

# Washington FAMILY

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DECEMBER 2019

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SCHOOLS & CAMPS

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THAT PHONE

*Holiday*  
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It's time to put down our devices and plug back into life. **Page 20**



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We welcome your comments on specific articles, overall themes and anything else related to editorial content. Send us a message using the Feedback tab on our website: [www.washingtonfamily.com](http://www.washingtonfamily.com).

*Please note we reserve the right to edit or refrain from publishing comments we deem inappropriate.*

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YOUR  
FEEDBACK**





# Light Up The Season

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WASHINGTON, DC



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to yours!**

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# Washington FAMILY

DECEMBER 2019

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**Craig Burke, Publisher**

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# Endings and Beginnings

**B**etween the start of the holiday season and the end of the year, it's hard not to feel nostalgic in December. And there's even more to consider this month as we approach the end of a decade. Think back to where you were 10 years ago. How much has your life changed since then?

This has been a momentous decade for me, to say the least. Most significantly, I became a mom! My first son, Levi, was born in 2011, and his brother, Asa, arrived in 2014.

Professionally speaking, the past 10 years have been a whirlwind as well. I spent much of the decade working as a freelance writer with the goal of earning a spot on the editorial staff of a magazine. With one month left in the year, here I am: the new editor of Washington FAMILY. What a way to end 2019!

Looking ahead to 2020, I want the content we're publishing in our magazine and sharing online to continue to be meaningful to you. In order to make that happen, I'd love to know about the issues that keep you up at night and what you talk about when you're grabbing coffee with

friends. What are you struggling with as a parent? How can we help you feel more confident in your role as mom or dad? Shoot me an email or find me on social media, and let me know what's on your mind.

In the meantime, the team at Washington FAMILY has put together a fantastic last issue of 2019. There's our annual calendar of holiday happenings around the DMV and a gift guide from local "fun experts." Dr. Thomas Franklin, a psychiatrist, offers advice on how we can unplug from our smartphone, and writer Erica Rimlinger shares one family's exploration into medical marijuana for their daughter. Then there's a moving personal essay from Gwen Van Velsor, founder of Yellow Arrow Publishing, about how sewing connects her to her grandmother.

From our FAMILY to yours, I wish you a magical holiday season and a very happy New Year! ■

*PJ Feinstein*



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## Open House

**Monday, January 27**

**9:00 - 10:30 a.m.**

{ december }

**SUNDAY 1**

**"The Very Hungry Caterpillar Christmas"**

Everyone's favorite insect is back — just in time for Christmas. Watch as the colorful caterpillar and other friends embark on a holiday adventure inspired by the original storybook classic.

*Center for the Arts, Fairfax, Va., 1 p.m. & 4 p.m. \$10-\$15. cfa.gmu.edu*

**Chanticleer**

Listen to the beautiful Chanticleer ensemble as they perform a holiday-inspired musical show. This men's chorus will not only be performing classic Christmas carols but also Renaissance motets and gospel melodies that will entertain the entire family.

*Hylton Performing Arts Center, Manassas, Va. at 4 p.m. \$33-\$55. cvpa.gmu.edu*

**MONDAY 2**

**FREE Funday Monday**

Spend the morning enjoying a creative kids' activity with guidance from Paint Your Own Pottery. Enjoy music and movement-based fun as well with local favorites Mr. Skip and My Gym.

*3999 University Dr., Fairfax, Va. at 10:30 a.m. fairfaxva.gov*

**TUESDAY 3**

**Bring Your Own Baby: Rothko & Co.**

Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center's program provides adults with an enriching educational experience while allowing them to meet other caregivers in the community. The group will walk to the National Gallery of Art to explore the work of Mark Rothko and his modern art contemporaries.

*National History Museum, Washington, D.C., 10:15-11:45 a.m. \$15. si.edu/seec*

**WEDNESDAY 4**

**Parent and Tot Skate**

'Tis the season to take the kids ice skating! This family skating event is aimed at children age 4 and under and includes pushing skate aids for no additional charge.

*Cabin John Ice Rink, Rockville, Md. at 11:15 a.m. \$5. montgomeryparks.org*

**THURSDAY 5**

**"The Velveteen Rabbit"**

In this family-focused production, everyone's favorite rabbit comes to life in a story that will surely get everyone in the holiday spirit!

*Adventure Theatre, Glen Echo, Md., 10 a.m. and noon. \$21. adventuretheatre-mtc.org*

**FRIDAY 6**

**Encore Stage & Studio's "CSI: Christmas Scene Investigators"**

Christmas is soon approaching, but Santa Claus is missing. Follow along as an ambitious group of students known as the Clue Club embark on an investigative journey to find Santa before the big day. Along the way, they just might discover the true meaning of Christmas, too.

*Gunston Arts Center, Arlington, Va. at 7:30 p.m. \$12-\$15. wscavantbard.org*

**Rock with the Rocknoceros**

This awesome musical trio is a true local favorite. Sing and dance along with Coach Cotton, Williebob and

Woogie Bennie as they perform their award-winning hits for kids.

*Jammin' Java, Fairfax, Va. at 10:30 a.m. \$5. jamminjava.com*

**SATURDAY 7**

**Holidays on the Farm**

Kick-off the holiday season with a day full of hands-on activities, a miniature train display, marshmallow toasting and a holiday-themed performance by Ray Owens. Santa will be making a special appearance as well, so get the cameras ready.

*The Children's Museum of Rose Hill Manor Park, Frederick, Md. Check website for times. \$5. recreater.com*

**FREE 7th Annual Tree Lighting**

Feel the Christmas cheer all around at One Loudoun's annual holiday tree lighting event. After the celebration, enjoy a family dinner at one of One Loudoun's great local restaurants.

*One Loudoun Downtown, Ashburn, Va. at 5 p.m. oneloudoun.com*

**SUNDAY 8**

**Holiday Teen Tea**

Kids ages 11 and older with an accompanying adult can enjoy a traditional afternoon tea in the 1867

Dower House with tasty treats such as sandwiches, scones and desserts. After tea, explore the festive decor of Tudor Place on a guided tour.

*Tudor Place Historic House and Garden, Washington, D.C. at noon. \$30-\$35. tudorplace.org*

**FREE Foxcroft School Christmas Pageant**

Foxcroft students have been putting on this holiday event for the community for more than 100 years, which includes live animals, colorful costumes and non-stop singing. Santa will make an appearance after the show.

*Foxcroft School Engelhard Gymnasium, Middleburg, Va. at 2 p.m. foxcroft.org*

**MONDAY 9**

**FREE Get Your Spell On**

Spellers of all abilities are invited to Bellevue Library's educational event. With prizes and tons of encouragement, the program aims at boosting kids' spelling skills in a safe and accepting environment.

*115 Atlantic St. SW, Washington, D.C. at 5 p.m. dclibrary.org*

**THE WIZARD SCHOOL SCAVENGER HUNT**

Dec. 28 | 2 P.M. | \$17-\$19



Harry Potter fans unite! Spend the afternoon enjoying a magical Harry Potter-themed scavenger hunt for kids. Roam through the National Gallery of Art in search of art that correlates with people, places and objects found in the Harry Potter series.

*National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. at 2 p.m. \$17-\$19. watsonadventures.com*



## THURSDAY 12

### "Fiddler on the Roof"

Take the family out into the District to catch this beloved musical. Directed by Tony-winner Bartlett Sher, this heart-warming tale focuses on family, faith and timeless traditions. Ideal for ages 8 and up.

*National Theatre, Washington, D.C. at 7:30 p.m. \$54-114. [thenationaldc.org](http://thenationaldc.org)*

## FRIDAY 13

### Vienna Boys Choir

The angelic voices of the Vienna Boys Choir are out of this world. Experience their talents live with a holiday-focused performance that includes classical masterpieces, contemporary pop favorites, carols and more.

*Center for the Arts, Fairfax, Va. at 8 p.m. \$33-\$55. [cfa.gmu.edu](http://cfa.gmu.edu)*

## SATURDAY 14

### FREE Christmas in Purcellville

Face painting, live music, pictures with Santa, an ornament workshop and more. Soak in the magic of

the holiday season at this annual Christmas in Purcellville festivity.

*Historic Downtown Purcellville, Purcellville, Va. 10 a.m. [purcellvilleva.gov](http://purcellvilleva.gov)*

### Prince William Little Theatre: "Charlie Brown Christmas"

Charlie Brown tries to bring back the true meaning of Christmas to his community by directing his school's Christmas pageant.

*Hylton Performing Arts Center, Manassas, Va. at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. \$15-25. [cypa.gmu.edu](http://cypa.gmu.edu)*

## SUNDAY 15

### Artful Afternoons: Movement

Join the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center for a creative afternoon that focuses on movement. Students in grades K-3 can participate in different activity stations around the museum's art studio and learn about artists Jackson Pollack, Soto and Otero.

*National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. at 2-4 p.m. \$32 per family. [seecstories.com](http://seecstories.com)*

### Brunch with Santa

Enjoy a festive brunch with the family at the Holiday Inn Gaithersburg. Dress the kids in their Christmas finery for a professional photo with Santa Claus! Reservations are required.

*2 Montgomery Village Ave., Gaithersburg Md. 11:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. \$15-\$22 (6 and under, free). [HarvestGaithersburg.com](http://HarvestGaithersburg.com)*

### "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever"

The Herdman kids might just be the most awful kids in history. Can a local couple figure out how to get them to cooperate in the local church Christmas pageant? Full of craziness and fun, this play is a laugh-out-loud good time for ages 8 and up.

*Arts Barn, Gaithersburg, Md. at 2 p.m. \$12-20. [gaithersburgmd.gov](http://gaithersburgmd.gov)*

## TUESDAY 17

### FREE Pajama Story Time

Need helping getting the kids to wind down after dinner? Put them in their jammies and head on over to the Woodridge Library for an evening of

stories before bed.

*1801 Hamlin St. NE, Washington, D.C. at 6 p.m. [dclibrary.org](http://dclibrary.org)*

## WEDNESDAY 18

### Crafty Critters

This alphabet adventure includes a story, craft and meet-and-greet with a live animal. After storytime, spend the rest of the afternoon visiting all of the park's unique animals.

