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Have you decided on a New Year's resolution yet? How many times have you started a new year planning to exercise more, eat healthier, or go to that special place on your bucket list only to find that — three weeks in — you've lost your enthusiasm?

Some folks swear that exercising with a partner helps them to stay motivated, or that joining a reading group keeps them focused on finishing a novel. So why not try a family resolution this year? This would be a resolution that the entire family signs on to in order to build better bonds, live a healthier lifestyle, or just focus on a group goal, such as raising money for a desired big-ticket item everyone can enjoy.

Strengthening bonds

Family resolutions are not only more fun, but they also help to strengthen bonds.

Stacy Kaiser, a licensed psychotherapist, relationship expert and Live Happy (www.livehappy.com) editor at large, explains, "Any time a group of people unites to do something together that they all agree upon, it helps to build a bond. Sharing common interests and ideas while working together helps us to connect with

one another."

In general, group activities foster togetherness.

"When we think of activities, we tend to think of hobbies and sports, but resolutions are activities as well and are all about improving ourselves and making our families better."

Susan Kuczmariski, EdD, a leading expert on the dynamics of family culture and bonding and author of several award-winning books, including the bestselling "Becoming a Happy Family: Pathways to the Family Soul" (Book Ends Publishing), shares, "We did New Year's resolutions within our family when our three sons were young. I believe you can start early with this exercise, and, when they become teens, they relish this opportunity. It gives them a chance to focus on something that is meaningful and familiar."

Kuczmariski stresses that spending time with each other should be a priority.

"If family togetherness is nurtured, there is a deep, fulfilling sense of belonging. The family that plays together, stays together. For many time-crunched families, that variation on a familiar saying rings true. In fact, these days, as the hustle and bustle of holidays continues, carve out time to spend together doing activities

that everyone enjoys. Make spending time with each other a priority and strengthening family bonds a concentrated focus."

Develop a plan together

It's imperative that all members of the family are invested in the resolution, so Mom and Dad should be sure to involve everyone in the planning.

Kuczmariski advises, "Have each family member do their own list of strengths and needs and share them in order to get input from other family members."

Knowing what everyone's individual strengths and needs are helps the family to choose activities for both personal and family growth.

"The trick is to let differences within the family flourish. There must also be room for each child's unique and personal ideas and contributions," she says.

Sticking to It

Now the hard part. It's hard enough for one person to stick to a resolution. How does a family do it?

Kaiser suggests the following for ways families can stick to resolutions:

- Make goals small and reachable.
- Be sure that all family members are in agreement with the resolution.
- Encourage each other daily. Encouragement provides motivation and serves as another way to bond with one another.

"Family members are ideally set up to remind each other about the resolution," says Kuczmariski. "This is one benefit of a group situation. Reminders should be gentle, not forceful in any way."

Make it fun and be sure that everyone is involved. If a resolution is to do one healthy activity together each weekend, take turns choosing the activity.

Resolution ideas for families

In need of some ideas to help kick off your resolution? Here are some to consider:

1. **Start a weekly or bi-monthly ritual**
Perhaps your family wants to plan a

Document memories

You might decide that your resolution is to combine your efforts to document a year of memories. Here are some ideas for this year-long project:

Take turns photographing family events. At the end of each month, have a family scrapbooking day to display the photos creatively.

Draw a map of the U.S. or globe on poster board. Each family member chooses a color to represent themselves. Then they use their individual color to highlight states, cities, or countries visited over the course of the year. This would include school trips, business trips, and family vacations.

Plan a family reunion. You've put it off for too long. Just do it! Include the kids in the planning. Take a group photo at the event and have reunion T-shirts designed to document the day.

Family history project. Do an ancestor search as a family. Once you have a family tree completed, make a book (one page per family member) with photos and descriptions of each person.

Start a family vacation journal. Each family member writes down his or her favorite experience from the current year's trip with a photo to accompany the memory. Leave room for future years.



family “date” once per week or twice per month. This could be a family night out, such as bowling, going to a restaurant, or attending a group painting class. Perhaps an occasional tech-free day will work. Instead of everyone’s attention focused on their phones or other tech device, choose to have a family reading night. Have the chosen reader rotate each time. Family members could read from something they’ve written for school, from a journal, or from their favorite book. Then, everyone discusses it.

2. Family conference day

You might consider committing to a family meeting once per week. It keeps communication flowing and is a great way for members to support each other and resolve internal issues as well.

Dr. Michelle Maidenberg, a psychotherapist whose specialties include marital and family issues, and author of “Free Your Child From Overeating: 53 Mind-Body Strategies For Lifelong Health” (The Experiment, LLC), suggests, “Invest in facilitating and improving family communication. My family (our children are ages 17, 14, 11, and 9) has a Sunday evening family meeting where we each share things that went well for us during the week and things and people that also disappointed us. This is a

time to share and to work through selective issues with family members.”

3. Reevaluate dinner time

“It’s extremely important to eat meals together,” Maidenberg stresses. “According to research, 59 percent of families report eating dinner together at least five times a week (CASA at Columbia University).”

The positives are endless including, “an increased chance of having healthful meals, more opportunity for dialogue and connection, and, according to research, it decreases the chances that teens will smoke, drink, and use substances.”

Maidenberg advises that families instill mealtime as part of the family culture, set a specific schedule for the meals, and ensure that meals are enjoyable and engaging.

If schedules simply won’t allow for daily family meals, be sure to schedule meals on weekends or rework schedules so that regular weekly meals become a given. Perhaps, a family breakfast would work.

4. Make health a priority

“Integrate ongoing family self-care,” says Maidenberg. “This can be an agreement among family members to include exercising (biking, hiking, etc.), meditation, or yoga as regular family activities.”

She reminds that individual family members need to regenerate, or else they won’t have the energy to give to each other.

Other ideas:

- Collect vegetable recipes that everyone would actually like to eat.
- Build an obstacle course together to use throughout the warm months.
- Find indoor activities that facilitate cardio exercise (e.g. indoor rock climbing, roller skating, swimming) to stay active in the winter.

5. Volunteer together

Kuczarski shares, “Community service is an outlet for families to experience renewal or a sense of restoration.”

Maidenberg agrees that when families volunteer together it creates better bonds.

“When the family engages collectively toward a mission and purpose that is meaningful to the family system, it provides them with something to talk about, bond over, and work toward. Families naturally bond when they feel purposeful and united.”

6. Money matters

“Hold a monthly, family financial discussion night,” suggests Pamela Yellen, a financial investigator and author of two New York Times bestselling books, including “The Bank on Yourself Revolution: Fire Your Banker, Bypass Wall Street,” and “Take Control of Your Own Financial Future” (BenBella Books). She recommends focusing on the family budget.

