

Washington FAMILY

Smart. Local.
Parenting for
the DMV.

holiday
GIFT GUIDE
SEE PAGE
10

Washington
FAMILY 30 YEARS

washingtonFAMILY.com
DECEMBER 2022

Jenna Liu
of Germantown

Mental Health
as a Family

Giving Back
to Schools:
Healthy Food

Talking to
Kids About
Homelessness

The Gift of Giving In the Holiday Season



WASHINGTON FAMILY WINNER OF
THE PMA'S GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

A GAYLORD HOTELS ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE

ICE!

FEATURING

A CHRISTMAS STORY



The holidays spring to life in ICE! at Gaylord National! Our signature attraction is a whimsical masterpiece of scenes from *A Christmas Story*™ carved out of two million pounds of boldly colored ice.

NOV. 20 - DEC. 31

ChristmasAtGaylordNational.com



GAYLORD
NATIONAL®

**SO. MUCH.
CHRISTMAS.**

A CHRISTMAS STORY and all related characters
and elements © & ™ Turner Entertainment Co. (s22)



DECEMBER 2022



With nightly snow and a waterpark, get the best of winter and summer at Snowland. **Page 19**



Germantown's Liu Family

PHOTO BY DAVID STUCK

FEATURES

- 10 HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE**
Toys, games and books for kids to enjoy with their families
- 19 HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS**
The best to see and do in the D.C. area
- 16 GIVING BACK**
Working together to bring healthy meals to Montgomery County Schools
- 20 KIDS AND MONEY**
Early education can help kids participate in charitable giving.
- 24 FAMILY HEALTH**
Mental health doesn't have to be a battle your child fights alone.

DEPARTMENTS

- 6 TOP 10 FAMILY EVENTS FOR DECEMBER**
Holiday-themed fun in the DMV
- 8 FAMILY FUN**
5 Places to go Ice Skating
- 9 DIY**
Warm up winter with watermelon fun.
- 26 INCLUSIVE FAMILY**
Talking to kids about homelessness
- 28 BOOK MARKED**
Holiday fun for everyone
- 30 HEALTHY FAMILY**
Winter play safety for your family
- 32 PARENT YOU SHOULD KNOW**
Meet Jenna Liu, founder of Sixx Cool Moms in Montgomery County
- 34 MY TURN**
Why your child needs a pen pal

WE WANT
YOUR
FEEDBACK

READERS' RESPONSES

We welcome your feedback — on specific articles, overall themes and anything else related to editorial content. Enter your comments on the Feedback tab of our website: info@washingtonfamily.com.

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



DECEMBER 2022
VOL. 30, NO. 12
 WashingtonFamily.com/
 301-230-2222

Craig Burke, Publisher

Jeni Mann Tough,
Associate Publisher



© 2022 Washington Family. Distribution of this magazine does not constitute an endorsement of information, products or services. The publisher reserves the right to reject any advertisement or listing that is not in keeping with this publication's standards. All rights reserved.
 9200 Rumsey Road, Suite 215, Columbia, MD 21045

EDITORIAL

Lindsay VanAsdalan, Editor
 LVanAsdalan@midatlanticmedia.com

Staff Writers

Jillian Diamond, Sasha Rogelberg
 Heather M. Ross, Jarrad Saffren

Contributing Writers

Emily Rose Barr, Megan Conway
 Elena Epstein, Gianna Gronowski,
 Jennifer Rothschild, Frances Shefter,
 Esq., Gina Gallucci-White,
 Patricia Velkoff

ADVERTISING

Craig Burke, CEO/Publisher
 cburke@midatlanticmedia.com

Sales Consultants

Alan Gurwitz, Robin Harmon
 Pam Kupersmidt, Jodi Lipson
 David Pintzow, Sara Priebe
 Philip Schmalzl, Sharon Schmuckler
 Sylvia Witaschek

MARKETING

Julia Olaguer
 Audience Development Coordinator

BUSINESS

Pattie-Ann Lamp
 Accounting Manager
 410-902-2300
 plamp@midatlanticmedia.com
 Jessica McGinnis
 Senior Accounts Receivable Specialist
 jmcginnis@midatlanticmedia.com

Sarah Appelbaum
 Accounts Receivable Specialist
 sappelbaum@midatlanticmedia.com

CIRCULATION

410-902-2300, ext. 1

CREATIVE

Steve Burke, Art Director
 James Meskunas,
 Digital Media Manager
 Ebony Brown, Graphic Designer
 Lonna Koblick, Graphic Designer
 Jay Sevidal, Graphic Designer
 Frank Wagner, Graphic Designer
 Carl Weigel, Graphic Designer

MID-ATLANTIC MEDIA

Craig Burke, CEO/Publisher
 cburke@midatlanticmedia.com
 Jeni Mann Tough, Associate Publisher
 jmann@midatlanticmedia.com



Personal Tours Available

Why have families moved across the country specifically for their children to attend Nysmith?

We provide PreK-8th graders with a life-altering educational experience taught by teachers whose passion inspires students. Our unique program makes it possible for children to work four grade levels ahead in both Math and Reading.

Our 1:9 teacher-to-student ratio with classes of 18 or less allow our exceptional teachers to devote the time to those children who need to fill in any academic gaps caused by Covid.

Limited Class Spots Still Available!

We Make A World-Class Education A Joy-Filled Experience

Preschool-8th Grade
 13625 EDS Drive Herndon, VA

Nysmith.com
 703-713-3332

Montessori School of McLean

Where Authentic Montessori Meets the 21st Century: Ages 2-12

Cultivating each child's unique ability to flourish in mind, body and spirit

ENRICHMENTS

- Science • Technology • Spanish • Outdoor Classroom
- Library • Music • Drama • Art • Physical Education

Extended Day • Transportation • Summer Camp

1711 Kirby Road
 McLean, VA 22101
 703-790-1049
www.mcleanmontessori.org

Accredited by



Lindsay VanAsdalan
Editor
LVanAsdalan@
midatlanticmedia.com

Facebook
@WashingtonFamilyMagazine

Twitter
@FAMILYMagDC

Pinterest
@familymagazine

Instagram
@washingtonfamilymag

Email us
Let us know what's on your mind.
info@thefamilymagazine.com

Season's greetings!