*Leesburg Animal Park, Leesburg, Va. at 10:30 a.m. \$10.95-15.95 [leesburganimalpark.com](http://leesburganimalpark.com)*

## THURSDAY 19

### FREE Wiggle Time

It's not always easy for little ones to stay still, and that's OK. This program at Francis A. Gregory Library encourages guided movement and play during story time to enhance comprehension.

*3660 Alabama Ave. SE, Washington, D.C. at 10:30 a.m. [dclibrary.org](http://dclibrary.org)*

# The Kennedy Center



### Glimpse

A fun-filled music performance for young audiences from the Netherlands!

What do colors sound like? Who can understand the moon? How do you sing a tree? This concert presented by Dutch music company **Oorkaan** transports young audiences to an enchanted world in which music, artists, images, and technology interact with one another. Jazzy melodies mix with bright visuals, forming a captivating new way to relate to music and sounds.

**January 11 & 12  
Terrace Gallery**

**Age 2-4**



### NSO Family Concert Beauty and the Beast

See NSO principal second violinist **Marissa Regni** and NSO principal percussionist **Eric Shin** in an exciting new program exploring the magic created when the violin and percussion join together. This melodic and rhythmic ride for families proves that no matter how different the instruments are, they can come together to make some beautiful music.

**January 18 & 26  
Family Theater**

**Age 3+**



### Winter Lanterns

The REACH at night glows with the D.C. debut of approximately 100 stunning Winter Lanterns crafted by Chinese artisans made up of 10,000 colored LED lights.

**Jan. 22-Feb. 2  
The REACH grounds**

### Chinese Family Day

The popular event returns! A number of free activities will be offered including: arts and crafts, traditional costume photo booth, zodiac stickers, and demonstrations of calligraphy, plus exciting performances of traditional music, a magician from Shenzhen, the Lion Dance, and more.

**January 25  
The REACH grounds All Ages**



### My Fair Lady

From Lincoln Center Theater comes "a sumptuous new production of the most perfect musical of all time" (*Entertainment Weekly*). Lerner & Loewe's *My Fair Lady*. It tells the story of Eliza Doolittle, a young Cockney flower seller, and Henry Higgins, a linguistics professor who is determined to transform her into his idea of a "proper lady." But who is really being transformed?

**Dec. 17-Jan. 19  
Opera House**

**Age 8+**

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Groups call (202) 416-8400

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Additional support for Glimpse is provided by Dutch Performing Arts

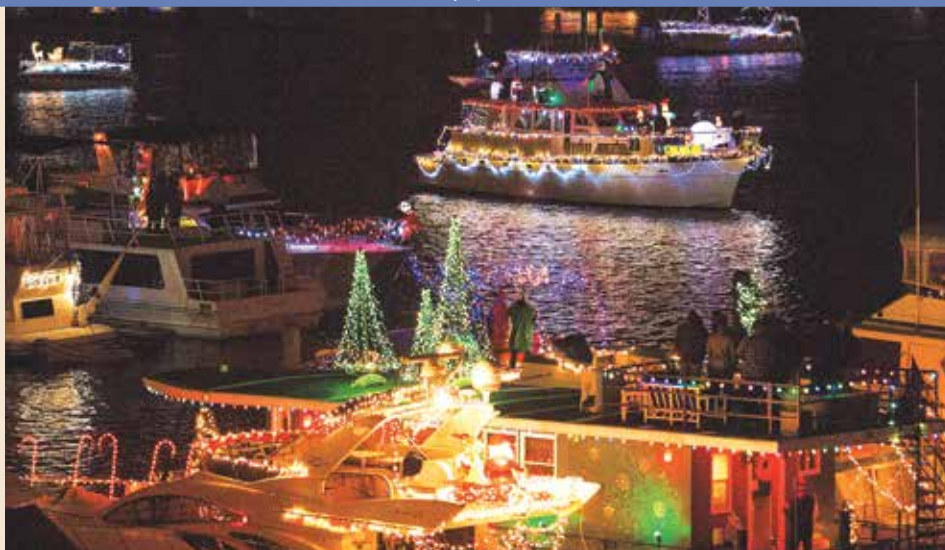
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International programming at the Kennedy Center is made possible through the generosity of the Kennedy Center International Committee on the Arts.

## THE DISTRICT'S HOLIDAY BOAT PARADE

Dec. 7 | FREE



Head over to the Wharf to watch the enchanting holiday boat show while sipping hot cocoa, listening to live music, making smores and taking pictures around the lighted Christmas tree. Plus, parents can enjoy adult winter drinks at the Waterfront Wine & Beer Garden.

*The Wharf, Washington, D.C. at 6 p.m., wharfdc.com*

## FRIDAY 20

### Daddy-Daughter Date Night

There will be dancing, music, snacks, drinks and a photo booth for dads and their little girl(s) at the Zen Lounge. All guests get to take home a goodie bag to remember their special night.

*The Zen Lounge, Manassas, Va. at 6:30 p.m. \$7-\$25.*

## SATURDAY 21

### Gingerbreadpalooza

Take a kid-friendly architecture tour around historic Tudor Place, enjoy a quick story time and then design your own gingerbread house, cottage or mansion to take home.

*1644 31st St. NW, Washington, D.C. at noon and 2 p.m.  
\$5-\$15. tudorplace.org*

### First Studio: Story & Workshop

Children ages 3-5 can explore the gallery, listen to a story and partake in a hands-on art project at The Kreeger Museum with an accompanying adult. The program

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aims at activating children's imaginations. Pre-registration required.

2401 Foxhall Rd. NW, Washington, D.C.  
at 10 a.m. [kreegermuseum.org](http://kreegermuseum.org)

## SUNDAY 22

### "Snow Queen"

In this family-friendly story, a little girl ventures across far lands with a magic mirror to save her best friend from the Snow Queen.

Synetic Theater, Arlington, Va. \$15-\$30  
at 4 p.m. [synetictheater.org](http://synetictheater.org)

## MONDAY 23

### "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! (The Musical!)"

Enjoy a live version of the beloved bedtime favorite by Mo Willems at the Kennedy Center Family Theater. Watch as the characters come to life through a combination of puppets and actors.

2700 F St. NW, Washington, D.C.  
at 1:30 p.m. \$20. [kennedy-center.org](http://kennedy-center.org)

## TUESDAY 24

### FREE Santa's Wonderland

Santa's Wonderland at Bass Pro Shops includes rustic cabins, holiday characters, remote-control trucks and a toy arcade. Visitors can make festive crafts and write last-minute letters to Santa.

7000 Arundel Mills Circle, Hanover, Md.  
at noon. [basspro.com](http://basspro.com)

## THURSDAY 26

### FREE Read to Rover

It's true — dogs are great listeners! Kids ages 5 to 12 can practice literacy skills by reading aloud to some cute and well-behaved furry friends at Northeast Neighborhood Library. All dogs are trained and certified by the nonprofit People Animals Love.

330 7th St. NE, Washington, D.C. at 6:30 p.m. [dclibrary.org](http://dclibrary.org)

## FRIDAY 27

### "The Magical Pinata"

In this Keegan Theatre play, a magical clay pot transports a girl from her home in Mexico to a mysterious jungle. There she discovers a wide range of interesting characters who encourage her to take pride in her home and her cultural background.

1742 Church St. NW, Washington, D.C.  
at 11 a.m. \$20. [keegantheatre.com](http://keegantheatre.com)

## SATURDAY 28

### Science Saturday

Enjoy engineering- and chemistry-based activities related to this month's theme, "Bomb Squad Science," at the National Law Enforcement Museum.

444 E St. NW, Washington, D.C. at 1 p.m. Free with admission to the museum.  
[lawenforcementmuseum.org](http://lawenforcementmuseum.org)

## MONDAY 30

### FREE Magic Monday Series: Physical Theatre Workshop

Synetic Theater's Children's programming artists introduce kids in grades K-5 to physical theater through hilarious sketches, fun activities and games at Central Library. Bring your imagination and willingness to participate!

1015 North Quincy St., Arlington, Va. at 2 p.m. [library.arlingtonva.us](http://library.arlingtonva.us)

## TUESDAY 31

### Hands-On History

Kids ages 3-8 can play dress up in 18th-century clothing, learn about George Washington, read books, make crafts and even meet the first president's farm animals at the Donald W. Reynolds Museum & Educational Center at Mount Vernon.

3200 Mount Vernon Hwy, Mt Vernon, Va. at noon. Free with admission.

[mountvernon.org](http://mountvernon.org) ■



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# Holiday HAPPENINGS

BY PJ FEINSTEIN

There's never a shortage of family-friendly events happening in the DMV, and that's especially true during the holiday season. From festive lights and icy adventures to enchanting ballets and (believe it or not) a waterskiing Santa, December around the District is a magical time for children of all ages. Whether you celebrate Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanzaa or any combination of the above, here are some exciting holiday happenings — a mix of traditional and non-traditional events — you and your kids won't want to miss.

## || LIGHT BRIGHT ||

### WINTER LIGHTS FESTIVAL

Experience the wonder of 450 illuminated displays and enchantingly lit trees from the warmth of your car on a 3.5-mile drive through Seneca Creek State Park. **Tickets required. Seneca Creek State Park, Gaithersburg, MD, through Dec. 31, Sunday-Thursday: 6-9 p.m.; Friday & Saturday: 6-10 p.m. visitmontgomery.com**

### ZOOLIGHTS

New additions to the National Zoo's dazzling annual holiday tradition include animal-shaped lanterns, an Instagram-worthy interactive art installation and no-snow-required tubing. **Free. National Zoo, Washington, D.C., through Jan. 1, 5-8 p.m. nationalzoo.si.edu**

### BULL RUN FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Follow the magical glow of holiday lights on this 2.5-mile drive through Bull Run Regional Park. Santa will be waiting in the holiday village on select nights for family photos. **Tickets required. Bull Run Regional Park, Centreville, VA, through Jan. 5, Monday-Thursday: 5:30-9:30 p.m.; Friday-Sunday (and holidays): 5:30-10 p.m. novaparks.com**

### GEORGETOWN GLOW

The 6th edition of this curated exhibit of outdoor public light art installations shines a light on D.C.'s oldest neighborhood. **Free. Georgetown, Washington, D.C., through Jan. 5, 5-10 p.m. georgetownglowdc.com**

## || FROZEN FESTIVITIES ||

### BETHESDA'S ANNUAL WINTER WONDERLAND

Local school choirs sing songs of the season while talented sculptors carve blocks of ice into holiday masterpieces on the streets of downtown Bethesda. Keep your eyes open for a visit from Santa. **Free. Veterans Park, Bethesda, MD, Dec. 7, 1-4 p.m. bethesda.org**