“Even children as young as 4 or 5 can get involved. Create your family’s ‘Personal Spending Rules’ together to work toward family goals. Your children will not only learn good financial skills through this process, but they’ll take pride in being part of it.”

Families can also decide to save for a big-ticket item that the family can enjoy together, such as a trampoline or a special vacation. Plan a garage sale — kids can create a lemonade stand and help with the tagging. This is also a great teaching moment about the importance of saving for something special.

7. Improve your environment

Each family member states something that can be improved about the home environment. Then, decide on one thing to tackle as a family. For instance, the family van may have become a dumping place for toys, newspapers, and candy wrappers. Each week a different family member takes a turn to pick up items left in the car. And the person cleaning gets to keep the change!

Myrna Beth Haskell is an award-winning author, columnist, and feature writer. Her work has appeared in national and international publications (www.myrnahaskell.com).

Give back

Get kids involved in donating to or organizing a food drive this holiday season

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

During the holiday season, there are a number of opportunities to give back to New Yorkers in need. This is a great time of the year to teach children about the importance of giving back, a value that will stick with them throughout their lives. Learning to give back is vital for positive youth development. Parents, schools, and communities play an important role in making community service a way of life. Participating in community service or philanthropy with your children will aid the development of qualities that foster social responsibility and help them become good citizens.

With more than one million New Yorkers (including one in five children) struggling to put food on the table, there is no better time than now to lend a hand. New York parents can get involved in a big way, and so can the city's kids.

"For 35 years, City Harvest has been on the road every day rescuing food that would otherwise go to waste, and delivering it, free of charge, to hundreds of soup kitchens and food pantries across New York City," said Lisa Sposato, director of Food Sourcing for City Harvest. "Our work also focuses on providing



nutrition education to children and their families, and working with communities to increase access to healthy food. Every item donated to one of our drop-off locations and every dollar contributed to

the digital drive will make a noticeable impact on a fellow New Yorker in need," she added.

This a great way for families to get the kids involved in philanthropy and

discuss what it means to give back. The process to set up a food drive is quite simple. And often a good place to start is by rallying your school communities.

"Starting a food drive at your child's school is an easy, three-step process," said Sposato.

Here's how to get started, as recommended by City Harvest:

Select dates for your drive. While the Daily News Food Drive runs from Oct. 23 through Jan. 18, you can run your school's drive at any time during that period. City Harvest recommends running a drive for at least two weeks.

Set up a bin in a high-traffic area of the school with a list of suggested items. The most-needed items are canned fruit, canned vegetables, canned proteins, peanut butter in plastic jars, packaged macaroni and cheese, cereal, soups, and juice packs.

Spread the word! Hang flyers, make announcements at assemblies and over the PA system, and encourage age-appropriate students to share on social media using #DailyNewsFoodDrive. A toolkit that includes Daily News Food Drive flyers and tips for running a successful drive are available for download at <http://www.cityharvest.org/dailynews/>.

"All participating schools will be en-

This a great way for families to get the kids involved in philanthropy and discuss what it means to give back.

tered into the Kids Can Help Competition. The school in each borough that collects the most food will win a prize from Macmillan Children's Publishing Group," Sposato shared.

New York families looking to donate food have convenient locations all over the city and in every neighborhood.

"This year's drive drop-off locations for non-perishable food items are at City Harvest's office in Midtown Manhattan, located at 6 E. 32nd St., any FDNY or NYPD stations, and select Goodwill or Apple Bank locations throughout all five boroughs," said Sposato.

The simple act of donating food will help an in-need individual or family in a very special way. All collected food will go to hundreds of food pantries, soup kitchens, and community food programs

across the five boroughs. But if you don't have the space to collect can goods and other food items, there are other ways to give. For instance, a virtual food drive.

"If you're interested in donating funds, you can show your support by donating online to the Daily News Virtual Food Drive, created specifically for this year's drive. Every \$1 donated helps City Harvest feed our neighbors in need for a day," said Sposato. "Families can donate food to any drop-off locations, submit funds to the virtual food drive, or even start their own team to encourage everyone to stand with City Harvest in the fight against hunger," she added.

No matter how young or old your children are, everyone benefits by participating in community service. Cultivate your child's charitable interests during the holiday season and everyday by making charity a fun event for the family. This holiday season, have your family come together to do good and give back. To find exact drop off locations near you, visit <http://www.cityharvest.org/dailynews>.

Shnieka Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer. She is based in Manhattan where she resides with her husband and son. Contact her via her website: www.shnieka-johnson.com.

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Inspiring change

Sex abuse survivor's story leads pol to draft new legislation

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Connie Altamirano, a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, is continuing her crusade in the state legislature against this ongoing national epidemic — spreading the word within her Queens community and beyond.

The mom-activist bravely came forward to tell her story (read Part I here: <https://www.nyparenting.com/stories/2018/10/child-sex-abuse-survivor-mother-advocate-2018-09.html>) sharing how her experience as a victim has affected her as a woman, and most importantly at this juncture, as a parent.

Her story has inspired a new piece of legislation aimed at advancing justice and healing for survivors.

In her fight against injustice, Ridge-wood parent Connie Altamirano has joined forces with a New York state senator to advance changes that will help other survivors find justice.

“As a parent, and as a legislator, it both angers and saddens me that so many young lives are devastated and left permanently scarred by these despicable acts,” said state Sen. Catharine Young (57th Senate District in Upstate New York), sponsor of the new Child Victims Fund legislation.

Sen. Young and Altamirano have forged a friendship and close working relationship in the course of developing a dialogue on the issue of childhood sexual abuse.

Altamirano's story, shared during a budget hearing, had a profound impact on the senator and was part of her motivation for developing an alternative to the Child Victims Act, which has been stalled in Albany year after year, that would help assure justice and compensation for survivors like Altamirano, whose abusers were family members, and not affiliated with large, deep-pocketed institutions like the Catholic Church or Scouting organizations.

“While high-profile cases and multi-million-dollar settlements brought against institutions like the Catholic Church, and the Boy Scouts make headlines, the reality is that institutional sexual abuse accounts for only a fraction of child sexual abuse cases,” Sen. Young noted. “The other 80 to 90 percent of

victims — abused by family members, neighbors, or acquaintances — who lack the means to pay civil damages, [The Child Victims Act] would do nothing for them. That is why we came up with a different solution,” she added.

In the hopes that Sen. Young can provoke change that helps others, her office has reached out to NY Parenting, so that readers can be made aware of her ongoing efforts and have a clear understanding of this crucial, solution-oriented proposal.