December is a magical time of year when the joy of the holidays meets the wonder of winter. No matter how you celebrate the season, there's plenty for families to do to get into the spirit in the DMV.

Explore our calendar of holiday favorites, plus places to go ice skating in Maryland, D.C. and Virginia, a family snowman craft and, lest we forget, how to stay safe during winter play!

Washinton FAMILY has a lot to celebrate this season. Magazine staff won a total of nine awards in the Parenting Media Association Design and Editorial Awards Program, including a top honor of General Excellence.

It's been an honor to tell your stories! From military moms to health experts to advocates for children with autism, we have been fortunate to talk to some amazing people in the community who have helped

these stories come alive on the page. Thanks for your support.

As you gear up for Christmas morning or menorah lights, check out our gift guide for toys, music and books to give your loved ones (pg. 10). And remember when exchanging gifts with family and friends that it's also important to think of those who are in need.

Take the opportunity to teach your kids some good money habits (pg. 20) so they can participate in charitable giving, too! Staff Writer Heather M. Ross offers helpful advice on talking to kids about homelessness—including how they can help (pg. 26).

Be safe, have fun and see you in the new year!

Lindsay C. VanAsdalan



Westminster School

PreK - 8th Grade | Established 1962

Presenting Challenge | Building Character | Instilling Confidence



Scan Here to
Learn More!

Winter Open House Dates
December 6 (virtual) & January 24 (in-person)

Accelerated Classical Curriculum
Art | Music | Drama | STEAM
Phonics-Based Reading | Writing | Penmanship
Critical Thinking | Public Speaking | Great Books
French | Latin | Daily PE | Field Trips

**Schedule
Your Tour
Today!**

www.WestminsterSchool.com

3819 Gallows Road Annandale, Va. 22003

(703) 256-3620

{TOP 10}

*Holiday Events
for the Family*

The weather is cold, but opportunities for holiday celebrations are heating up. No matter what holiday you celebrate this month, there are plenty of local options to make merry or bring cheer. Check out our picks for December family-friendly events in the D.C. area

BY SASHA ROGELBERG



1

THROUGHOUT THE
MONTH

LETTERS TO SANTA

Don't miss your chance to send your letters to the man in the North Pole. From Dec. 1 until Christmas Eve, visit the Dulles Town Center super-regional mall and drop off your notes in the mailbox stationed at the center's lower level.

21100 Dulles Town Circle,
Sterling, Virginia;
shopdullesmallcenter.com/directory

DEC. 6, 12-8 P.M.

DOWNTOWN HOLIDAY MARKET

Forget the stress of last-minute holiday shopping with a visit to the 18th Annual Downtown Holiday Market in downtown Penn Quarter. Two blocks of the open-air market offer goods from 75 exhibitors, highlighting minority-owned businesses in the area, as well as live performances and food from Alexa's Empanadas and Churrow, A Taste of Germany and more.

8th and F streets, NW, Washington, D.C.;
downtownholidaymarket.com

2

DEC. 3, 4-8 P.M.

TREE LIGHTING FESTIVAL

Kick off the holiday season by visiting City Ridge for its tree-lighting festival. Before the ceremony at 7 p.m., check out the host of kids activities, such as face painting and train rides, and grab a bite to eat at King Street Oyster Bar or Tatte Bakery & Cafe, which will be serving hot chocolate all evening.

14 Ridge Square NW,
Washington, D.C.

3



4

DEC. 8, 7:30-9:30 P.M.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

You can't beat the classics, and the Ford's Theatre's performance of "A Christmas Carol" promises a "music-infused production" of the Michael Baron script, adapted from the classic Charles Dickens novel. The two-hour show, recommended for ages 5 and older, brings to life the story of Ebenezer Scrooge and his journey to find holiday joy, as he is joined by the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future.

511 10th St. NW, Washington, D.C.;
fords.org/performances/current-and-upcoming/a-christmas-carol-2022



DEC 12, 11 A.M.-6 P.M.

"ART OF GIVING" ART SHOW

HorseSpirit Arts Gallery presents its "Art of Giving" holiday show for the second year running, featuring original art from 45 local artists. Along with a visit to the gallery, consider a donation of food, clothing or money to the Art of Giving Tree. Donations will go toward the Grassroots Day Resource Center. The art show runs until Dec. 31.

8600 Foundry St., Suite 2063, Savage, Maryland; horsespiritartsgallery.com

6

DEC. 17, 10:30-11:30 A.M.
AND 1-2 P.M.

FAMILY HOLIDAY CONCERT

From highlights from the "Nutcracker" to Chanukah classics, join the Columbia Orchestra for its Family Holiday Concert, featuring guest dancers from Dance Connections. Tickets for the event are \$10 for kids and \$15 for adults.

5460 Trumpeter Road, Columbia, Maryland;
columbiaorchestra.org/season/events/
family-holiday-concert-22

THROUGHOUT THE
MONTHWASHINGTON BALLET'S
NUTCRACKER

More than 100 dancers from Washington Ballet will perform the "Nutcracker," the dazzling ballet set to Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's compositions. The show, set in 1882 Georgetown, uses original period-era costumes and ornate sets. Tickets for the family-friendly show start at \$48.

513 13th St. NW, Washington, D.C.;
washingtonballet.org



DEC. 18, 11:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. AND 1-2 P.M.

HERSHEL AND THE HANUKKAH GOBLINS

The Puppet Co. Playhouse presents its version of "Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins," the story of Hershel and his quest to save the days after the king and queen of the goblins forbid the lighting of the Chanukah candles. During the festival of lights, beginning Dec. 18, audience members will take home a special gift.

7300 Macarthur Blvd., Glen Echo, Maryland;
thepuppetco.showare.com

9

DEC. 16-31, 1:30 P.M.