### CHANUKAH ON ICE!

Lace up your skates and celebrate the first night of Chanukah on the ice, which kicks off with the lighting of a 6-foot menorah. Latkes and kosher hot dogs are available to purchase. **Tickets required. Pentagon Row Outdoor Ice Rink, Arlington, VA, Dec. 22, 6-8:30 p.m. chabadalexandria.org**

### GAYLORD NATIONAL'S ICE!

Two million pounds of hand-carved ice sculptures depict favorite scenes from Dr. Seuss's "How The Grinch Stole Christmas." Dress warmly for your stroll through icy Whoville. **Tickets required. Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center, National Harbor, MD, through Dec. 30. tickets.gaylordnational.com**

### HOLIDAY SING-A-LONG

Gates open at 2:30 p.m. for a performance by the U. S. Marine Band and a sing-a-long of Christmas carols and Chanukah songs with local choir and vocal groups. Bring a bell for the "Jing-A-Long," a candle for the traditional

candlelight processional and your holiday cheer! **Free. Wolf Trap, Vienna, VA, Dec. 7, 4 p.m. wolftrap.org**

### KWANZAA CELEBRATION AT DANCE PLACE

Join Coyaba Dance Theater, Coyaba Academy and special guests as they celebrate the seven principles of Kwanzaa through dance. **Tickets required. Dance Place, 3225 8th St., N.E., Washington, D.C., Dec. 14, 7 p.m.; Dec. 15, 3 p.m. danceplace.org**

### THE HIP HOP NUTCRACKER

A remixed and reimagined version of the Christmas classic, this holiday mash-up updates Tchaikovsky's classic score with a DJ, an electric violin and awe-inspiring contemporary and hip-hop dancers. **The Music Center at Strathmore, North Bethesda, MD, Dec. 17-19, 8 p.m. strathmore.org**

### THE CENTER FOR BALLET ARTS PRESENTS: NUTCRACKER IN A NUTSHELL

At one hour and 15 minutes, this abridged version of the beloved classic is the perfect length for the whole family to enjoy. **Tickets required. Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, Alexandria, VA, Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 22, 3 p.m. thecenterforballetarts.com**

### SEASONS OF LIGHT

Now in its 20th season, this interactive event for elementary-aged children celebrates the history and customs





of Diwali, Chanukah, Las Posadas, Ramadan, Santa Lucia Day, Kwanzaa, Christmas and the First Nations' tradition of the Winter Solstice.

**Tickets required. Discovery Theater, Ripley Center, Washington, D.C., through Dec. 20, 10:15 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. [discoverytheater.org](http://discoverytheater.org)**

#### A FAMILY CHRISTMAS

Presented by the Choral Arts Society of Washington, this one-hour sing-along of favorite children's holiday songs includes a visit from Frosty, Rudolph and Santa. **Tickets required. The Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., Dec. 24, 11 a.m. [kennedy-center.org](http://kennedy-center.org)**

### || MERRY MAKING ||

#### ENCHANT CHRISTMAS

Nationals Park becomes a winter wonderland with a 90,000-square-foot light maze in the outfield and an ice skating trail in the infield. Shop for gifts in the Christmas market and enjoy holiday-themed food and drink. **Tickets required. 1500 S. Capitol St. SE, Washington, D.C., through Dec. 29. [enchantchristmas.com/dc](http://enchantchristmas.com/dc)**

#### 74TH ANNUAL GREATER MANASSAS CHRISTMAS PARADE

Grab a spot on the sidewalk for one of the largest holiday parades in Northern Virginia, featuring marching bands, floats, high-flying balloons

and more. **Free. Historic Downtown Manassas, Manassas, VA, Dec. 7, 10 a.m. [gmchristmasparade.org](http://gmchristmasparade.org)**

#### NATIONAL MENORAH: CHANUKAH ON THE ELLIPSE

The annual lighting of the National Menorah includes musical performances from the U.S. Marine Band and Dreidelman and the Maccabees, delicious Chanukah treats and free dreidels and menorah kits. **Free, but tickets required. The White House Ellipse, Washington, D.C., Dec. 22, 4 p.m. [nationalmenorah.org](http://nationalmenorah.org)**

#### WATERSKIING SANTA

For the 34th year, Santa swaps his sled for water skis

as he and his merry crew take to the Potomac River for a most unusual Christmas Eve tradition. **Free. Old Town Alexandria, Alexandria, VA, Dec. 24, 1 p.m. [waterskiingsanta.com](http://waterskiingsanta.com)**

#### CHRISTMAS AT MOUNT VERNON

Costumed characters tell stories of Christmases past at George Washington's estate. Holiday-themed tours and programs take place throughout the month, including chocolate-making demonstrations and ornament decorating. **Tickets required. Mount Vernon, VA, through Dec. 31, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. [mountvernon.org](http://mountvernon.org)** ■

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COMMUNITY

# Delivering Christmas Cheer To Hospitalized Kids

Among the many things that children look forward to during the holiday season is discovering whether Santa has rewarded their "nice behavior" with a favorite toy (or two!) under the Christmas tree. But what happens when a child is hospitalized during the holidays and unable to be home on Christmas morning to open presents? In Fairfax County, those children get an early visit from Santa himself.

For 31 years, Santa has been swapping his sled and reindeer for a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and police escort in early Dec. to collect toys for children at local hospitals. He and his merry crew will ride into town on Dec. 11-12 to deliver gifts and yuletide spirit at INOVA Children's Hospital - Life Services Center and the Georgetown Hospital Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center.

This annual tradition traces its origins to 1987 when Fairfax County Police Department motor officers Buddy Sekely and John Burdette were invited by the Montgomery County Police Department's motor squad to help deliver Christmas gifts to D.C. Children's Hospital, now Children's National Hospital. Sekely and Burdette were so inspired by the positive impact the event had on

the children and their parents that they wasted no time starting their own ride the following year.

Officer Sekely, now retired, played Santa until 1993. He remembers the challenges he faced recruiting elves for Fairfax County's inaugural Santa's Ride in 1988. "I had a little resistance from some of the guys in the department at first since a lot of them were not too keen on the idea of wearing an elf costume, but it only took one time participating and everyone was hooked," he says. "Shortly after that, I got the chief onboard, and the whole thing took off." Mrs. Claus, Rudolph and Frosty were soon added to the lineup, and eventually the ride got so big that a second day was added to visit more hospitals.

Needless to say, the event is no small undertaking, and the Fairfax County Police Department's motor squad scrambles like Santa's elves on Christmas Eve to pick up donations of unwrapped toys from local police stations, various local businesses and participating Fairfax county schools. More than 100 boxes of toys are typically collected, and the gifts — including games, books and even bikes — are sorted in a warehouse by age and gender to make it easier for distribution at

the hospitals. Nurses will help Santa figure out what kinds of toys each child prefers.

Coordinating this year's event is Fairfax County police Pfc. Charles Reinhard. "Seeing the joy on these kids' faces is so gratifying, and the parents are so grateful as well. The fact that we help take these kids' minds off being sick and in the hospital, if only for a brief moment, makes it all worth it," Reinhard says.

Santa will also leave some toys to be delivered on Christmas morning and other times throughout the year. Any remaining gifts will be given to various local charities, including the INOVA Life with Cancer Center.

If you'd like to donate to this special cause, you can drop off a new and unwrapped toy, game, book or other gift to any Fairfax County Police Station, Fairfax County Public Safety Headquarters, Fairfax County Print Shop at the Government Center, Fairfax City Police Department, Vienna Police Department or the lobbies of the Pennino and Herrity Office Buildings. All donations should be made before 9 a.m. on Monday, Dec. 9. ■

—MELANIE SWITZER REILLY



Santa, Mrs. Claus and their friends will be rolling into Fairfax County on their motorcycles during the second week of December to deliver toys to young hospital patients.





# Holiday GIFT GUIDE

## TOYS FOR YOUR TOTS

*Fun gift ideas from the area's fun experts*

BY WF STAFF

Got a kid to buy for and no clue what to get? Steven Aarons is your guy. As owner of Barstons Child's Play, which has stores in Chevy Chase, Arlington, McLean and Rockville, Aarons gets as excited as any child about toys.

"We believe in a lot of open-ended play," Aarons says, and his choices for this year's shoppers reflect that.

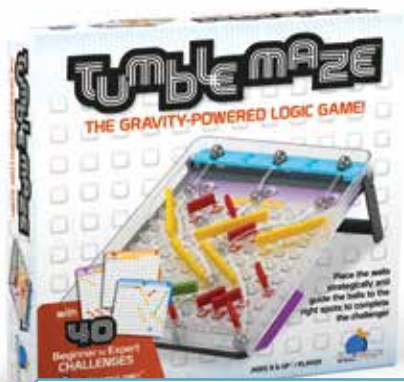
Let's start with the dragon that breathes steam. Yep, Hearthsong's Steam Breathing Dragon (\$40) breathes hours of imaginative play with all that hot air. Not the animal of choice for the wee folk in your house? How about a Tumbling Hedgehog (\$40) from Thames and Kosmos? This cute-faced critter is a programmable pet that reacts to sounds and handclaps.

For kids who would like a toy that's even more active, Aarons recommends B4 Adventure's Cosmic Mini Golf (\$120-\$160) — basically a "make-your-own miniature golf course" that comes in a variety of course lengths.

### IMAGINATION REQUIRED

Other toys that make Aarons' list include BRIO's Wooden Pinball Game (\$50) and a Gumball Machine Maker (\$40), also from Thames and Kosmos, which is exactly what it sounds like and also somewhat "like a marble run but with gumballs."

Many parents are familiar with Our Generation Dolls, the reasonably priced cousin of American Girl dolls and a line known for its range of accessories. The popular sleepover set, for example, even has its



**BLUE ORANGE TUMBLE MAZE**  
**\$28**



**B4 ADVENTURE  
COSMIC MINI GOLF**  
**\$120 - \$160**

# Holiday GIFT GUIDE



**LEGO'S IDEAS TREE HOUSE**  
\$200

**OUR GENERATION DOLLS  
GRILL TO GO FOOD TRUCK**  
\$120



own full deck of doll-sized cards. New this year, the line is offering a Grill to Go Food Truck (\$120), which is expected to ride the popularity of the line's ice cream truck.