The Child Victims Fund

The legislation recently introduced in the New York State Senate by Sen. Young will advance justice and healing for many brave survivors of childhood sexual abuse by making it easier to prosecute perpetrators and provide restitution to victims. Key elements of the measure include the creation of a \$300-million state fund from asset forfeiture monies to compensate victims for physical and psychological harm, and the elimination of the criminal statute of limitations for child sex offenses, allowing for prosecution of predators to occur no matter how many years had passed (the Child Victims Act only extends the criminal statute of limitations from 23 to 28 years of age).

“Childhood sexual abuse is one of society's most insidious crimes. Perpetrated on innocent children, often by someone they know and trust, these crimes are frequently shrouded in shame, confusion, and silence, leaving victims with deep emotional and psychological wounds that can take decades to confront,” Sen. Young said. “While the wounds will never fully heal, victims deserve access to all avenues of justice, both criminal and monetary. This legislation serves as the bridge to that justice.”

Senator Young's proposal would help all survivors by assuring compensation for everyone who has been a victim of childhood sexual abuse. The Child Victims Act and its “look-back window,” which would allow time-barred victims to sue their abusers for financial damages would, practically speaking, really only results in compensation for those who were abused by individuals affil-

ated with large, deep-pocketed institutions such as churches, the Boy Scouts, etc., according to the senator.

Victims like Altamirano, who were abused by family members, step-family members, etc. (the majority of child sexual abuse cases fall into this category), would probably not be able to collect compensation, unless their abuser is independently wealthy.

The Senator says her proposal would also completely eliminate the criminal statute of limitations on child sexual abuse, while the Child Victims Act would only raise it from 23 to 28 years of age. With most victims unable to confront their abuse until, typically, their 40s, the Child Victims Act's minor change in the criminal statute would have little to no effect.

The healing process

As a clinical psychologist with expertise in psychological trauma, including due to child abuse and sexual assault, Dr. Jim Hopper has studied traumatic, as well as recovered, memories of sexual abuse for 20-plus years.

He writes on Psychcentral.com: “Research evidence shows victims can go for decades without having (recognizable or explicit) memories of the abuse. People almost always have implicit memories of the abuse, i.e. memories they did not realize were memories; for example, physiological or emotional responses triggered by encountering things associated with the abuse, like being touched in a certain way.”

Most survivors feel stripped of their dignity and sense of control and tend to block early memories of abuse until their 40s and 50s, sometimes only recalling snippets as though from a bad dream.

Early traumatic events seem to color a survivor's world like a dark cloud hanging over their lives. Sadly, that has been Altamirano's experience.

But there's hope. According to Dr. Hopper, while traumatic memories can be scary and confusing, “they can be sorted out too,” he writes; “certainly enough to heal and have the life you want.”

Professional therapy may help, but it can take years and isn't always effective. Indeed, the healing process is a long one,



Child sexual abuse survivor and advocate Connie Altamirano and her children, ages 9 and 13.

and the journey is daunting and emotionally arduous.

“By creating a state compensation fund for victims, monetary reparation for the horrific crimes victims endured will be available to them, regardless of the amount of time that has passed or their abusers’ financial status,” Sen. Young explained. “More efficient and expedited than a civil action, deserving victims who have been denied justice in other venues will find redress through this process.”

One of the most widely underreported crimes estimates are that approximately one in four girls and one in six boys will

be sexually abused before their 18th birthday.

To get what they want, predators weave a complicated web of lies and deceit, ensnaring their victims with manipulation and threats.

Sen. Young agrees. She says, “Victims of child sexual abuse are too often silenced — by their perpetrators, sometimes by disbelieving families and by a system that slams the door on their right to be heard before they have even found their voice. It is time for that to change. Providing victims with redress through the courts is not only just, it is a crucial part of the recovery process.”

“By creating a state compensation fund for victims, monetary reparation for the horrific crimes victims endured will be available to them, regardless of the amount of time that has passed or their abusers’ financial status.”

...

Increased vigilance in reporting and preventing abuse are the goals of the final provisions of the new bill, which add members of the clergy to the list of “mandated reporters” obligated to report suspected abuse and require criminal background checks for employees and volunteers who work with children.

Particularly important, this expedited and streamlined compensation process would spare victims from waiting years for civil cases to work their way through the courts and protect them from the often re-traumatizing process of a trial. It would also offer the assurance of an award. When victims receive civil judgments against family members or other non-institutional abusers, the likelihood of the victim actually collecting those funds is low, according to Sen. Young, who emphasizes that “no matter the circumstances, victims could apply for compensation to rebuild their lives. My 21 co-sponsors and I believe that any measure to help victims must offer justice for all.”

She added: “The courageous survivors who are spearheading action on this issue are heroes. Their stories have convinced me that we need to help all victims affected by this devastating crime,” Sen. Young said. “However, in continuing to play partisan politics rather than working towards a realistic solution, Senate Democrats are leaving victims in the cold. The session clock is running out. The time to act is now.”

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer and journalist, parent, and regular contributor to New York Parenting. Interviewing hundreds of New York City’s movers and shakers has been an amazing adventure for her. Scileppi’s work has appeared in a variety of media outlets. She has also written book cover copy for Simon and Schuster.



Gotta hand it to you

Proper hand hygiene helps quell colds

The more you look around the city, the more you see hand sanitizer dispensers: at doctors' offices, restaurants bathrooms, workplaces, and schools. (In fact, the place where you might need them the most is the one area where you won't find them: on the subway, but that's clearly a larger issue!). Now heading into the brutal winter season, how do you keep your kids (and yourself) protected from picking up the rampant barrage of cold germs and viruses that flood the school halls and handrails all over the city? Every parent has her own idea and often the plan includes Purell.

"No eat, wipes," says 3-year-old Evan Goldstein as he refuses a cookie from his father at the playground. In his short life, Evan has been trained not to eat anything unless he cleans his hands with disinfectant wipes or covers them in Purell. Some parents would admire his restraint, but could Evan be on the road to an unhealthy tolerance for germs, not to mention a harmful obsession with cleanliness?

While Evan's mom, Stacey, carries antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer everywhere she goes, Evan's dad, Joe, thinks a little dirt never hurt anyone. It's a source of conflict for the Goldsteins.

When to practice hand hygiene

The American Academy of Pediatrics agrees that hand hygiene is the most effective means of reducing germs and infections. Whether you choose to use hand sanitizer or regular soap and water, it is key to teach your children to practice good hand hygiene throughout the day. Children should learn to wash their hands:

- Before eating
- After using the bathroom
- Whenever they come in from outside
- After petting a cat or dog, or touching any other pet
- After they cough or sneeze into their hand or blow their nose

Remember, kids learn what they see, so it's important for mom and dad to practice the same hygiene habits.