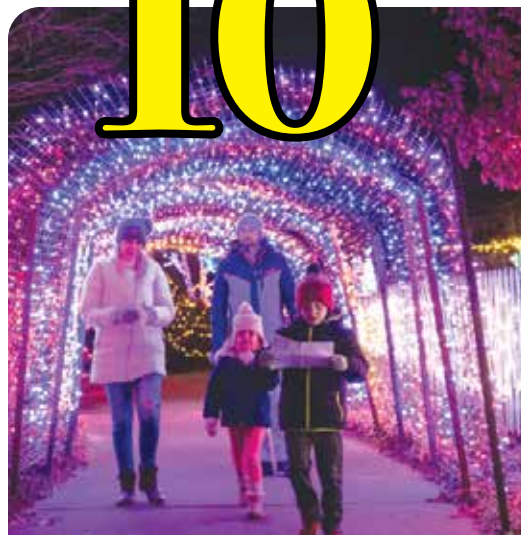
9. MOST WONDERFUL TIME

Celebrate the diversity of the December holiday season with Olney Theatre Co. During the second half of the month, the company will present a 90-minute, four-performer performance sharing memories, songs and warmth with holiday classics such as "Let It Snow!" and more.

2001 Olney Sandy Spring Road, Olney, Maryland; olneytheatre.org/whats-playing/
wonderful-time-year

10

MONTGOMERYPARKS.ORG



DEC. 30, 12 A.M.

GARDEN OF LIGHTS

For those more interested in spending time outdoors for the holidays, visit Brookside Gardens' Garden of Lights, a half-mile walkthrough light display that brings true meaning to decking the halls. Tickets are \$5 per person for ages 5 or older.

1800 Glenallan Avenue, Wheaton, Maryland;
montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/
brookside-gardens/garden-of-lights

5 Places to Go Ice Skating in the DMV

BY LINDSAY C. VANASDALAN

Oh the weather outside may be frightful, but the glistening ice from these outdoor winter skating rinks is all too delightful. Town squares and shopping centers in the DMV offer picturesque views in locations convenient for a family outing. Stop in for an hourly skate, book a lesson or come with a group!

Don't get cold feet just because you don't know where to start. Here are five ice skating rinks that are open and accessible to everyone in your family, from beginners to seasoned pros!



WEYO / ADOBESTOCK

Silver Spring Ice Skating at Veteran's Plaza

8523 Fenton Street, Silver Spring | Mondays through Fridays Noon to 10 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 10 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Stop in for a skate at Veterans Plaza's pavilion-covered rink when you're out shopping or grabbing a bite in downtown Silver Spring. Lessons are available on weekends, and the rink can also be booked for small groups, fundraisers, birthdays and large groups for special rates. The season runs through mid-March. Reservations are required; they are available up to two weeks in advance.

Tickets start at \$10, skate rental \$5
silverspringiceskating.com

Rockville Town Square

131 Gibbs St., Rockville | Mondays through Thursdays Noon to 10 p.m., Fridays Noon to 11 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m. to 11 p.m., Sundays 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

At 7,200 square feet, this open-air skate in the Rockville Town Square is the largest between Baltimore and Washington, D.C.—and the largest in Montgomery County. Choose between hockey or figure skates when booking a time slot or schedule. The

skating season runs through mid-March. Reservations are required.

Tickets start at \$10; skate rental \$5
rockvilleiceskating.com

Harris Pavilion Ice Rink

9201 Center St, Manassas | Mondays through Fridays 3:30–9 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Skate under the Harris Pavilion in Historic Manassas and explore the history, shops and restaurants in the community. Families can grab a photo together at the iconic Virginia "LOVE" sign at the nearby Manassas Railroad Depot, closed Mondays and Tuesdays in January except for Jan. 3 and 17 (On those days, hours are 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.) Harris Pavilion offers both private and group lessons. Reservations are required.

Tickets start at \$8, skate rentals are \$5; group rates are \$12 per person.
manassasva.gov

The Wharf Ice Rink

760 Maine Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C. | Wednesdays through Fridays 4–10 p.m., Saturdays Noon to 10 p.m., Sundays Noon to 8 p.m.

Try out D.C.'s only over-water ice skating rink! The Wharf Ice Rink is open through

February, with special holiday hours. Skaters of all ages and skill levels are welcome, from first-timers to Olympians. Go for a skate, and grab hot beverages and other seasonal specialties at nearby shops and restaurants. Tickets start at \$10, skate rentals and skate aids are \$7 each.

wharf-ice-rink.com

Pentagon Row Outdoor Ice Skating

1201 S Joyce St., Arlington | Tuesdays through Thursdays Noon to 10 p.m., Fridays Noon to 11 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Sundays and Mondays 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Renovations in 2013 made this rink the largest in Northern Virginia—and the second-largest in the state at 6,840 square feet. A dual-sided stone fireplace keeps things cozy in between skates. Group skating and youth and adult lessons are available. Rent hockey skates (advanced), figure skates or double blades (for young children).

Tickets start at \$10; skate rentals are \$6
Pentagonrowskating.com ■

Heather M. Ross contributed to this story.

WARM UP WINTER WITH WATERMELON FUN

STORY AND PHOTOS BY FAMILY FEATURES

The cold chill of winter may have you feeling trapped indoors with nothing to do and nowhere to go, but fun activities fit for the whole family can add excitement and chase away those winter-time blues. Paired with an appetizing snack, at-home crafting provides a relaxing way to keep your mind and body moving.

Warming up with family-friendly activities starts with a versatile (and delicious) option like watermelon, which can be your sweet superstar all year long. As a centerpiece for evenings at home or gatherings and get-togethers, its versatility creates zero food waste with endless creative uses in the kitchen, from rind-smile snowmen to handheld snacks.

When this year's first snowfall offers a canvas for creativity and entertainment, gather your loved ones to make this Watermelon Snowman. Fresh-cut and personal-sized watermelons are the predominant options in wintertime, and they're perfect for putting together this festive work of art. All you'll need is a collection of kitchen knives, an ice cream scoop, melon ballers, skewers, some decorative "clothing" and blueberries for a fruit salad served right out of the snowman.

While you're hard at work, ease your appetite with a quick and easy snack like Watermelon Glazed Meatballs. Start with a homemade watermelon puree mixed with barbecue sauce. Then, saute frozen meatballs and top with the sweet glaze for a perfect wintertime treat. Along with its delicious taste, watermelon is also a nutritious hydration source, which is just as important in winter as it is during warmer months, and provides an excellent source of vitamin C with 25% of the daily recommended value in each 2-cup serving to support immunity.