LEGO's IDEAS series offers a Tree House (\$200) with leaves that can be changed out with the seasons. And speaking of being green, Bio Buddi, a Duplo-compatible set of bricks, is made from plant-based materials, which make for a "better long-term" toy, Aarons says. (Set prices start at \$20.)

Toy shoppers can expect to see some of the familiar this year as well — "Star Wars," "Frozen" and that boy wizard, Harry Potter, remain popular, as do Pokémon, fidgets and games, Aarons says.

## BRAIN TEASERS

This recommendation comes from aMuse toys, which has stores in Fells Point and Quarry Lake, and we love it: Yellow Scope Science Kits (\$50). These award-winning kits, created by moms and scientists for creative girls interested in STEM, include Foundation Chemistry, Paper Chromatography and Acids, Bases and pH. Their newest kit, DNA and Traits, comes with lab equipment, a notebook and outlines for many activities that explore DNA. The founders at Yellow Scope are passionate about educating and inspiring girls, and their science-based gifts will enthrall any curious mind.

Got a puzzle lover to buy for? Check out Blue Orange's Tumble Maze (\$28), a logic game that involves creating a maze



**YELLOW SCOPE SCIENCE KITS**  
\$50



**LITTLE  
LIKES KIDS  
UNDER  
\$20**

to get a marble through a series of tracks to a finishing point. “We can’t stop playing it,” says Flora Stelzer, co-owner of Shananigans in Baltimore. “There are so many levels to get through, so we’re always entertained.” With 40 levels that increase in complexity, this gravity-powered puzzle engages children and parents alike, challenging even the brainiest.

Kathleen Donahue, owner of Labyrinth Games & Puzzles in Washington, D.C., is a big fan of Little Likes Kids, a brand of memory games and puzzles created by Takoma Park mother Kemi Tignor

“It’s so hard to find puzzles that have diversity,” Donahue says. “The art for these puzzles is absolutely gorgeous, and it’s super inclusive. I really love it.”

A favorite is the Sweetgrass Head Basket Memory Game (\$17), but the line also has Santa puzzles that feature an African-American Santa (\$14).

Shashibo Shape-Shifting Box (\$20) is a seemingly simple toy that offers any child endless ways to play. A magnetic puzzle cube that can be used as a creative medium or just a quiet fidget toy, the box is available in four mesmerizing patterns and can be transformed into more than 70 shapes.

And you heard it here first: Archery is back! Featuring foam-tip arrowheads, Two Bros Bows Archery Set (\$53) is a safe alternative to traditional bows and arrows for kids with a wild sense of adventure. We think this set has the potential to be a new child (and parent!) favorite.

## TRENDY TOTS

Fashion-forward babies will look extra adorable in unique threads from Emerson & Friends Baby Apparel (\$22 per onesie). This apparel line features witty slogans and soft fabrics. Another good one for the littlest ones on your list: Indestructibles Baby Books (\$6), which are rip-proof, chew-proof, non-toxic and 100 percent washable. They offer original stories based on classic nursery rhymes.

Happy shopping, parents! ■



**SHASHIBO SHAPE SHIFTING BOX  
\$20**



**EMERSON & FRIENDS BABY APPAREL  
\$22**

With reporting from Molly Szymanski



# Needle and Thread

BY GWEN VAN VELSOR



Mountains of paper piles sit crookedly on my kitchen table. Paper cutters, awls, bone folders and rulers are strewn about. Pages are printed, covers are cut to size, paper is folded and punched with holes. At last, all the pieces come together, and it's time to bind the book.

It takes weeks to make several dozen books this way. Every single time this process starts, I ask myself if it is worth it. I know how much easier, and perhaps neater, the product would turn out if it were sent off to a printing company. I could simply email the file and a perfectly packed box would arrive at my doorstep. Instead, I sit at my table night after night, folding and cutting, stitching and trimming.

I slide my glasses on and slip the waxed thread through the eye of an oversized needle. The needle glides through the cover, into signature one and out signature two. Again and again the needle dives between the pages until it meets its tail in the middle. I pull the thread taut, snip it off and tie a knot. Another book is born.

The pages are sewn together, one by one, hour by hour, until my fingertips ache. It's in the sewing, the act of pulling needle and thread to create something new, that I think of my grandmother.

I remember the sunshine beams cutting through the crystal gems that hung over the kitchen window in my grandparents' trailer, making little rainbows on the table. I was about 8 years old, sitting

on a backless bench and attempting to re-thread a needle with adeptness and confidence like grandma.

As she waited for me, she didn't stop talking; she never stopped talking. But I liked to listen. She told me about making dress patterns from brown paper during the Depression and the time she received a single sacred orange for Christmas.

That summer, it was decided that my grandmother, Wanita, would give me sewing lessons. I was an eager student, longing to embroider my own hankies with delicate violets or to make fashionable skirts that no one else had. During my first lesson, we used the sewing machine and our hands to make a little stuffed lion with button eyes and an embroidered nose.

Grandma wouldn't have called herself a seamstress, but she could sew anything, so it seems like the right word. She made my mother's wedding dress and made matching Easter dresses for Cabbage Patch dolls. She embroidered pillow cases and crocheted lap blankets.

There were glamorous taffeta gowns for Christmas, and one Halloween, she made me a spot-on Sleeping Beauty costume. She made things for my numerous aunts, uncles and cousins, too. Never forgetting a birthday or holiday, Grandma took the time to make something special for each of us. It was her way of self-expression, her way of creating space in a world where having a voice outside of the sewing room was rare.

Today, my own projects consume the kitchen table just like hers did, but I'm not sewing dresses. I'm making

books. As I stitch away at them, making a neat pile after finishing each one, my breathing slows and the light in the room feels warm. I've found a way to fuse the personal nature of the words in these books with a product that feels like it was made just for the reader. Because it was.

In this way, I know she is here. She's part of me in the joints of my fingers, in the quietness of my mind, as I was once a part of her. A peaceful presence.

Yes, it seems a little crazy to make all these books when it would be so easy to have them printed. But in the tranquility of this process, thinking of my grandmother, it becomes clear. This making of books slows me down, way down, enough to impart some good thoughts and prayers into each book I sew. It allows me to create space for expression.

My three year old marvels at the supplies on the table, longing to pull the heavy arm of the paper cutter. Usually I wait until she is sleeping to sew, but this time I show her my tools, and she watches as another book comes together. I teach her how to make a simple folded book, and she writes intently in the pages with a chubby blue marker. Maybe one day, when she's older, my daughter will remember me sewing at our kitchen table and decide to create something of her own using a needle and thread. ■

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Gwen Van Velsor is founder of Yellow Arrow Publishing, a Baltimore-based nonprofit that supports writers identifying as women through literary events and a biannual journal that is bound by hand.



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# Look Up!

## IN 2020, TAKE YOUR EYES OFF YOUR PHONE

BY DR. THOMAS FRANKLIN



We are currently raising a generation of young people who struggle to tolerate boredom. Instead of learning to sit with their thoughts, they compulsively reach for their phones.

It's that time of year when we all resolve to be better. Perhaps in 2020, you'll resolve to lose weight, quit smoking or be more kind. These are good resolutions. But I believe an important resolution you can make in the new year is this: Look up! Put down your phone and engage with the world around you.

We have all become addicted to our phones. It is understandable. Our smartphones provide real value to our lives. We use them to connect with friends, listen to music, take photos, follow the news or research any and every passing thought that pops into our head. But their constant presence has brought us to the precipice of a mental health crisis.

Children are using devices and interacting with media at a growing rate. They are being put in front of screens instead of interacting with other humans and caretakers. According to Common Sense Media, children as young as 5 years consume over two hours of media a day. Adults often use these devices in lieu of spending quality time with their children, spouses and each other. And despite being more "connected," we feel lonelier than ever. Suicide and depression are rampant, even when we know that actual, real-life social connectedness is one of the most effective preventatives of both.

### iCRISIS

As a psychiatrist at Sheppard Pratt Health System, I've witnessed firsthand an alarming rise in the incidences of suicide and reports of depression among the general population, but especially in adolescents. Research points to a disturbingly strong correlation between the cumulative time that teenagers spend on their devices with depressive thoughts



and suicidal actions. And a 2017 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the number of high schoolers considering suicide has increased by 25 percent between 2009 and 2017.

It is this younger generation that concerns me the most. Readers from Generation X (of which I am a member) and older had the benefit of experiencing their formative years without the crutch of being able to text their parents or friends whenever they felt bored or lonely. As a teen, I did not experience daily FOMO — "fear of missing out" — because I wasn't exposed to an endless feed of photos and messages from every party to which I was not invited. The synapses and circuitry in my brain were allowed to form without a constant barrage of stimuli that has been shown to short-circuit attention spans and limit deeper cognitive processes.

As a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst and addictions specialist, I can tell you that we are currently raising a generation of young people who struggle to tolerate boredom. Instead of learning to sit with their thoughts, they compulsively reach for their phones. Instead of interacting spontaneously and deeply with each other and their environment, many are scrolling endlessly. These attempts to cure boredom with devices leave users feeling depleted, uncomfortable and unable to actually think.





## YOUR BRAIN ON SMARTPHONES

Do you remember that commercial that aired in the late 1980s during the height of the cocaine epidemic? An actor held up an egg and said, “This is your brain.” He showed us a pan and told us it was drugs. Then he cracked the egg into a pan and we watched it sizzle as he said, “This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?” It was an alarming mental image that I can still remember all these years later.

Your brain on smartphones is not quite as dramatic. Certainly, most of us can still function in spite of our digital

addiction. But the statistics are alarming enough to make everyone think about the impact of the constant barrage of social media and access to 24/7 technology on our mental health.

Smartphones render our minds like a pinball, bounced around as we respond to texts, then bumped back to check our status and then knocked back over to answer an email. It’s a lot of work that leaves us feeling anxious and exhausted.

Our devices feed us these constant stimuli, and we gorge on it despite its uselessness, often to the exclusion of what’s going on around us.

## PLUG BACK INTO LIFE

So what is the solution? I wish I had a silver bullet to fix our overdependence on technology. The fact is, smartphones are here to stay. It’s not realistic for most of us to completely unplug. But we can try to limit its impact on our mental health. Simply being aware of your use of technology will help you rein it in. ■

Dr. Thomas Franklin is a psychiatrist at The Retreat at Sheppard Pratt. He is board certified in psychiatry and addiction medicine. For more information, visit [sheppardpratt.org](http://sheppardpratt.org).