When we were kids, soap and water was enough. This begs the question: Have parents become overly cautious?

Dr. Anatoly Belilovsky, a pediatrician and medical director of Belilovsky Pediat-



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

rics in Brooklyn, believes that since "most colds and viruses are spread by hand-to-hand and surface contact, any of the anti-germ products are better than nothing." He says that while soap and water still suffice for washing hands, instant sanitizers hold the attraction that anything "instant" does in today's culture. "It's not that we need different products in order to sanitize; it's that we need different products to motivate us to sanitize."

With all the talk and fear lingering around super-strain viruses and immunity, Dr. Belilovsky believes that sanitizers won't cause super-strains of viruses to develop.

"Many people worry about the 'hygiene hypothesis' — that all of the sanitizing antibacterial products are preventing children from developing immunities — and a lot of research is being done on it. However, the jury is still out; there is no solid proof for the hygiene hypothesis."

Despite this ongoing debate, doctors and parents do agree on this: One good bet to keeping your kids healthy is to educate them on proper hygiene techniques and boost their immunity with healthy food, adequate sleep, and exercise.

"Surprisingly, Evan has not really been sick in his three years," says Stacey Goldstein. "So although I never let him eat anything without wiping his hands, and Joe sometimes does, I hope that his immunity is strong from the nutritious diet he eats, and that's something that Joe and I agree on wholeheartedly."

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

Here's your year-end financial to-do list

The end of the year is always a happy time for most people. There are holiday parties, family gatherings, and a slower time at the office. With a little planning and action now, you'll be able to enjoy all those parties without worrying about financial items on New Year's Eve. Here is a list of what to look over:

Review your 401(k) contributions

If you participate in a 401(k), the 2018 maximum contribution limit is \$18,500; if you're age 50 and older the maximum contribution is \$24,500. You have until Dec. 31 to make the contribution to your account.

If you haven't contributed the maximum and still want to contribute more money to your 401(k), you'll need to contact your company's payroll department and ask what steps are needed to increase your deduction starting with your next paycheck. If your employer allows a lump sum contribution you may want to redirect some or all your year-end bonus into your 401(k).

Take your required minimum distributions

Once you reach age 70-and-a-half, you are required to take a distribution from your IRA, 401(k), and other types of retirement plans by Dec. 31. The only exception to this is the year you turn 70-and-a-half, because you're given an extension until April 1 to make your first withdrawal. Another exception is if you are still employed at this age. If you are still working, it isn't necessary to take the distribution from your employer's 401(k). Missing the distribution deadline, if you are eligible, can lead to penalties that are quite large. Although there are mechanisms to request the penalty be waived, the amount not withdrawn is subject to a 50-percent excise tax. If you haven't taken your distribution yet, contact your financial advisor or 401(k) administrator and take the distribution before the deadline.

Withdrawals from IRA and 401(k) accounts are considered taxable income and may increase future taxes. If that is

a concern, there is a way to avoid those income taxes. Owners of IRA accounts over age 70-and-a-half can make contributions directly to charity from their IRA. This is a powerful planning tool because it allows taxpayers to make qualified charitable distributions up to the \$100,000 limit from their IRAs directly to a charity and to exclude that amount from income. Remember, no taxes will be paid on the distribution, and the income tax charitable deduction is not permitted for this amount.

Make tax-effective charitable gifts

Making a gift before the end of the year can increase deductions if you itemize your deductions. Consider gifting highly appreciated stock instead of selling the stock and donating cash. If highly appreciated stock is donated to charity before Dec. 31, you get a deduction for the full value of the contributed stock and avoid paying capital-gains taxes on the increase in value since you've owned it.

Check the deadline for withdrawals flexible spending account

Most flexible spending accounts are use-it-or-lose-it accounts, meaning if you haven't spent all the funds in your account by Dec. 31, you may forfeit whatever money is left in the account. So, before the end of the year, check to see if there is a balance in the account and make that doctor or dentist appointment, or buy the new glasses you may have been putting off.

Flexible spending account funds can also be used for many over-the-counter items like contact lens solution, pain relievers, diaper cream, medical devices like walkers and wheelchairs, and a host of other items.

The same use-it-or-lose-it rules applies to Dependent Care flexible spending accounts. A Dependent Care account allows you to defer up to \$5,000 in 2018 to pay for qualified child care expenses. Some expenses that may qualify are preschool, summer day camp, before or after school programs, and child day-care.



FAMILY FINANCIAL PLANNING

ANTHONY N. CORRAO

Contribute to a 529 college-savings plan

For most people, 529 accounts are an excellent strategy to save for college tuition. They allow the beneficiary of the account to use the money tax-free for college tuition, room and board, and fees. In some states, a state income tax deduction is available for your contribution. Most states require the contribution be made by Dec. 31 in order to get the state tax deduction.

A note: Before buying a 529 plan, you should inquire about the particular plan and its fees and expenses. You should also consider that certain states offer tax benefits and fee savings to in-state residents. Whether a state tax deduction and/or application fee savings are available, depends on your state of residence. For tax advice, consult your tax professional. Nonqualifying distribution earnings are taxable and subject to a 10-percent tax penalty.

A little year-end planning could put you on the path towards solid retirement and college planning and might help you save on your taxes. Take a few minutes to review your financial plan before the end of the year to see if you can take advantage of any of these year-end strategies.

Anthony N. Corrao is president, 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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Smart moves

Reducing your risk of a child with a neurological disorder

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

The statistics are alarming no matter how you crunch the numbers. There has been a large increase in recent years of children diagnosed with neurological disorders.

A 2016 “Community Report on Autism,” published by the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network, which is funded by the Centers for Disease Control, reported, “One in 68 children or 1.5 percent of 8-year-olds were identified with autism spectrum disorder.” This statistic is particularly daunting because this network studied children ages 4.5 to 9.9 years in 2000 and found that only one in 150 children had a diagnosis.

The percent of children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is also concerning. The Centers for Disease Control reports, “The percent of children estimated to have ADHD has changed over time and can vary by how it is measured. Recent surveys show that approximately 11 percent of children 4–17 years of age (6.4 million) have been diagnosed with ADHD as of 2011. A history of ADHD diagnosis by a healthcare provider increased by 42 percent between 2003 and 2011.”

In 2007, the National Institute of Mental Health issued a press release stating, “The number of visits to a doctor’s office that resulted in a diagnosis of bipolar disorder in children and adolescents has increased by 40 times over the last decade.”

Whether the statistics are rising due to earlier under-diagnosis, current over-diagnosis, a true increase in prevalence of the disorders, or some combination of these factors, the numbers have sparked needed debate and continued research. Are the increases due to toxins in the environment? Can a specific diet, exercise program, or reduction in stress during pregnancy reduce the chance of a child being born with a neurological disorder? The bottom line: Women who plan to be pregnant should educate themselves and prepare their bodies, even before conception.