These tasty morsels also make for a simple, shareable appetizer while hosting throughout the season. Just lay them out on a serving tray and pop toothpicks into each meatball so guests can grab and go while mingling.

To find more family-friendly crafts and sweet snack ideas, visit watermelon.org.



WATERMELON SNOWMAN

KITCHEN KNIVES

1 ROUND SEEDLESS WATERMELON

2 PERSONAL-SIZED WATERMELONS, ONE LARGER THAN OTHER

ICE CREAM SCOOP OR LARGE SPOON

MELON BALLER

MINI MELON BALLER OR PARING KNIFE

BLUEBERRIES

LARGE WOODEN SKEWERS

Y-SHAPED STICKS

SCARF

HAT

- 1 Using knife, cut 1/4-inch slice off bottom of round seedless watermelon and both personal watermelons to provide stable bases. Use smallest melon for head, second largest for torso and largest for lower body. Set aside smallest watermelon.
- 2 Cut tops off large and medium watermelons to create bowls. Using ice cream scoop or large spoon, scoop out flesh.
- 3 Using melon baller, scoop eyes out of smallest watermelon. Invert melon balls and reinsert.

4 Using mini melon baller or paring knife, scoop out holes for nose and mouth. Carve one piece of watermelon into triangle for nose and fill mouth holes with blueberries.

5 On platter, using large wooden skewers, connect all three watermelons.

6 Insert y-shaped sticks in middle watermelon for arms.

7 Fill bottom sections with fruit salad of melon balls and blueberries. Decorate with scarf and hat.

WATERMELON GLAZED MEATBALLS

Servings: 8

WATERMELON PURÉE:

1 FRESH WATERMELON

2 TABLESPOONS VEGETABLE OIL

24-36 FROZEN PREPARED MINI MEATBALLS

1 CUP PREPARED BARBECUE SAUCE

1 CUP WATERMELON PURÉE

TO MAKE WATERMELON PURÉE:

- 1 Remove seeds from watermelon and cut into large chunks. In blender, process until smooth.
- 2 In large, heavy saute pan over medium-high heat or electric skillet set to 325° F, heat oil.
- 3 Saute mini meatballs until browned and hot. Reduce heat to low.
- 4 Mix barbecue sauce and watermelon puree. Pour over meatballs and simmer 2-3 minutes. Serve hot. ■

Source: National Watermelon Promotion Board



HERE'S WHAT WE'RE LOVING FOR YOU AND

BY JAMIE DAVIS SMITH

It's the most wonderful time of the year! That means it's time to make your list and check it twice. Erica Card, store director and toy buyer from Child's Play Toys & Books (with locations in Washington D.C., and McLean and Arlington, Va.) along with D.C. area parents, share some of their favorite picks for the season. From the tried-and-true to the brand new, see what's popular this year. They have some great picks for hard-working parents, too!

For the Kids

▼ BUILDING

Building toys help children develop skills in key areas including problem solving, creativity and mathematics. Card recommends Magna-Tiles. They grow with kids and come in fun themes like dinosaurs and construction sites. Grattirax, an interactive track system, and Zig & Go, an evolved marble run, are other great choices.



► CLASSIC TOYS

Classic toys are popular every year. Card says LEGO is always hot, and this year is no exception. Not only does building with LEGO help build science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills and encourage imaginative play, but there is something for everyone at all price points. Choose from huge Star Wars-themed sets like The Justifier, LEGO Art or Disney themes. Hot Wheels is another popular classic toy with a lot of versatility. Choose from single cars or big sets designed for "crashing." Playmobil and Brio Trains are also popular, timeless options, says Card.



► ACTIVE TOYS

When it's cold outside, D.C. area parents look for ways to keep kids active indoors. Some parents swear by Stairslide to turn any staircase into a slide. Kids get their exercise in running up and down the stairs while pretending they are at the playground. A Little Partners Pikler Triangle is perfect for little ones. Card recommends Stomp Rocket. Jumping launches indoor-safe foam rockets and kids run to find them to relaunch. Stomp Rocket comes in fun themes like glow-in-the-dark and cars.





AND YOUR FAMILY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

For more product reviews, visit nappaawards.com



▲ GAMES

Card recommends Magic Mountain, a cooperative game where families work together to defeat a villain, and Sleeping Queens, a card game in which players need to wake royalty. Seven Wonders Duel is a great civilization-building game. Catan is a classic that is now a simplified dice game.



► STEM

Stay Curious and Keep Exploring is a fantastic book of 50 science experiments families can do at home. Card says Thames & Kosmos products are very popular for STEM-themed gifts. Little engineers (who also love candy) will enjoy assembling a working Candy Vending Machine. Or, opt for a full lab setup with an Ooze Lab.



CREATIVITY

Art projects with a message are always in! Kids Crafts' Brave Like Rosa needlepoint encourages kids to create a craft with a purpose. Introduce kids to a new art form with a Faber-Castell Do Art Pottery Studio or Quick Knit Loom.



▲ ON TREND

Sometimes kids want the latest new thing. This year the Zuru Smashers Dino Island Skull comes packed with more than 30 toys that are only revealed after smashing. Star Wars is always on trend, and this year small, plush Galactic Pals are popular. This is the winter of Black Panther and the Fierce Collection of highly detailed dolls are a great choice. Miniland dolls come in a diverse range to look like almost anyone, from skin color to glasses to a child with Down syndrome. They show that everyone is beautiful.

For Mom or Dad

► SMART WATCH

DMV parents are busy. Simplify their life with a new smartwatch for the new year. The Garmin Venu 2 not only tracks fitness and sleep, but it also displays texts, allows wearers to take calls from their wrist and even has guided breathing exercises for relaxation. The face and band are customizable to fit any style.



PI PIZZA OVEN

Kids love pizza. Parents get tired of take-out. The solution? A Solo Stove Pi pizza oven so parents can make real wood-fired pizza right from their own backyard.

JOURNALS

Finding balance as a parent isn't easy. Taking even a few minutes a day for reflection can pay off big. Journaling can reduce stress and help busy parents prioritize tasks. A guided journal like the Better Every Day Journal is great for parents who aren't sure how to get started. A premium journal from Moo is another good choice.