## NEED HELP UNPLUGGING?

- Turn off all notifications on your smartphone so that you’re checking it on your timeframe, not because of some app’s insistence.
- Limit the amount of time children use their devices by banning them at the dinner table or after a certain time in the evening.
- Try taking a day off each week entirely — for example, “No Electronics Sundays.” Your family may start off complaining, but it could end up as the best day of the week.
- Swap mindless scrolling for intentional activities like old-fashioned board games or jigsaw puzzles, family walks or face-to-face conversations.
- Spend a week or two away from social media every year. People come up with their best ideas when their minds can wander. Daydream. Be bored. (And let your kids be bored, too!)
- Look up! Put the phone down while your daughter is doing something cute. Look at your spouse while they are sharing a story. Make eye contact and smile as you walk down the street. You might just make someone’s day. ■





# 2019 Holiday and Spring Break Camp Guide

## CAMP ARISTOTLE AT THE AUBURN SCHOOL

scott.swick@catapultlearning.com  
201-588-8048  
9115 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring, MD  
larissa.vlassich@catapultlearning.com  
703-793-9353  
3800 Concorde Parkway, Chantilly VA

## CAMP GRIFFIN AT WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

westminsterschool.com;  
kmock@westminsterschool.com  
703-340-7268  
3819 Gallows Rd., Annandale, VA  
Ages: 3-14  
Winter Camp 2019-2020  
12/23, 12/26-12/27, 12/30-12/31 and 1/2-1/3  
Camp Hours: 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.  
Spring Camp 2020  
March 30 - April 6, 2020  
Hours: Early Care: 7:15-9 a.m.;  
Regular Camp  
Hours: 9 a.m.- 3 p.m.; Extended Care,  
3-6 p.m.  
Spring has sprung at Camp Griffin! Join us  
March 30 - April 6, 2020 for field trips, arts,  
outdoor adventures, cooking and so much  
more! Get a taste of what our Summer camp  
has to offer!

## CAMP KEETOV

11810 Falls Road  
Potomac, Maryland 20854  
(301) 279-7505  
<https://www.whctemple.org/education>  
hgroege@whctemple.org  
Ages: Toddlers to 5 years  
Day Camp

## ENCORE STAGE & STUDIO SPRING BREAK CAMPS

encorestageva.org/camps; camp@  
encorestage.org  
703-548-1154  
Hours: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
4000 Lorcom Ln., Arlington, VA  
When school is out, Encore is in! While  
school is on a short vacation, Encore  
will take its students on a vacation of a  
lifetime-into literary destinations! Encore  
is pleased to offer holiday mini-camps for  
students in Kindergarten - 2nd grade and  
Play in a Day for 3rd-5th grade on days when  
schools are closed.

## GLEN ECHO PARK AQUARIUM: A CHESAPEAKE BAY DISCOVERY CENTER

gepaquarium.org;  
info@gepaquarium.org  
301-955-6256  
7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo, MD  
Enjoy an exciting day of exploration and  
learning as we discover the amazing life  
of our rivers and oceans while meeting  
live animals.

## KIDS FIRST SWIM SCHOOLS

kidsfirstswimschools.com; contact@  
kidsfirstswimschools.com  
Hours: 9 a.m.-8 p.m.  
301-540-SWIM  
18066 Mateny Rd., Germantown, MD  
301-638-SWIM  
3307 Crain Hwy., Waldorf, MD  
703-444-9673  
21800 Town Center Plaza,  
Ste. 215, Sterling, VA  
703-488-9800  
Sully Plaza Shopping Center, 13985  
Metrotech Dr., Chantilly, VA  
The Kids First® Swim Schools are America's  
largest provider of year-round, warm-  
water swimming instruction, operating 20  
locations across 5 states, teaching over  
100,000 students annually.

## PINECREST SCHOOL

pinecrestschool.org;  
admissions@pinecrestschool.org  
703-354-3446  
Hours: 7:30 a.m.-6 p.m.  
7209 Quiet Cove, Annandale, VA  
Pinecrest School offers spring break care  
for current families from April 6-10, 2020,  
and June Care from June 8-12, 2020. Children  
will enjoy fun-filled days with indoor and  
outdoor play, games and more!

## PINECREST SCHOOL SUMMER CAMP / PINECREST PAVILION

pinecrestschool.org;  
camp@pinecrestschool.org  
703-354-3446  
7209 Quiet Cove, Annandale, VA  
Creative and enriching theme classes:  
an exciting mix of STEM, arts and crafts,  
physical activity and games for preschoolers  
through 6th graders. Scavenger hunts,  
science experiments, engineering  
challenges and much more will be part of  
each day's fun! Before-care beginning 7AM  
and after-care until 6PM available. ■



## Accepting Applications for the 2020-2021 School Year



ST. VINCENT PALLOTTI  
—HIGH SCHOOL—

- Apply for admission
- Schedule a shadow visit

pallottihs.org | admissions@pallottihs.org  
301-725-3228 | Laurel, MD

## Camp Griffin WINTER CAMP

**DEC**  
23, 26-27 & 30-31

**JAN**  
2-3

Experience ~ Explore ~ Create

Ages 3-14  
Daily Themes! Field Trips, Baking, Sports,  
Arts and Crafts, and Festive Activities!  
Early & Extended Care

**REGISTER NOW!**

(703) 340-7268

[www.WestminsterSchool.com](http://www.WestminsterSchool.com)

## SAVE THE DATE!

### Join Us For a Day of Family Fun!

- Raffles and prizes ▪ Family-fun activities
- Exhibitors from all over the DMV ▪ Giveaway bags

SUMMER CAMPS  
& ACTIVITIES  
2020 **FAIR**

### Northern Virginia:

**Sunday, January 19, 2020**  
**Noon-4pm ▪ Fair Oaks Mall**

Register:  
[WFCampFair2020NOVA.eventbrite.com](http://WFCampFair2020NOVA.eventbrite.com)

### Maryland:

**Sunday, February 9, 2020**  
**Noon-4pm**  
**Westfield Montgomery Mall**

Register:  
[WFCampFair2020MD.eventbrite.com](http://WFCampFair2020MD.eventbrite.com)



Contact your account executive to become an exhibitor  
Contact [advertising@washingtonfamily.com](mailto:advertising@washingtonfamily.com) or call 301-230-2222, ext. 4

**Washington  
FAMILY**



## 2019 EDUCATION GUIDE

### ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT & FIELD TRIPS

#### BARRIE SCHOOL

**barrie.org**  
**admission@barrie.org**  
**301-576-2800**

**13500 Layhill Road**  
**Silver Spring, Md.**

Barrie School inspires intellectual curiosity, emotional resiliency, and social engagement for students age 18 months to Grade 12. Students from 18-month old Toddlers through Grade 5 Upper Elementary are taught using the Montessori Method, a child-centered educational approach. Students in Grades 6-12 engage in Project Based Learning, a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge. All students enjoy small class sizes and make use of our 45-acre wooded campus on a daily basis. Barrie is located in Silver Spring, Maryland, minutes from the ICC and Glenmont Metro. Our close proximity to downtown Washington, D.C. enables students to take full advantage of the cultural and educational resources available in the area.

#### GLEN ECHO PARK AQUARIUM

**gepaquarium.org**  
**info@gepaquarium.org**  
**301-955-6256**

**7300 Macarthur Blvd.**  
**Glen Echo, Md.**

Celebrate with the fishes! The Glen Echo Park Aquarium, a Chesapeake Bay Discovery Center, offers a unique party experience. Follow the flow of water from local streams, to rivers, the Bay and the ocean. Tour the exhibit hall, touch live sea creatures, craft and celebrate in a party room.

#### RESTON MONTESSORI SCHOOL

**restonmontessori.com**  
**office@restonmontessori.com**  
**703-481-2922**

**1928 Isaac Newton Square**  
**West, Reston, Va.**

Hours: 7 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
Established in 1986, Reston Montessori School is a private, coeducational school for children from 3 months through 3rd grade. RMS provides academic school day, enrichment programs and before/after school activities.

### SUNSET HILLS MONTESSORI

**sunsethillsmontessori.com**  
**703-476-7477**

**11180 Ridge Heights Road,**  
**Reston, Va.**

Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
At SHMS we are committed to recognizing and cultivating the uniqueness of each individual child. We have a community of educators, and wonderful families, that have chosen SHMS because of a shared vision for early childhood and elementary education.

### AFTER SCHOOL & ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

#### BARRIE SCHOOL

**barrie.org**  
**admission@barrie.org**  
**301-576-2800**

**13500 Layhill Road**  
**Silver Spring, Md.**

Barrie School inspires intellectual curiosity, emotional resiliency, and social engagement for students age 18 months to Grade 12. Students from 18-month old Toddlers through Grade 5 Upper Elementary are taught using the Montessori Method, a child-centered educational approach. Students in Grades 6-12 engage in Project Based Learning, a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge. All students enjoy small class sizes and make use of our 45-acre wooded campus on a daily basis. Barrie is located in Silver Spring, Maryland, minutes from the ICC and Glenmont Metro. Our close proximity to downtown Washington, D.C. enables students to take full advantage of the cultural and educational resources available in the area.

#### THE CENTER FOR BALLET ARTS

**thecenterforballetarts.com**  
**ctrbalarts@aol.com**  
**703-273-5344**

**3955 Pender Drive, Ste. 103,**  
**Fairfax, Va.**

**Ages: 3-Adult**  
The Center for Ballet Arts provides a well-rounded curriculum and pleasant encouraging environment for dance training in many different disciplines. Classes are designed to promote flexibility, strength, artistry, coordination and technique.



# EDUCATION GUIDE **WF**

## ENCORE STAGE & STUDIO

[encorestage.org](http://encorestage.org)  
[info@encorestage.org](mailto:info@encorestage.org)  
 703-548-1154

4000 Lorcom Lane  
 Arlington, Va.

Encore offers learning opportunities for students in K-12. Our after-school programs and year-round classes help students develop creativity and self-confidence. They are targeted to all levels of experience, from introductory to advanced. Course offerings for grades 8-12 include topics in acting, movement, music and playwriting for bilingual/ESOL students. Encore can also work with you to customize a class based on your school's needs or help direct or produce your school's play or musical.