Chris Willhite is chairman of the board of directors for the Neurological Health Foundation, a non-profit that works with medical doctors, nutritionists, neuroscientists, and other researchers to develop

More reading

Here are some additional resources women planning to get pregnant should check out:

- **Healthy Child Guide:** This is a Neurological Health Foundation publication based on a wealth of research and clinical experience. It is a must-read for moms-to-be. This guide provides a step-by-step plan that women and their partners can follow to improve their chances of having a healthy child.
- **Food Safety for Pregnant Women:** [Foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov)
- **Avoiding Toxic Exposure During Pregnancy:** [Autism Speaks](#)
- **Stress and Pregnancy:** [March of Dimes](#)

specific, evidence-based recommendations that women or couples can follow to improve the odds of having a healthy child, free of chronic neurological health disorders. Willhite talks a bit about the alarming statistics.

“NHF has been around since 2011. It was founded by a group of parents who found the increase in neurological health problems with children extremely disturbing. The cases of bipolar disorder, ADHD, and autism were rising at alarming rates.”

Willhite says that there are several contributors, including environmental toxins, diet, and stress during pregnancy.

“We can educate parents on how to have a higher probability of having a healthy child,” he says.

Nutrition specifics

“What we know about foods has not changed too much over the years, but there are some specific things to consider,” explains Dr. James B. Adams, director of the Autism-Asperger’s Research Program at Arizona State University and chair of the Neurological Health Foundation’s Scientific Advisory Board. “Prenatal vitamins should be taken even before you plan to conceive. Women who do this have a 40 percent lower chance of having a child with autism.”

The vitamins and minerals present in

the prenatal vitamins that doctors prescribe — including folic acid, vitamin D, and iron — are crucial for a growing fetus.

Adams says that most women are not getting enough vitamin D and that taking a supplement from the start can reduce the number of pre-term births by half. Many women also have iron deficiencies, and low iron can increase your chance of having a baby with autism (e.g. a University of California, Davis study found that 40 to 50 percent of pregnant women have an iron deficiency). However, not all physicians retest for iron levels after the first tests are taken.

“It’s very important to test for iron again in the third trimester,” Adams states.

It’s also imperative to have folic acid (the synthetic version of folate, which is found in dark green vegetables and citrus fruits) in your system before you get pregnant. The Centers for Disease Control recommends that women take 400 mcg of folic acid every day starting one month before they get pregnant. This is because folic acid helps your baby’s neural tube development.

“Folic acid is important in reducing autism because it helps with the methylation cycle (process of turning genes on and off),” says Adams. Studies have shown that impaired methylation leads to increased risk of birth defects, speech delay, autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, etc.

Pregnant women used to be told to avoid fish because nearly all fish contain some mercury, and babies exposed to mercury in the womb can be born with brain damage.

“Seafood quality has changed quite a bit. Omega 3 fatty acids are very good for you, but farm-raised fish are fed corn, so you are not getting the benefits, and most shrimp that you find in the grocery store today is farmed,” warns Adams.

The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists advises, “Limit your exposure to mercury by not eating shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish. Limit eating white (albacore) tuna to 6 ounces a week. Be sure to eat at least 8–12 ounces of low-mercury fish and shellfish per week.”

Pregnant women should also be wary



sprouts, cabbage, etc.), raw goat whey, and some spices, such as rosemary, help boost glutathione levels.

Reduce stress

Dr. Barbara Held, who specializes in both routine and high-risk obstetrics and gynecology at Houston Methodist Hospital, counsels, “Everyone has stress in their life. However, it is the significant, chronic stress that can produce detrimental effects on a pregnancy, such as small birth weight and preterm delivery.”

She also adds that a recent study showed that stress can lead to chronic inflammation, which can have detrimental neurodevelopmental effects on a pregnancy.

“A lot of stress early in the pregnancy increases risk of miscarriage,” Adams reports. “Stress later in pregnancy is associated with lower birth weights, higher risk of anxiety disorders, and permanent changes in the child’s brain.”

Dr. Michael Cackovic, a maternal-fetal medicine physician at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center cautions, “The problem with trying to establish stress as a cause of adverse pregnancy outcomes is that there are often [additional variables] associated with stress, such as smoking, illicit drug use, and poor nutrition, to name a few. Much of the research on the effects of stress on reproduction used experimental animals subjected to physical stressors, including noise, restraint, heat, or food deprivation. It is not clear that these stressors adequately model human psychological stress.”

However, he points out that in addition to low birth weight and premature delivery, some reports have associated stress with an increased risk of congenital anomalies involving cranial neural crest-derived tissues. (“Cranial neural crest cells contribute to much of the bone, cartilage, and connective tissue in the head, including most of the head skeleton and parts of the teeth,” writes H.M. Young in the *Encyclopedia of Neuroscience*.)

Women should practice healthy ways to combat stress.

“Yoga, massage therapy, and getting enough sleep (seven to nine hours per night) all help to lower stress levels,” explains Adams.

Held suggests that women speak with their obstetricians to decide on a specific plan to reduce daily stress. A plan might include exercise, yoga, meditation, psychotherapy, improving eating and sleep habits, or medication, if necessary.

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

of bottled water. Willhite cautions, “Water bottles sit on trucks during transport and can be exposed to high temperatures. The chemicals released from the plastic in this case can cause health problems.”

MarchofDimes.org also makes the following recommendations:

- Don’t use plastic containers with the numbers 3 or 7 or the letters PC on the bottom. PC stands for a chemical called polycarbonate. Plastics with the numbers 1, 2, and 4 are safe to use. Use glass containers instead of plastic.

- Don’t re-use single-use plastics. These are plastics that are meant to be used once and then thrown away, like shopping bags, water bottles, coffee cups, and straws. If you re-use them, they can break down and release chemicals. Instead, use cloth shopping bags, glass bottles or cups and paper straws.

Avoid toxins

Avoiding toxic metals, such as mercury and lead, is critical, says Willhite.

Mercury is found in fish, light bulbs, thermometers, dental fillings, and can be released from burning waste and coal

products. Lead is found in paints and dust in older homes, auto refinishing materials, soil, some personal care products, tap water, etc. Exposure to pesticides is also dangerous to the fetus. These toxins can damage the body’s ability to methylate DNA, which is why the folic acid supplements are so important.

“Studies have shown that exposure to endocrine disruptors during pregnancy is linked to autism,” Adams warns.

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences states, “Endocrine disruptors may be found in many everyday products — including plastic bottles, metal food cans, detergents, flame retardants, food, toys, cosmetics, and pesticides.”