▼ CHOCOLATE GALORE

For the parent who already has it all, you can never go wrong with chocolate. Try the Eku Box Gourmet Chocolate Lovers set that comes with a huge variety of treats beautifully packaged with holiday flair. It's perfect for sharing—but no one would blame a parent for keeping it all to themselves!



GREAT EATS

Another guaranteed favorite is a gift certificate to a parent's favorite restaurant. If you aren't sure which one that may be, you can send them to a great meal at one of José Andrés' restaurants, which aren't only delicious but but you can also help with the famed chef's humanitarian efforts to feed those in need.

THE BEST HOME GOODS

Give the dining room table an upgrade with a gorgeous Acacia hardwood Lazy Susan from Lynn & Liana. The Lazy Susan comes in stunning designs including Ocean Vibes and Emerald Jewel to match any décor. It will make everything from family dinners to holiday parties run just a little more smoothly and look great when not in use.

UPGRADE HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Parents can't always make it out to see a movie or watch the big game. A home projector like the Nebula Mars Pro II brings the big screen right to the living room or backyard. All that's needed to make this work is a blank wall or big white sheet. A projector doubles as a great family gift for movie nights.

▼ SHOWTIME

A night out at the theatre always makes a great gift for parents who don't have enough time to get out without the kids. The Kennedy Center has great shows, including musicals, dramas and symphony performances. Broadway at the National consistently has a solid line-up of the best of Broadway. The Shakespeare Theatre and Synthetic Theatre are other great options.



REST AND RELAX

Most D.C. area parents can't escape from daily life and go on a restorative tropical vacation. Instead, give them the gift of a few hours at one of the area's fantastic spas. Privai is an optimal choice with locations at Pike & Rose, Fairfax and throughout the DMV.

▼ THE GIFT OF QUIET

It's hard for parents to escape the noise, from the sound of the metro to loud kids. Nokia's noise cancelling earbuds not only provide an upgrade, but have an ambient mode and a built-in assistant.

Active parents will love Soundcore by Anker sport earbuds. ■



The *outdoor season* doesn't have to end!

FALL SALE!

"It's our *favorite* room in the house!"®

As cooler autumn weather arrives, extend your outdoor living season and relax in natural light flowing in your Betterliving Sunroom as you enjoy watching the leaves change or the snow fall around you.

3-SEASON & YEAR ROUND SUNROOMS and ENCLOSED PORCHES

15% OFF*

CALL for a catalog or FREE estimate
(240) 650-2594

Garretty Glass
Your Glass Experts
Betterliving PATIO & SUNROOMS

Betterliving
SUNROOMS • AWNINGS
Serving Maryland & South Central PA
100% Financing Available

* Offer not valid on prior sales or combined with other offers. Discount varies with room size/model. EXP. 12/31/2022.

MADE IN THE USA

BATH FITTER®

FITS YOUR life

With our unique tub-over-tub liners, replacements, and tub-to-shower conversions we can complete your bathroom renovation in as little as a day. At Bath Fitter, we don't just fit your bath, we fit your life. Why have over two million people brought Bath Fitter into their homes? *It Just Fits.*

OUR BENEFITS

- Easy to Clean, Virtually Maintenance Free
- Seamless Wall
- One-Day Installation¹

LIFETIME BATH FITTER WARRANTY²

SPECIAL OFFER

24 MONTHS 0% INTEREST*

NO INTEREST UNTIL 2025!

WE DO IT ALL! Tub Liners | Tub and Shower Replacements | Tub-to-Shower Conversions

1-833-776-0515 bath-fitter.com/local24

1Tub-to-shower conversions and fiberglass replacements typically require a two-day installation. 2Lifetime warranty valid for as long as you own your home. *Offer ends 12/31/2022. All offers apply to a complete Bath Fitter system only, and must be presented and used at time of estimate. Minimum purchase required. Terms of promotional financing are 24 months of no interest from the date of installation and minimum deposit. See representative for details. Qualified buyers only. May not be combined with other offers or applied to previous purchases. Valid only at select Bath Fitter locations. Offers and warranty subject to limitations. Fixtures and features may be different than pictured. Accessories pictured are not included. Plumbing work done by P.U.L.S.E. Plumbing, MD MPL #17499, NJ MPL #10655, DE MPL #PL-0002303, MD MPL #82842, VA MPL #2710064024, IA MPL #18066, OH MPL #37445, WV MPL #PL07514, MI MPL #B111651, PA HIC #PA017017, NJ HIC #13VH03073000, WV HIC #WV053085, MD HIC #129346, VA HIC #2705155694, MD HIC #122356, VA HIC #2705096759, IA HIC #C112725, WV HIC #WV038808, MD HIC #129995, VA HIC #2705146537, DC HIC #420213000044. Each Franchise Independently Owned And Operated by Bath Saver, Inc, LLC, Iowa Bath Solutions, LLC, Ohio Bath Solutions, LLC, Mid Atlantic Bath Solutions, LLC.

5 ALBUMS TO WARM YOUR HEART AND MOVE YOUR FEET

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

"DEAR HEART" by Martin and Rose Music

Parents and songwriters Martin and Rose explore the social and emotional landscape of kids growing up in the pandemic and a post-pandemic world. The

husband-and-wife team involved the whole family in making this album, even their dog, Jett. It was created to remind adults to take their time and let kids be kids — for just a little bit longer. Parents and caregivers can use these songs to speak with their children about their feelings, fostering stronger relationships and healthy emotional bonds in the wake of disaster.

martinandrosemusic.com

"INTO THE LITTLE BLUE HOUSE" by Wendy and DB

Introduce your children to new, Grammy-nominated tunes with this blues album of original songs for kids. Creators Wendy and DB collaborated with the blues community of Chicago to create an album for the whole family to enjoy. Wendy and DB's lyrics focus on themes like inclusion, diversity, love and kindness. A portion of the proceeds from each of their albums always goes to nonprofits such as Jane Goodall's

Roots and Shoots, Xerces Society, A Better Life for Kids, Jumpstart and No Kid Hungry. Ten percent of sales from "Into the Little Blue

House" will go to The Pinetop Perkins Foundation, encouraging and supporting musicians young and old. wendyandddb.com

"LOOK BOTH WAYS" by Tom Knight

Tom Knight recently released his sixth kids' album after a nearly-20-years-long break from recording. The album, which came out Nov. 18, blends a gentle spirit with creative, lyrical storytelling. This album is for all ages, but best for children ages 3 to 8 years old. Knight's goal for the album is to inspire families and children so they can sing and dance together. The album features new material as well as songs Knight wrote since his last album in 2003. Listen for lively tunes like "Wiggly Tooth" and "The Museum Mambo." tomknight.com/store

"AN ADOPTION STORY" by Kitt Wakeley

What would be the soundtrack to your adoption story? Billboard chart-topping composer Kitt Wakely's orchestral EP follows his journey through foster care and adoption, his reunion with his sister after 30 years and, coming full circle, his adoption of three siblings.