## HARMONIA SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND ART

[harmoniaschool.org](http://harmoniaschool.org)  
[harmonia@harmoniaschool.org](mailto:harmonia@harmoniaschool.org)  
 703-938-7301  
 204-F Mill St. N.E, Vienna, Va.  
 Hours: 12-8:30 p.m.  
 (Monday-Friday)  
 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (Saturday)

Harmonia provides music lessons in all instruments and voice, as well as musical theater instruction and productions. Our quality programs and experienced teachers make our school the best choice for performing arts education, all under one roof.

## INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MUSIC

[ismw.org](http://ismw.org); [info@ismw.org](mailto:info@ismw.org)  
 301-365-5888  
 10450 Auto Park Ave.  
 Bethesda, Md.  
 11325 Seven Locks Rd, Suite 255  
 Potomac, MD  
 Hours: Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Voted best in music instruction, the International School of Music offers music lessons in all instruments and voice to students of all levels and ages. Preschool music classes and adult music instructions are also available in addition to the optional performances and certificate programs. Book your trial lessons today.

## KIDS FIRST SWIM SCHOOLS

[kidsfirstswimschools.com](http://kidsfirstswimschools.com)  
[contact@kidsfirstswimschools.com](mailto:contact@kidsfirstswimschools.com)  
 Check website for list of all locations.

The Kids First Swim Schools are America's largest provider of year round warm water swimming

instruction, operating 20 locations across 5 states, teaching over 100,000 students annually.

## REVELS AFTER-SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

[revelsdc.org/revels-kids/education](http://revelsdc.org/revels-kids/education)  
[info@revelsdc.org](mailto:info@revelsdc.org)  
 301-587-3835  
 531 Dale Dr., Silver Spring, MD  
 Winter & Spring 2020  
 4:15-5:45 PM

Give your child a great foundation in the arts in Washington Revels' play-based, globally minded after-school workshops. "Revels Kids" develop an inclusive worldview through traditional songs, dances, games and stories from around the world.

## SUNSET HILLS MONTESSORI

[sunsethillsmontessori.com](http://sunsethillsmontessori.com)  
 703-476-7477  
 11180 Ridge Heights Road,  
 Reston, Va.

Hours: 7 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

At SHMS we are committed to recognizing and cultivating the uniqueness of each individual child. We have a community of educators, and wonderful families, that have chosen SHMS because of a shared vision for early childhood and elementary education.

## INDOOR SWIMMING

**KIDS FIRST SWIM SCHOOLS**  
[kidsfirstswimschools.com](http://kidsfirstswimschools.com)  
[contact@kidsfirstswimschools.com](mailto:contact@kidsfirstswimschools.com)  
 Check website for list of all locations.

The Kids First Swim Schools are America's largest provider of year round warm water swimming instruction, operating 20 locations across 5 states, teaching over 100,000 students annually.

## MUSIC, ART & PERFORMING ARTS

## COMMOTION DANCE STUDIO

13097 Wisteria Drive, L1  
 Germantown, Md.  
[commotiondance.com](http://commotiondance.com)  
[info@commotiondance.com](mailto:info@commotiondance.com)  
 301-515-8908

Be encouraged, engaged, excellent! CoMMotion is more than a dance studio, it's a place where you learn life-long lessons, of integrity, patience, leadership and achievement. Intro classes, Free Uniform, Jazz, Ballet, Tap, Contemporary, Hip Hop, Poms.



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 Call today to schedule a tour or join us for one of our upcoming Open Houses:  
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 Nurturing and Experienced Teachers to Meet Your Needs  
 Convenient Options to Schedule Siblings Simultaneously

**International School of Music**  
[www.ismw.org](http://www.ismw.org)  
 301.365.5888

**HARMONIA SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND ART**

[harmoniaschool.org](mailto:harmoniaschool.org)  
[harmonia@harmoniaschool.org](mailto:harmonia@harmoniaschool.org)  
 703-938-7301

204-F Mill St. N.E., Vienna, Va.

Hours: Monday-Friday

12-8:30 p.m.

Saturday 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Harmonia provides music lessons in all instruments and voice, as well as musical theater instruction and productions. Our quality programs and experienced teachers make our school the best choice for performing arts education, all under one roof.

**INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

[ismw.org](mailto:ismw.org); [info@ismw.org](mailto:info@ismw.org)  
 301-365-5888

10450 Auto Park Ave.

Bethesda, Md.

4701 Sangamore Road, #LL-03

Bethesda, Md.

Hours: Monday-Friday

10 a.m.-8 p.m.

Saturday 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Voted best in music instruction, the International School of Music offers

music lessons in all instruments and voice to students of all levels and ages. Preschool music classes and adult music instructions are also available in addition to the optional performances and certificate programs. Book your trial lessons today.

**PERFECT POINTE DANCE STUDIO**

[perfectpointe.com/arlington](http://perfectpointe.com/arlington)  
[arlington@perfectpointe.com](mailto:arlington@perfectpointe.com)  
 703-533-8830

2499 N. Harrison St., Ste. 1-LL  
 Arlington, Va.

Offering classes in ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop, modern, musical theater, dance and acrobatics for ages 18 months through adult! Qualified and caring staff, family-friendly atmosphere, fun performance opportunities.

**PERFECT POINTE MUSIC & DANCE STUDIO**

[perfectpointe.com/springfield](http://perfectpointe.com/springfield)  
[springfield@perfectpointe.com](mailto:springfield@perfectpointe.com)  
 703-440-9000

8060 Rolling Road  
 Springfield, Va.

Offering classes in ballet, tap,

jazz, hiphop, modern, acrobatics, contemporary & musical theater dance styles. Private music lessons include guitar, ukulele, violin/viola, drums, voice and more! Highly qualified staff, family-friendly atmosphere and fun performance opportunities.

**WESTMINSTER SCHOOL**

[westminsterschool.com](http://westminsterschool.com)  
[admissions@westminsterschool.com](mailto:admissions@westminsterschool.com)  
 703-256-3620

K-8

3819 Gallows Road

Annandale, Va.

Preschool (3 and 4-year-olds):

6800 Columbia Pike

Annandale, Va.

Hours 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Westminster School provides a unique Preschool-Middle School education based on a classical curriculum; accelerated academics enhanced by the arts; and an emphasis on personal responsibility and good character. Students enjoy small classes taught by teachers who specialize in their field.

**PRIVATE SCHOOLS & PRESCHOOLS**

**AIDAN MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

[aidanschool.org](http://aidanschool.org)

202-387-2700

2700 27th St., N.W.

Washington, D.C.

Aidan Montessori School is a co-ed independent school located in Woodley Park. Aidan has served children's natural development, innate curiosity, and pursuit of independence since its founding as one of the nation's first Montessori schools in 1961.

**THE AUBURN SCHOOL**

[theauburnschool.org](http://theauburnschool.org)  
[admissions@theauburnschool.org](mailto:admissions@theauburnschool.org)

703-793-9353, 301-588-8048

3800 Concorde Pkwy., Ste. 500

Chantilly, Va.

9115 Georgia Ave.

Silver Spring, Md.

7401 Park Heights Ave.,  
 Baltimore, Md.

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

The Auburn School is an independent day-school with a specialized program which offers

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Beauvoir offers an extraordinary education designed for early learners.

Accepting applications for pre-kindergarten to third grade for the 2020-2021 school year.



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The National Cathedral Elementary School

3500 Woodley Road NW, Washington, DC 20016

[www.beauvoirschool.org](http://www.beauvoirschool.org)



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 Advanced Academic Curriculum

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a stimulating educational program for intellectually engaged students with challenges in the areas of communication, socialization, language, and organization. Auburn's program simultaneously supports the development of academic skills, social competency and pragmatic language in an engaging educational environment. Our program is appropriate for students who can learn successfully and appropriately in a small classroom setting.

## **BARRIE SCHOOL**

**barrie.org**

**admission@barrie.org**

**301-576-2800**

**13500 Layhill Road**

**Silver Spring, Md.**

Barrie School inspires intellectual curiosity, emotional resiliency, and social engagement for students age 18 months to Grade 12. Students from 18-month old Toddlers through Grade 5 Upper Elementary are taught using the Montessori Method, a child-centered educational approach. Students in Grades 6-12 engage in Project Based Learning, a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge. All students enjoy small class sizes and make use of our 45-acre wooded campus on a daily basis. Barrie is located in Silver Spring, Maryland, minutes from the ICC and Glenmont Metro. Our close proximity to downtown Washington, D.C. enables students to take full advantage of the cultural and educational resources available in the area.

## **BEAUVOIR, THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**beauvoirschool.org**

**202-537-6493**

**3500 Woodley Road, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.**

**Open House: Call to schedule a tour.**

Beauvoir provides an educational environment fostering a lifetime of enthusiasm for learning and growth while nurturing the spiritual, ethical, intellectual, emotional, physical and social development of every child.

## **BROOKSFIELD SCHOOL**

**brooksfieldschool.org**

**sarah@brooksfieldschool.org**

**703-356-5437**

**1830 Kirby Road, McLean, Va.**

**Ages Served: 3-10**

**Open House: Call to schedule a tour.**

Mindfulness, nutrition, Spanish, dance, music & art, outdoor adventure program, extracurricular activities and summer camp.

## **CONGRESSIONAL SCHOOL**

**congressionalschool.org**

**gherbst@congressionalschool.org**

**703-533-1064**

**3229 Sleepy Hollow Road,  
Falls Church, Va.**

A co-ed independent day school for infants to eighth graders in Falls Church, Va. Congressional School prepares young learners for future success, inspiring them to question, collaborate, create, and lead.

## **FEYNMAN SCHOOL**

**feynmanschool.org**

**admissions@feynmanschool.org**

**301-770-4211**

**11810 Falls Road, Potomac, Md.**

**Grades: Preschool-Grade 5**

**Open House: Sunday,  
December 15, 2019**

**2 PM - 4 PM (parents and  
prospective students welcome)**

**Thursday, January 9, 2020**

**9:30 AM - 11:30 AM (adults only)**

The area's leader in educating academically-gifted children, Feynman School features extraordinary programs in science, math, language arts, theater and music designed to maximize your child's potential.