It’s difficult to guarantee zero exposure to toxic metals or products considered to be endocrine disruptors, so women should do everything they can to boost their body’s natural defenses.

Adams explains that glutathione, which is an important antioxidant, removes toxic metals in the body before they can reach the developing baby. Several foods boost glutathione levels. Sulfur-containing vegetables (e.g. kale, broccoli, Brussels

Calendar

DECEMBER



Julietta Cervantes

Celebrating cultures

Come celebrate a Mexican-American Christmas at the Thalia Spanish Theater now through Dec. 16.

“Navidad, a Mexican American Christmas” features youngsters in the Calpulli Mexican Dance Company bringing their two worlds together. In a dream, they imagine the fusion of mariachi music with Tchaikovsky, folk dance with ballet, and the wonderment of their two cultures. But a tempt-

ing character preaches the separation of these customs, and the youngsters must choose.

“Navidad, a Mexican American Christmas” now through Dec. 16. Fridays and Saturdays, 8 pm; Sundays at 4 pm. Tickets are \$45, \$37 for students and seniors; group rates available. For all ages.

Thalia Spanish Theater [41-17 Greenpoint Ave. in Sunnyside, (718) 729-3880; www.thaliatheater.org].

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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 queens-calendar@cnglocal.com — and we'll take care of the rest. Please e-mail requests more than three weeks prior to the event to ensure we have enough time to get it in. And best of all, it's FREE!

FRI, NOV. 30

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Drop by our Computer Lab to take control of a city 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.

SAT, DEC. 1

IN QUEENS

Family Program Access Mornings: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; 9:30 am to 10:30 am; \$5 (Free for children under 3 and members).

Join us for exclusive museum access for families on the autism spectrum. This early access hour, before the museum is open to the general public, will allow visitors of all ages to explore the exhibitions and participate in art making projects, facilitated by museum educators. A different theme will be offered each month. Light breakfast refreshments will be served. Reservations required.

Prototyping Lab: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 11 am to 4 pm; Free with admission to the hall.

Test out new engineering and design activities in our Design Lab area.

Family Program Moving Image Studio: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; 11 am; Free with museum admission.

Moving Image Studio is the museum's drop-in space where visitors of all ages can create media and other projects. Families are welcome to stop by and experiment with puppet making and animation inspired by The Jim Henson Exhibition and the core exhibition Behind the Screen.



Adventure under the sea

“The Rainbow Fish” swims into Flushing Town Hall for a puppet show on Dec. 8.

This fish will enchant even the youngest child with his silver scales and heart of gold in this new adaptation of Marcus Pfizer’s award-winning book about the beautiful fish who learned to share his most prized possession.

The performance is presented by Mermaid Theatre Nova Scotia, traveling from Canada to Queens for the show. Its striking puppetry production includes two delightful companion stories, “Rainbow Fish Discovers the Deep Sea” and “Opposites.” The show is recommended for ages 3 to 7, but older children and their families are welcome, too.

Recommended for ages 4 and up and their adult companions.

Teen Program: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave.; (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; 4 pm to 6 pm; Free with museum admission.

In the digital media lab, teens explore free design jams. These events are a unique opportunity to get exclusive access to the museum, to share in your favorite kinds of media-making, or to experiment with something new. We work with everything from vintage arcade games to

Prior to the show, puppet artist Jean Marie Keevins will bring her years of puppetry experience to a family-friendly shadow puppetry workshop at 1 pm. Families will work together to build their shadow puppets and write and perform a short story.

“The Rainbow Fish” puppetry workshop, Dec. 8 at 1 pm. \$8, \$5 children, free for teens and members with tickets to performance. RSVP required.

“The Rainbow Fish” performance, Dec. 8 at 2:15 pm. \$14, \$10 members, \$8 children, \$6 member children, free for teens.

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

web-based hacking tools as we explore the Museum’s collection in fun and innovative ways. All levels of experience are welcome. Plus, there’s pizza. Recommended for children 14 and older.

FURTHER AFIELD

Train Operator Workshop: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Friday, Nov. 30.

Twyla Tharp Family Matinee: The Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave., Manhattan; (212) 691-9740; danceeducation@joyce.

Calendar

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

org; www.joyce.org; 2 pm; Children 6–14 years \$10 with adult paying full-price.

Technical precision coupled with a streetwise nonchalance are just a few ways of describing the prolific choreographer Twyla Tharp. In her return to The Joyce Theater with “Minimalism and Me,” she takes you on a personal journey of her early works and their relationship to the minimalist period in visual art. Tharp dancers recreate excerpts from “Tank Dive,” “The History of Up and Down,” and “Eight Jelly Rolls.” Don’t miss the rare opportunity to see this acclaimed artist and her innovative style. The Joyce Family Matinee Series makes serious dance seriously fun with welcome packets for all kids and the opportunity to meet a few of the artists after the performance!

SUN, DEC. 2

IN QUEENS

Family Program Moving Image

Studio: 11 am. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Dec. 1.

TUES, DEC. 4

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, DEC. 6

FURTHER AFIELD

“The Yorkville Nutcracker”: The Kaye Playhouse, 695 Park Ave., Manhattan; (646) 765–4773; lilli@michelletabnickpr.com; <https://www.dancespatrelle.org>; 7 pm; \$65.

This year marks the 23rd anniversary of “The Yorkville Nutcracker,” set in 1895, which includes lavish sets and costumes and takes the audience on a tour through Olde New York’s most beloved landmarks, including a holiday party at Gracie Mansion, dancing at the Crystal Palace in the New York Botanical Garden, and skating in Central Park. “The Yorkville Nutcracker” provides an opportunity for young dancers to dance alongside professional artists. This year, Abi Stafford of New York City Ballet will be the Sugar Plum Fairy with Cavalier Ask La Cour (principal dancer, New York City Ballet), and Maximilien Baud and Therese Wendler will perform the Snow Pas de Deux.



Rachel Neville

A sweet holiday tradition

Visions of Sugar Plum Fairies and twinkled-toed ballerinas greet the audience in this perennial holiday favorite of “The Nutcracker,” at the Florence Gould Hall on Dec. 14, 15, and 16.

The ballet dances to Tchaikovsky’s score and is set in Art Nouveau style, circa 1907.

Clockwork imps and luminous owls fly above the audience, mice dressed in polka dots, and dancers dancing with

chopsticks, entertain and delight the audience in this re-imagined classic that bursts with excitement.

“The Nutcracker,” Dec. 14, 6 pm; Dec. 15, 11 am, 1 pm, and 3:30 pm; and Dec. 16, 11 am, 1 pm, and 3:30 pm. Tickets are \$27, \$15 children. Suitable for all ages.