Recorded at the famous Abbey Road Studios and featuring the London Symphony Orchestra, the album's net proceeds will support the Ohio-based Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. kittwakely.com

"A THANKFULLY SPOOKTACULAR CHRISTMAS" by Dennis McKinley

All Star Kid, a new children's brand created by TV personality Dennis McKinley, was inspired by his 3-year-old daughter, Pilar Jhena. "A Thankfully Spooktacular Christmas" includes catchy songs inspired by popular

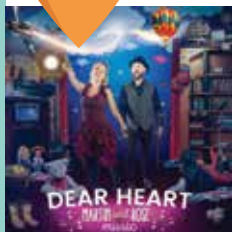
children's tales. With a diverse cast of original animated characters and creative storytelling, this album has lots to love. allstarkid.com



WF SHOP LOCAL

"MY D.C. MY GO-GO" BY DONNA HENRY

Follow 8-year-old Marleigh as she explores the go-go music scene of her city, Washington, D.C. Donna Henry is originally from Jamaica but has called D.C. home for the last 20 years. She uses children's books to educate young people about the environment and money, and encourages them to think critically and ask questions. "My D.C. My Go-Go" is Henry's fourth book about D.C.'s culture and history, joining "My D.C. Her Story," "Meet My Mayors" and "D.C.'s Superheroes...Our Mayors." talesbydonnahenry.com/product-page/my-d-c-my-go-go



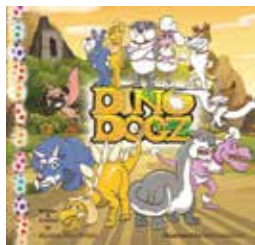
10 BOOKS FOR LEARNING AND FAMILY FUN

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

"DINODOGZ: EGGZELLENT ADVENTURE"

by Mike McHale

The DinoDogz, which are half dog, half dinosaur, go on a rescue mission to save five StegoPup eggs from Dr. D. Story and save the world. This series is best for kids ages 5 and older but can be read to younger children and be just as captivating. Children of all ages can enjoy brilliant illustrations of the pups as they transform and embrace their dino-features! dinodogz.com



Ruby on their journey to rescue Luke, Spider's 12-year-old twin brother. Luke is imprisoned for trying to organize an uprising against The Chosen, a

ruling elite content with their life of luxury on an artificial island. Perfect for children ages 9 to 18. tailorandseal.com

"MISSING VIOLET"

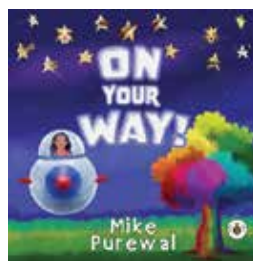
by Kelly Swemba

Best friends Violet and Mia were inseparable, until one day Violet got sick and didn't get better. This book follows Mia's journey through the stages of grief and remembering what she loved most about Violet. This book is for children ages 5 to 8 years old. Available beginning Jan. 31, 2023. beamingbooks.com

"ON YOUR WAY!"

By Mike Purewal

Follow along with this magical tale crafted by loving father Mike Purewal. This colorfully illustrated book follows the main character, Purewal's daughter Bianca, through tackling obstacles like anger, worry and fear as she journeys through space with rainbow trees, rocket ships and stars galore! Teach your child to overcome with this touching and rhythmic storytelling experience. olympiapublishers.com



"RUNNING FOR SHELTER: A TRUE STORY"

by Suzette Sheft

Suzette Sheft, 16, grew up hearing stories of her grandmother's life during the Holocaust. In the face

of today's rising antisemitism and xenophobia, Sheft wrote this book to share her grandmother Igne Eisenger's story with the world, especially people her own age. This book is best for ages 12 to 18. [amsterdam publishers.com](http://amsterdampublishers.com)

"STERLING AND NUGGET THE DRAGON"

by Judd B. Shaw

Sterling, a brave young boy, has dreamt of becoming a knight for as long as he can remember. In true knightly fashion, he sets out to slay the dragon! But Sterling's quest is upset by a unique choice. To fight? Or to help? This story encourages growth for children's emotional and social development. It is meant for children between ages 3 and 6. morgan-james-publishing.com

"FIREFIGHTER FLO"

by Andrea Zimmerman

Give your little one a glimpse into the exciting life of Flo, as she races to battle raging fires. This book is part of the Big Jobs, Bold Women series with the goal of introducing even the youngest readers to women as leaders in unusual jobs. This book is best for children ages 3 to 6 years old. holidayhouse.com/book/firefighter-flo

"A TIME TO GROW"

by the PJ Library

This free, updated guide to the Jewish holidays is available for free in four languages including English, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. Enjoy beautiful illustrations, easy to understand explanations of timeless traditions and a step-by-step guide to understanding and celebrating as a family this holiday season. amazon.com/pjlibrary; pjlibrary.org/fall-guide/high-holidays-at-home/downloads/guide-download ■



"GOD IS JUST LIKE ME"

by Karen Valentin

Author Karen Valentin explores what it means to be made in the image of God through a story of a young Puerto Rican girl living in New York City. "God is Just Like Me" is about a young girl going through each day of the week, finding ways she and God are alike. beamingbooks.com

"JOURNEY TO JUSTICE"

by Tanni Haas

This futuristic tale is full of suspense! Set in a post-global-warming world, follow Spider and

CHARITABLE GIVING

Teaming Up for Nutritional Health

Montgomery County Public Schools partners with Silver Diner and Real Food for Kids to get more plant-based foods onto school lunch menus.