## **GUIDEPOST MONTESSORI**

**guidepostmontessori.com/**

**northern-virginia**

**866-202-8593**

**24328 Marrwood Drive**

**Aldie, Va..**

**42945 Waxpool Road**

**Ashburn, Va..**

**4550 Walney Road**

**Chantilly, Va.**

**13251 Woodland Park Road**

**Herndon, Va.**

**3551 Waterway Drive**

**Montclair, Va**

**Ages: Infant to elementary**

Guidepost Montessori in Loudoun, Fairfax and Prince William counties is among a growing, worldwide network of schools that offer language immersion for ages infant through elementary.



## **The Area's Leader in STEM Education**

**Best for Families Winner for Best STEM Program for the 2nd consecutive year**

### **Open Houses:**

**Sunday, December 15, 2019 2 PM - 4 PM**

**(adults and prospective students welcome)**

**Thursday, January 9, 2020 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**

**(adults only)**



**Or contact us for a private tour:**

**admissions@feynmanschool.org or 301.770.4370**

**Preschool-8th Grade**

**www.feynmanschool.org**

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REGISTRATION.

**www.kidsfirstswimschools.com**  
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<p><b>MARYLAND</b></p> <p>Bowie: 301-262-SWIM Columbia: 443-755-0111 Germantown: 301-540-SWIM Laurel: 301-725-SWIM North Bethesda: 301-984-SWIM Rockville: 301-217-5910 Waldorf: 301-638-SWIM</p>	<p><b>VIRGINIA</b></p> <p>Chantilly: 703-488-9800 Falls Church: 703-534-SWIM Manassas: 703-392-SWIM Midlothian: 804-744-6513 Springfield: 703-321-SWIM Sterling: 703-444-9673</p>
---	---




**Does your child need...**

- A place to make friends with support?
- A camp with structure & consistency?
- A supportive & highly trained group of staff?
- A more understanding camp environment?
- A low camper to teacher ratio?
- A small camp environment?

**Camp Aristotle at The Auburn School**  
a camp program that supports social development through fun and friendship!  
Fairfax, Silver Spring and Baltimore  
[www.camparistotle.org](http://www.camparistotle.org)

## Pinecrest School

NURTURING CURIOSITY, CONFIDENCE,  
AND A LOVE OF LEARNING SINCE 1957

- Preschool Age 3 - Grade 6
- Before-Care & After-Care
- Summer, Winter & Spring Camps
- Differentiated Instruction
- Small Classes
- Challenging Academics
- Positive Social & Emotional Development



Annandale, Virginia  
703.354.3446 • [pinecrestschool.org](http://pinecrestschool.org)

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2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR**

## Kay School

Offering preschool, prekindergarten,  
kindergarten and School Age  
before and after care options.

A NATURE BASED AND ARTS  
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IN HERNDON, VA

**< UPCOMING OPEN HOUSE DATES >**  
Dec. 7, Jan. 18 and Feb. 1  
Each Sat. from 9-11  
RSVP to [director@kayschool.org](mailto:director@kayschool.org)

[www.kayschool.org](http://www.kayschool.org) • 703.264.9078  
3006 Dower House Dr., Herndon, VA

## WF EDUCATION GUIDE

**KAY SCHOOL**  
[kayschool.org](http://kayschool.org)  
[director@kayschool.org](mailto:director@kayschool.org)  
703.264.9078  
3005 Dower House Drive  
Herndon, VA  
Ages: 2 1/2 through  
kindergarten  
Open Houses: All from 9-11 a.m.  
Dec. 7, Jan. 18, Feb. 1  
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# Head in the Game

## An athlete's mental health is also important

BY COURTNEY MCGEE

**W**hen it comes to youth and sports, intensity seems to be growing at an alarming rate.

Rampant pressure coupled with hectic schedules and little down time for rest and reflection can create an environment of high stress. As such, the mental health needs of young athletes have become a real concern.

Dr. Deepak Prabhakar serves as medical director of outpatient services at Sheppard Pratt Health Systems and specializes in sport psychiatry; he is certified by both the National Football League and Major League Baseball. His goal is to address athletes' mental health needs so that players as well as their teams are better served. Washington FAMILY asked Prabhakar about youth sports and mental health concerns.

### **Are today's athletes under more pressure or are we just more attuned to it now and better prepared to recognize it?**

It's a multifactorial issue. First, participation in sports and almost elite-level performance expectations are being tied to a promise of scholarships and admissions to higher-level education.

Second, we live in the day and age of data analytics; for every level, we now have access to performance data that is being shared widely. This has inadvertently led to performance pressures in younger athletes, thereby moving the focus away from joy and camaraderie to competitive advantage.

Third, social media has enabled individuals to express themselves in ways that were previously unknown or not possible. For example, someone may be physically isolated, yet able to communicate their thoughts and feelings with hundreds and thousands on a social media platform. Hence, we are now aware of something that previously would have gone unnoticed.

### **Are teams today becoming more likely to address mental health issues?**

With growing appreciation of mental health issues and their negative impact on overall health, society is paying relatively more attention to an athlete's emotional state now compared to the past. Teams are trying to address these issues; however, the outcomes are highly variable depending upon the openness of the stakeholders and available resources. Unfortunately, stigma and disjointed health care continues to impede progress.

### **Are some activities higher risk for kids who may be more vulnerable to anxiety or depression?**

Athletes are representative of the general population. Some sports have more of a risk of physical injury, thereby increasing the risk of mental health sequela. However, there is no one sport that can be identified as particularly stressful. It is important to understand that the individual and the surroundings can affect the stress level. If done right, sports participation should be a net positive for an individual.

### **Do student-athletes feel more pressure from peers, from coaches or from themselves?**

Student-athletes feel pressure from all of the above. Just like they can be motivated from within and from their peers, coaches and family, they can also feel pressured to perform a certain way by all of these.

### **What are the signs of distress to look for? And what sort of actions should we take if we see warning signs?**

Isolation, lack of interest, missing practices, bodily symptoms right before performance, drug/alcohol use, poor sleep



and poor nutrition choices are some of the warning signs. If you see any of these signs, you should seek professional help, leading to appropriate and timely diagnosis and management

### How can we foster good mental health from the start?

By focusing on the overall growth and development needs of an individual rather than looking at sports through the solitary lens of performance outcomes. A key point for parents to remember is that participation in sports should be a matter of joy not only for the student athlete, but for the family as well.

### How does involvement in sports present positive opportunities for good mental health in young athletes?

Participating in sports can offer opportunities for physical activity, positive and age-appropriate social engagement, sense of belonging, responsibility and accountability to self and others, planning and

executive-function skills. All of these foster mental health and overall wellness.

### >> Three more takeaways:

- “Sports is part and parcel of life and transitions,” Prabhakar says. At transition age points, pay attention to what the child’s needs are elsewhere, not just in the sport setting. It is important to consider academic stress, social issues and familial issues.
- There is a longstanding belief in sports culture that pushing through pain is somehow a good thing. “For kids, that mentality can be harmful not only physically, but psychologically,” Prabhakar says. Being attentive to appropriate safety measures includes not only protection from injury, but also awareness and evaluation of how the athlete is feeling.
- Sports provide fundamental opportunities to grow and learn and are in general a valuable and positive experience for kids. “Not all learning is books,” Prabhakar reminds us. ■

A key point for parents to remember is that participation in sports should be a matter of joy not only for the student athlete, but for the family as well.

—DR. DEEPAK PRABHAKAR

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— TINA STROUP

# Can Medical Marijuana Help Kids with Seizures?

## One family looks for answers

BY ERICA RIMLINGER

When Maryland licensed its first medical marijuana dispensaries in 2015, Trent and Tina Stroup believed the move might hold promise for their teenage daughter, Addie, who faces multiple medical challenges including epilepsy and autism. The Stroups heard through multiple advocacy groups and resources that medical marijuana could be a panacea for people who, like Addie, faced frequent seizures that persisted despite years of medical effort.

"We heard of other families that have used cannabis and have had some success going seizure-free and pharmaceutical med-free," Trent says. Could medical marijuana work for Addie?

The medical marijuana industry has exploded since the first Maryland providers were licensed. According to the Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission (MMCC), there are currently 82 dispensaries, 17 growers and 17 processors with licenses. As of August 2019, there were 73,433 patients certified through the state compared to 10,341 in December 2017. That's a 610% increase in less than two years.

After registering his daughter as a patient with MMCC, Trent searched for a provider from one of more than 500 doctors and medical professionals registered with the commission who can "certify" patients. Certification is not a prescription: Prescribing medical cannabis is illegal under federal law. Doctors and other healthcare providers can only recommend or issue certifications.

In order to be certified, patients must be diagnosed with a condition that is, according to MMCC's requirements, "severe" and for which other medical treatments have been ineffective and for which the symptoms "reasonably can be expected to be

relieved" by the medical use of marijuana. Addie met all of those requirements.

But Trent encountered delays during every administrative step in acquiring Addie's medical marijuana card, and the process took 10 months from start to finish. When Washington FAMILY asked MMCC via email about the delays in Addie's application, the commission replied that it could not discuss specific cases due to HIPAA concerns.

Addie's original medical team hadn't directed them to try marijuana, but for the Stroups, whose child's seizures were severe and seemingly unstoppable, marijuana's reputation found them first.

In the decade-plus since Addie's diagnosis, Tina and Trent have plugged in to several advocacy groups through social media and the internet, where they and other parents share challenges and solutions for their children's medical conditions. Communicating with other parents in groups created to discuss epilepsy "always seems to help," says Tina, "because they're the ones who have tried" the most solutions.

The Stroups first tried cannabidiol, or CBD. "We've seen a lot of things where CBD oil helps people sleep. We've been using that for two to three years. It does help her sleep," Trent says. But it had no impact on Addie's seizures.

Dr. Anne Comi, a pediatric neurologist at Kennedy Krieger Institute, has been researching the effects of CBD on kids with Sturge-Weber syndrome, a condition that can cause seizures. Children with this syndrome, says Comi, "are at very high risk for epilepsy, strokes and stroke-like episodes."

Comi uses Epidiolex in her research, which is a brand-name "pharmaceutical-grade, highly purified" CBD product "derived from marijuana." The amount



of THC (the intoxicating chemical that occurs naturally in marijuana) is “miniscule” in Epidiolex. Comi says research into Epidiolex for epilepsy began about 10 years ago and yielded “dramatic” results.