Florence Gould Hall [55 E. 59th St. on the Upper East Side, (212) 355–6160; www.nytb.org/calendar-and-tickets].

FRI, DEC. 7

FURTHER AFIELD

Train Operator Workshop: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Friday, Nov. 30.

SAT, DEC. 8

IN QUEENS

Prototyping Lab: 11 am to 4 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, Dec. 1.

Family Program Moving Image Studio: 11 am. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Dec. 1.

“The Rainbow Fish”: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd., (718) 463–7700; www.flushingtownhall.org, 1 pm and 2:15 pm, Tickets \$8–\$14; RSVP for puppet workshop.

The Mermaid Theatre Nova Scotia presents a puppet performance of “The Rainbow Fish,” an adaptation of Marcus

Pfizer’s award-winning book about the beautiful fish who learned to share his most prized possession. Prior to the 2:15 pm show, puppet artist Jean Marie Keevins will bring her years of puppetry experience to a family-friendly shadow puppetry workshop at 1 pm.

FURTHER AFIELD

Train Operator Workshop: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Friday, Nov. 30.

SUN, DEC. 9

IN QUEENS

Family Program Moving Image Studio: 11 am. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Dec. 1.

Music for the Season: King Manor Museum in Rufus King Park, 150-03 Jamaica Ave. at 153rd Street; (718) 206–0545; contact@kingmanor.org; <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/clementi-co-an->

Calendar

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

evening-of-baroque-and-chamber-music-tickets-44337404370; 5 pm to 6:30 pm; \$15 general admission; (\$10 members, seniors, and students).

This concert is sure to warm your heart with an evening of wintry, festive music. Selections featured are by Longman, Clementi & Co. fortepiano (London, c. 1800) and chamber music from the time of Rufus King. Dongsok Shin, fortepiano, and Leah Nelson, baroque violin, perform.

FURTHER AFIELD

Annual Merry Tuba Christmas at Rockefeller Center: 30 Rockefeller Plaza, between 49th and 50th streets, Manhattan; 3:30 pm; Free.

Hundreds of tenor and bass tuba players will congregate to play Christmas carols and other crowd favorites for the 45th annual event. Tubists of all ages will line up under the famous Christmas tree and fill the plaza with the organ-line sound of low brass. Spectators are encouraged to sing along with the Christmas carols and holiday favorites. The musicians, hailing from across the country, will be conducted by Chris Wilhjelm, conductor of the famous Goldman band.

TUES, DEC. 11

FURTHER AFIELD

Little Playtimes: 10 am–2 pm. LEGOLAND Discovery Center Westchester. See Tuesday, Dec. 4.

FRI, DEC. 14

FURTHER AFIELD

Train Operator Workshop: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Friday,

Nov. 30.

SAT, DEC. 15

IN QUEENS

Family Program Moving Image

Studio: 11 am. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Dec. 1.

Teen Program: 4 pm to 6 pm. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Dec. 1.

FURTHER AFIELD

Train Operator Workshop: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Friday, Nov. 30.

SUN, DEC. 16

IN QUEENS

Prototyping Lab: 11 am to 4 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, Dec. 1.

Family Program Moving Image

Studio: 11 am. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Dec. 1.

TUES, DEC. 18

FURTHER AFIELD

Little Playtimes: 10 am–2 pm. LEGOLAND Discovery Center Westchester. See Tuesday, Dec. 4.

LONG-RUNNING

IN QUEENS

GingerBread Lane: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. (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, until 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.

Tutoring: Rochdale Village Inc., Community Center, 169-65 137th St.; (718) 525-2800 X 14; Jshaw@rochdalevillage.com; www.rochdalevillage.com; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am, Free.

One-on-one tutoring and homework help.

"Navidad, a Mexican American Christmas": Thalia Spanish Theater, 41-17 Greenpoint Ave.; (718) 729-3880; <http://www.thaliatheater.org>; Fridays and Saturdays, 8 pm, Sundays, 4 pm, until Sun, Dec. 16; \$45 (\$37 for students and seniors- group rates available).

Youngsters in the Capulli Mexican Dance Copmany bring their two worlds together. In a dream, they imagine the fusion of Mariachi music with Tchaikovsky, folk dance with ballet, and the wonderment of their two cultures. But a tempting character preaches the separation of these customs, and the youngster must choose.

FURTHER AFIELD

Ocean Wonders – Sharks! New York Aquarium, 602 Surf Ave. between

Continued on page 28

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Continued from page 27

W. Eighth and W. Fifth streets, Brooklyn; (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. As you explore the exhibit, the wondrous world deep below the ocean surface is revealed, whether it is in the Coral Reef Tunnel, The New York Bight or the dark and mysterious Hudson Canyon's Edge with large sand tiger sharks, sandbar sharks, nurse sharks and hundreds of marine species which live off the coast of New York.

"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.

Harry Potter – A History of Magic: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W. at W. 77th St., Manhattan; (212) 873-3400; <https://harrypotter.nyhistory.org>; Tuesdays – Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 am–6 pm, Fridays, 10 am–9 pm, Sundays, 10 am–5 pm, until Sun, Jan. 27, 2019; \$21 adults, \$6 children 5–13, children 4 and under free.

A spellbinding exhibition for all fans of Harry Potter! See original material from series publisher Scholastic and author J.K. Rowling's own archives. Plus, explore the subjects studied at Hogwarts through century-old treasures including rare books, manuscripts and magical objects from the collections of the British Library and New-York Historical Society. Check website for special events and activities.

"Yeti, Set, Snow!": Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, W. 79th Street and West Drive, Manhattan; (212) 988-9093; cityparksfoundation.org/swedish-cottage-marionette-theatre; Tuesdays – Fridays, 10:30 am to 11:30 am and 11:30 am to 12:30 pm, until Sun, Feb. 24, 2019; \$8 to \$12.

City Parks Foundation presents this original production and story, which tells the story of a young girl named Widget, and her friend, Twig, who encounter a yeti named Pascetti on the first snow day of the winter season. Pascetti, who lives on a mountain top nearby, dislikes the snow. Through songs and snow day activities, Pascetti discovers not only that snow can be fun but also learns the value



The new holiday spot

Come to "Winterfest," six weeks of winter fun that transforms the Brooklyn Museum's grounds into a winter wonderland, now through Dec. 31.

The inaugural event features winter activities, holiday shopping from local and international vendors, and cultural programs. Attractions include:

Enchanted Tree Maze. Besparkled with lighted trees that explores holiday traditions from 20 countries and cultures from around the world.

Santa Land. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be available for photos, story time, and snacks.

Snowzilla. People of all ages can enjoy the thrill of this fun slide.