BY JENNIFER MARINO WALTERS

Sweet potatoes topped with a sweet chili mix and ranch sauce.

Thai curry sauce over edamame and chickpeas with whole-grain rice.

White bean and pesto dip with roasted tomatoes on a flatbread.

A three-bean torta with roasted corn salad.

These may sound more like menu items at a vegetarian restaurant than offerings in a school lunch line. But they're all dishes that were recently being considered for the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) school lunch menu.

MCPS partnered with local diner chain Silver Diner and local advocacy group Real Food for Kids to develop delicious and healthy plant-based recipes to add to its menu. On Sept. 29, about a dozen MCPS middle and high school students took part in a student focus group, in which they got to try the dishes and offer their feedback. All of the dishes were created by Silver Diner Executive Chef Ype Von Hengst.

"Even though [Washington] D.C. has very wealthy suburbs, there are pockets of kids who experience food insecurity every day,"

says Bonnie Moore, executive director of Real Food for Kids. "Our goal is to provide equity and access to real, whole foods for all students."

Approaching the holiday season, many individuals, families and businesses are thinking about ways they can give back. By bringing healthy food options onto school menus, this partnership gives back not just financially—but with lasting change.

The Need for Healthier Food

Food insecurity is a major concern throughout the U.S., not just the D.C. area. According to the School Nutrition Association, one in seven American kids live in households without consistent access to adequate food. That's 11 million U.S. children who don't have enough to eat—which can have detrimental effects on their health and well-being.

A review of 17 recent studies, published last September in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, found that food insecurity is associated with lower academic outcomes,

increased behavioral problems, higher stress and anxiety and even developmental delays in children.

Even kids who don't suffer from food insecurity often only have access to highly processed foods that are high in calories, sodium and fat. Perhaps it's no surprise, then, that the rate of childhood obesity in the U.S. has more than tripled since the 1970s. Today, about one in five (or 14.7 million) American children and teens ages 2-19 are affected by obesity, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Obesity can lead to health problems such as high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes, joint problems and breathing problems such as asthma and sleep apnea.

MCPS is one of many school districts across the country working to combat food insecurity and poor nutrition among kids by revamping their lunch menus. All of the school district's offerings, including vending machine and a la carte items, meet current U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines. That means the food contains 30 percent or less calories from fat, 10 percent



or less calories from saturated fat and zero grams of trans-fat. MCPS also exceeds national standards for sodium in its food, with sodium levels that are lower than the limit set by the USDA.

But non-meat options for students have been mostly limited to items like pizza, grilled cheese, and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, which aren't exactly the healthiest choices. And, many MCPS students have expressed the desire for more variety in lunch offerings to meet the dietary needs of vegetarians, vegans, students with food allergies and those with religious restrictions such as halal or kosher diets. The district's partnership with Real Food for Kids and Silver Diner—which has one of the healthiest kids' menus in the country—seeks to provide those options.

"Silver Diner has a lot of experience with vegan foods, and Chef Ype understands food as a sensory experience," says Moore. "He created recipes for MCPS that show what a vegan dish can be in terms of colors, aromas and textures."

A Changing Lunch Menu

Addy Hogan is one MCPS student who welcomes the idea of seeing more plant-based options on the school lunch menu. The Takoma Park Middle School eighth-grader is one of the students who participated in the focus group to taste and provide feedback on Chef Ype's recipes. While she's not a strict vegetarian, Addy does stick to a mostly plant-based diet.

"I like to stay away from meats because it's healthier, and it makes me feel better," Addy says. "Plus, it's better for the environment."

Addy says that while she mostly liked the recipes, she thought some of them were a little too difficult and messy for busy students



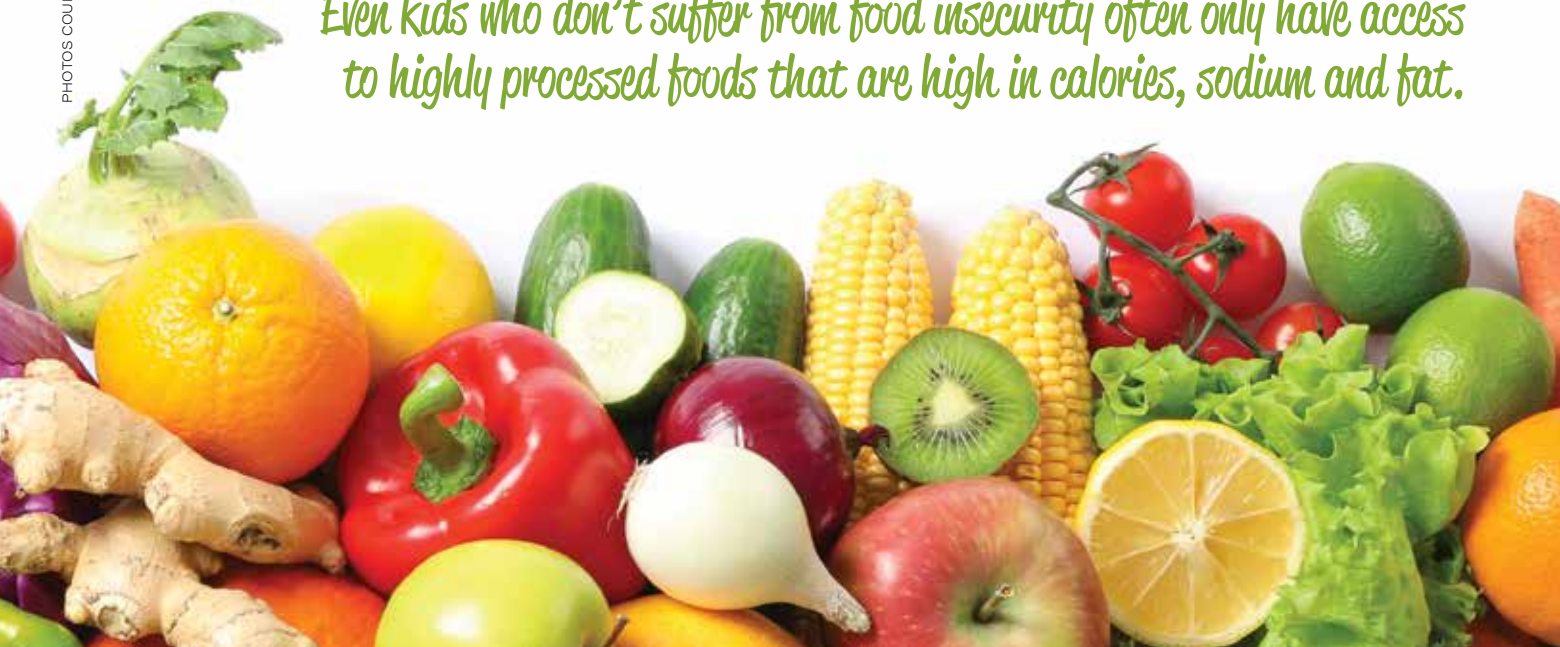
Von Hengst helps students competing to get their dish added to school menus.