Comi and her colleagues at Kennedy Krieger started studying Epidiolex with kids whose seizures failed to stop despite trying multiple — “sometimes eight to 10” — different medications. In their two published studies, there was a “small subset of patients who had become seizure free, which was remarkable,” says Comi, who saw a huge improvement in the cognitive abilities and quality of life of these patients.

In addition, “Epidiolex reduced seizure frequency by 50 percent in 40 percent of patients,” she says. “That doesn’t seem like a whole lot, but remember: These are patients for whom nothing seemed to help. For them, it was a tremendous help.”

Comi understands that parents in desperate situations might pursue medical marijuana, but she doesn’t recommend it to her patients. “There is a lot of misunderstanding in this field,” she says.

According to Comi, pre-clinical studies have raised concerns about THC on the immature brain. And without product regulation protocols in place, consumers may not know exactly what they’re getting with these products. Whereas every bottle of Epidiolex is formulated to identical specifications of purity, she explains, medical marijuana sold in dispensaries holds no such guarantee.

The Stroups had been warned by their peers about the trial-and-error involved in finding the correct strain and dose of medical marijuana, but they’d already spent 15 years navigating the trial-and-error of mainstream pharmaceuticals to no avail.

Tina asked about THC in one of her online groups and received “a slew of information” in response, she says. Adding that she was asking from Maryland, the information became even more specific. Other parents began recommending certain strains of marijuana and the dispensaries that offered pediatric discounts.

The Stroups decided to try incorporating THC into Addie’s medical regimen. “We added

a little bit in, a very small amount,” Trent says. “It seemed to dramatically, exponentially increase her appetite. We only added 3 milligrams of THC, and her appetite went through the roof.”

Because of this, and because they saw no improvement in their daughter’s seizures, the Stroups stopped using it.

Addie’s parents understand they’re navigating through new territory. “There’s no, ‘This is the amount you take, this is the type you take,’” Tina says. “There are so many different types. You’re just buying one and trying it to see if it works. It’s really been hard.”

Despite the early promise of cannabis in the treatment of seizures, Tina and Trent are learning that, for Addie, cannabis does not yet offer “the magic solution.”

But they aren’t giving up yet. Tina says they’ve recently heard of another strain that might work for Addie. “Trent was going to go to another dispensary and find this other kind that another family suggested,” she says. Hopefully this one does the trick. ■

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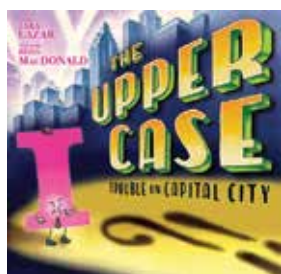
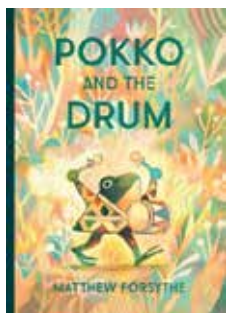
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# Best of the Year

Here are a few of our favorite books of 2019

These wonderful tales, all published this past year, are perfect for gift-giving and library-borrowing.

## BOARD/TODDLER

### "Baby Play"

by Skye Silver

A wide variety of babies, caregivers and families are featured dancing, laughing, splashing and building. Eye-catching photographs and easy-to-read text will engage even the youngest readers.

## PICTURE BOOKS

### "Pokko and the Drum"

by Matthew Forsythe

The biggest mistake Pokko's parents make is giving her a drum, as they live in a quiet forest and do not want to draw any attention. When Pokko goes outside to play her drum, she attracts others who want join in and enjoy the music. If you or your little ones march to your own beat, this is the perfect story for you.

### "Small in the City"

by Sydney Smith

This quiet picture book follows a young child who wanders through the city providing encouragement and advice on how to navigate the big city. In a twist at the end, we find out who "you" is.

## YOUNG READERS

### "Frank and Bean"

by Jamie Michalak

Frank is a hot dog who just wants to be left alone at his campsite to write in his secret journal. Bean is, well, a bean who loves to make noise. It is most definitely not like-at-first-sight for these two, but Frank comes around and the two form an unlikely friendship and a band, The Chili Dogs. Four short chapters are perfect for emerging readers looking for lots of laughs.

### "The Upper Case: Trouble in Capital City"

by Tara Lazar

Private I, the detective introduced in 2017's "7 Ate 9," is back on the case when he learns from Exclamation and Question Mark that all of the other capital letters have disappeared from Capital City. This picture book for older readers will warrant a re-read, as wordplay and sight gags combine with a traditional mystery story.

## MIDDLE READERS

### "Look Both Ways"

by Jason Reynolds

Jason Reynolds is a *New York Times*-bestselling author, a Newbery Award honoree, a Printz Award honoree, a National Book Award honoree, a Kirkus Award winner, a two-time Walter Dean Myers Award winner, a NAACP Image Award winner and the recipient of multiple Coretta Scott King honors. His latest work is 10 interconnected slice-of-life short stories, each following different middle-graders as they walk home from school. This is storytelling at its finest.

### "Strange Birds"

by Celia Perez

It's the summer before seventh grade, and four girls who have never met before form a club, an anti-scout group of sorts, in response to a pretentious girl scouting group called the Floras that focuses on social etiquette and hosts a pageant where the winner is crowned with a hat made of unethically sourced feathers. The girls learn about friendship as they grow to support one another over their common cause. All four narrate in alternating chapters,



# Happy Birthday, E.B. Lewis!

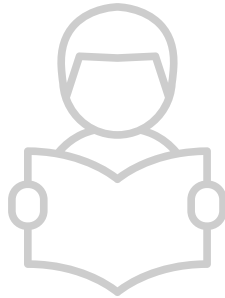
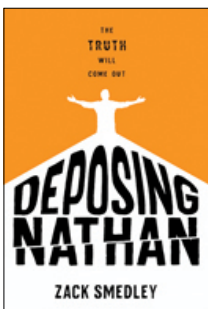
*Each month, we celebrate a birthday of literary significance.*

There is a good chance that you have picked up a book illustrated by E.B. Lewis at one time or another. Lewis has created art for more than 70 books, several of which have won awards. During his career, he has received the Coretta Scott King Award, the Caldecott Honor Medal and the Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children.

Lewis became interested in art in third grade. He went to Temple University's Tyler School of Art and Architecture, where he discovered his love and preference for watercolor. His primary focus has been on the African-American experience, and many of the books he has illustrated are the retelling of stories generally not found in history books.

Some of his best-known work includes "Talkin' About Bessie" by Nikki Grimes, "D is for Drinking Gourd" by Nancy I. Sanders and "Each Kindness" by Jacqueline Woodson.

Lewis, who was born on Dec. 16, 1956, teaches at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and regularly visits schools and holds book signings, workshops and art exhibits.



allowing for each of their unique character arcs to be explored as well as their different perspectives of the shared experience. Perfect for middle schoolers learning how complicated friendships can be.

## YOUNG ADULT

### "With the Fire on High"

by Elizabeth Acevedo

The multiple award-winning author returns with her second novel, this one featuring Emoni Santiago, a teen mother who is starting her senior year of high school in Philadelphia. Always comfortable in the kitchen, she enrolls in an immersive course with the opportunity to spend a week in Spain learning from master chefs. Her home life features her "Buela," who helps raise 2-year-old Emma and gives Emoni the push she needs to discover her passion. Acevedo, a former Prince George's County schoolteacher, strikes gold again in this moving work, which also features mouthwatering recipes.

### "Deposing Nathan"

by Zack Smedley

Told in a nonlinear chronology, this surprising debut novel deftly tackles major issues facing the two protagonists. Nate has been raised in a staunchly Catholic family. Cam has no interest in God. They meet on the first day of their junior year of high school and hit it off immediately. Until one night, when tragedy strikes and their relationship changes forever. Written by a recent UMBC grad, this novel's deep dive into aspects of religion, sexuality and the legal system makes for a fascinating and heartbreaking read. ■

Compiled by the Baltimore County Public Library's Collection Development Staff





Bullying is when somebody with more power, or believed to have more power, repeatedly tries to cause harm or exclude someone.

# What's Bullying And What's Not

BY GINA GALLUCCI-WHITE

Lately I've noticed that the word "bullying" is being used a lot more frequently in conversations with friends and family as well as on social media. But are we too quick to label any hurtful situation as bullying?

While doing some research, I came across a post titled "What Bullying Is Not" by the Franklin County Community School Corporation in Indiana that explores incidences where bullying is not occurring, such as accidentally bumping into someone, making other kids play games or activities a certain way, or not being friends with someone.

"It is very natural that people do not like everyone around them and as unpleasant as it may be to know someone does not like you, verbal and non-verbal messages of 'I don't like you' are not acts of bullying," according to the educators who wrote the article.

Bullying, on the other hand, is when somebody with more power, or believed to have more power, repeatedly tries to cause harm or exclude someone. It's aggressive and also reoccurring, according to the website [StopBullying.gov](http://StopBullying.gov), a site sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Because the ramifications of bullying can include depression and even suicide, society has stopped dismissing certain incidents by saying "boys will be boys" or calling it "just kid behavior," says Megghan Thompson, owner and clinical director of Thompson Child Therapy in Mount Airy, Maryland. "I think with the increase in awareness of the consequences of bullying, it has

lead parents to ask more questions about what really is bullying," she says.

Parents can help kids understand the difference between bullying and isolated non-bullying incidents by asking questions and empathizing with their child, which validates their feelings. "That can be their key tool in investigating," Thompson says. "Not only does your child feel heard and understood, which is the perfect way to combat the effects of actual bullying, but it also gives you more details if you need to advocate for your child."

She always tells parents to get specifics before moving on to teaching moments. "We don't want to close the door if the child really is being bullied, and have our child shut down or clam up because we jumped straight into advice giving or teaching mode, or what I like to call 'fix it mode,'" she says.

Parents should also be careful not to escalate situations that are already tense, which Thompson believes happens because they want their child to feel safe. Asking the child how they'd like the situation to be handled may help parents collect more information about the incident. "When we are curious, we can then figure out if [the] child is seeing whether or not this instance is true bullying, and then we can teach," she says.

Thompson also encourages parents to think about how they would react if their best friend was telling them the same story about his or her child. "If you can pause and have that conversation with yourself or your spouse before you call the principal the same day ... that can help you get some perspective of what questions need to be answered by the school, if any," she says. ■



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