The World's Largest Snowman. Bouncy, the gigantic man made of snow, will be standing tall for unique picturesque moments at Winterfest.

Giant Snowglobe. A life-sized experience, for families and friends to walk through.

Vinopolis wine tasting for the adults. An interactive tasting experience inviting wine enthusiasts to embark on a journey from grape to glass and beer garden.

Plus, nightly music, food, and beverages.

Winterfest runs daily through Dec. 31. Mondays to Thursdays, 1 pm to 8 pm; Fridays, 1 pm to 9 pm; Saturdays, 11 am to 9 pm; and Sundays, 11 am to 6 pm. Closed Dec. 3, Dec. 10, and Dec. 17. Suitable for all ages.

Admission to the grounds is free; however, fees for activities apply.

Brooklyn Museum [200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue in Crown Heights; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org].

of friendship.

The Big Bolt: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road, Long Island; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; Wednesdays and Fridays, 10:15 am and 12:15 pm, Thursdays, 10: 15 am and 12:15 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am and 2 pm, until Sun, Dec. 30; \$7 (\$9, non-members; \$12 theater only).

Jimmi is a confident, curious girl and aspiring engineer who loves to build and explore the neighborhood with her friendly dog Conrad. Her

curiosity can sometimes get her into trouble, though. While visiting a local construction site, Jimmi decides to take a big, important-looking bolt home with her. A hilarious chain of events unfold, involving a confused mail carrier, a melodramatic opera singer and an overly confident construction supervisor. With Conrad's guidance, Jimmi learns to take responsibility for her choices. Laugh along with Jimmi in this comical romp, and learn important lessons about honesty, consequences and forgiveness.



Put politics aside at your holiday table

For many people, December marks a time of goodwill. From Hanukkah and Christmas to Kwanzaa and New Year's Eve, this month is a period when most of New York gets together with family and friends. It's not only the religious either; lapsed Catholics and non-practicing Jews still go home for the holidays or at least attend the holiday meal. And even atheists cannot walk the streets without seeing the holiday lights and festivities, and again the message behind them of generosity and benevolence.

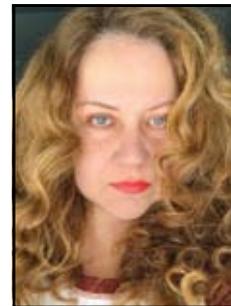
We need that message now more than even amidst our tumultuous political climate. Everyone is so heated about his or her party, and countless holiday get-togethers will be tarnished with raised voices on both sides of the aisle. It's hard to see a truce as a possibility when simple basic human rights are being put on the chopping block for discussion.

Yes, it is incredibly difficult to keep quiet when you hear insane rants being thrown around the dinner table ... but a holiday with children all around is never

a time to argue (and the mix of personalities combined with liquor do result in a certain lethal combination). However, the holidays should be child-centered, for them and also for us.

The truth is that kids know way more than we do. Children could teach us all a lesson in life. Look at the typical 5 year old in your family. Chances are he goes to school with vastly different races, religions, and economic backgrounds. But he doesn't see that; instead he sees his friend. Just by being in the same class, kids realize that all belong and are each an important part. They are each expected to respect each other and their teacher. They help one another. They share. They do what is right. They feel bad when a fellow classmate is upset. They care about the feelings of their classmates.

There is a common belief that babies are born with everything they need to know, with a strong connection to heaven, knowing they chose us for their parents, knowing they are good. Even the non-religious might be able to see the truth there. It's easy to recognize that children aren't born with hate. They



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

aren't racist, or sexist, or judgmental. They are not bullies. Those things are learned. And yes, unfortunately, they are often learned at the dinner table or on the couch or when damaging words are hurled within an earshot of a child quietly playing.

"If we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children."

—Mahatma Gandhi

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



Just take a little bite

Getting children to try new holiday foods

“You don’t want to hurt Grandma’s feelings, do you? She always makes this for us at holiday time.”

Maybe it’s Grandma, or maybe it’s an aunt, uncle, or cousin. Have you found yourself saying this when your child is offered a holiday food item he or she has never seen or tasted before?

Whether you’re celebrating Christmas, Ramadan, Hanukkah, or another winter holiday, not only are you faced with the stresses of the season, you’re also trying to teach your children good manners and exposing them to your family traditions.

Many kids automatically shut down when they’re faced with eating something that is unfamiliar. And it can be embarrassing when you’re aware of how much time and energy the preparer has spent on the dish. This is true especially when the food has been passed down through the generations in your family.

The problem is food neophobia, or a fear of a new food. Of course, it occurs year round and not just during the holidays. But food neophobia usually occurs when you’re alone with your child. Emotions aren’t running so high. And the rejection of a new food isn’t out in the open with

people staring.

Experts agree it’s unwise to pressure your child to sample a food, even if the preparer’s feelings might be hurt. Faye Berger Mitchell, a private practice dietitian and nutritionist in Potomac, Md., gives these tips:

Share memories about the food. Tell stories about family and childhood memories of how delicious and special these holiday favorites were. If there is a symbolic meaning to the food, explain the connection to pique your child’s interest. For example, potato latkes, fried potato pancakes, are a traditional Hanukkah food. Foods fried in oil represent the oil that miraculously lasted for eight days.

Have your kids help make special holiday favorites. When they are involved in the process and see you cooking with love, they are more likely to want to taste the finished product.

Serve it alongside foods they love. Place a small amount on their plate along with several foods you know they enjoy. Make sure there are some familiar foods at the holiday meal along with the holiday favorites.

Remember that it’s important to introduce your child to new foods on a regular basis. This helps him obtain a variety of



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

nutrients. It’s also a way for him to discover new tastes and textures.

What if your child absolutely refuses the food?

“Never force, cajole, or bribe. If a child does not want to try it, respect that and do not make a big deal about it,” advises Berger Mitchell. “The more you try, the more they will resist. Sometimes it takes as many as 10 exposures to a food for some kids to try it.”

Eating the right foods is important, but it may be a better idea to encourage the kids to taste your aunt’s ethnic favorites next year or even after the holidays when everyone is calmer and there’s less stress all the way around.

“Your kids may not like the same foods as you, and that is OK. We all have different food preferences and some people are more selective eaters. Continue to make your traditional holiday favorites and enjoy your holidays,” adds Berger Mitchell.

Finally, make sure everyone obtains enough sleep and maybe gets a little extra. This can help mitigate meltdowns and temper tantrums.

Remember to keep the focus on what holiday gatherings are all about: Reconnecting with family and friends and sharing the love you have for one another, even if you only see each other a few times each year.

Christine Palumbo is a Illinois-registered dietitian nutritionist and Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She is a 2018 recipient of the Medallion Award from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.



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