Silver Diner Chef Ype Von Hengst, student advocate, Real Food for Kids Culinary Challenge

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DEB LINDSEY

Even kids who don't suffer from food insecurity often only have access to highly processed foods that are high in calories, sodium and fat.





to eat during their limited lunch period.

“School lunch needs to be more about the ease of eating it and less about the presentation,” she says. “And, of course, it needs to taste good.”

Moore says the students provided other helpful feedback as well, including that some of the dishes needed more spice or should have the sauce served on the side.

Overall, the students on the panel, including Addy, like the Sweet-Heat Potatoes best. Moore says the potatoes are set to be added to the MCPS lunch menu in January 2023, while the Yellow Chickpea Curry was already added in October.

Addy hopes that by being exposed to more healthy options like these, students will start to choose them more often. “Right now, kids are more likely to take the foods they know, like

pizza,” she says.

Moore is hopeful that will change. “Studies show that the more variety of fruits and vegetables kids are exposed to, the more likely they are to eat them,” she says.

Real Food for Kids will continue its work to get more plant-based foods into schools through its Chef Exchange Program, in which more restaurant chefs like Chef Ype can create healthy recipes for school menus. And through its Student Nutrition Advisory Council and its student Culinary Challenge, more students like Addy can influence and create recipes that make it onto the school menu.

“School lunch brings kids together,” Moore says. “That’s why it’s so important to create dishes that celebrate the diversity of cultures, religions and diets in the student body.” ■




EXPLORE • WONDER • GROW

Brooksfield School

Now Enrolling Ages 2 to 6
Toddler Program • Before & After Care
Outdoor Education Classroom
 Montessori Kindergarten & Preschool
 Advanced Academic Curriculum

McLean, VA • 703-356-5437 • www.brooksfieldschool.org

OVER 60 YEARS OF MONTESSORI EXCELLENCE



OPEN HOUSES
DEC 2, JAN 6 & 11

18 MONTHS TO GRADE 6

Schedule your visit at
aidanschool.org

aidan
 MONTESSORI SCHOOL

202.387.2700 | 2700 27th Street NW, Washington, DC

The Best Holiday Events in the DMV

BY JAMIE DAVIS SMITH

WinterFest at Kings Dominion

It's the most magical time of the year! The DMV is filled with family-friendly holiday events, from leaping ballerinas to exhibits filled with kitsch of fun and beloved annual events that many families turn into time honored traditions. The holiday season is a time to see millions of sparkling lights brighten the dark winter nights and indulge in special treats. There is something to get everyone in the holiday spirit. Here are some of our favorites from the tried and true to the completely brand new.

Let's Go to a Show

The holidays are a great time to experience live theater, and there is something for everyone. The Washington Ballet's Nutcracker is a classic holiday treat that all families should experience at least once. Love musicals? Head to the Kennedy Center to see Wicked and hear the story of the Wizard of Oz told from the point of view of the Wicked Witch. Younger kids will love seeing Mo Willems' Naked Mole Rats Get Dressed transformed into a rock experience at Imagination Stage in Bethesda.

Make the Magic Real

Head deep into the forest to Harry Potter: A Forbidden Forrest Experience in Leesburg, Va. Your favorite magical beast may be around the corner as the Wizarding World comes to life around you. Bring your wand to perform your own spells during this interactive journey and relax with a Butterbeer at the end of the trail. Another great immersive event is Artechouse DC's Spectacular



Snowland at Great Wolf Lodge

Factory: The Holiday Multiverse. In this digital experience, you can float among giant swinging bells, attend a party with a thousand nutcrackers, take a train ride among wreaths and spin on a candy cane carousel.

Christmas at Gaylord National

ICE! returns to Gaylord National in National Harbor, and this year features A Christmas Story. Come to see the larger-than-life rendition of the iconic film and stay for the endless events at Gaylord National. There will be ice skating, bumper cars on ice, story time with Mrs. Claus, gingerbread cookie decorating and so much more. Make a day of it or spend the night.

Lights Galore

It wouldn't feel like the holiday season without experiencing the twinkle of thousands of lights. Enchant will once again take over Nationals Park with millions of lights, a Little Elves Play Place, a maze, and so much more. After a two years hiatus, Zoolights is back at Smithsonian's National Zoo with its glittering displays and your favorite nocturnal animals. Winter City Lights in Olney is the place to be if you want to experience 18 acres of a twinkling winter wonderland where it's guaranteed to snow. Many regional parks also host their own light displays, so check those out too!

Polar Express

Hop aboard the Polar Express that leaves from

the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore for a ride straight to the North Pole to see Santa himself. The iconic book of the same name comes to life as passengers listen to a retelling of the story and get cookies and hot chocolate. Pajamas are encouraged! When passengers disembark, they will experience an indoor snowfall in the roundhouse and participate in various holiday-themed activities.

US Botanic Garden Train Display

One of the area's most beloved holiday events is the U.S. Botanic Garden's annual train display. The gardens are transformed for the holidays every year as train displays are interspersed with the greenery.

Theme Park Magic

Theme parks aren't just for summertime! Experience WinterFest at Kings Dominion in Doswell, Va. with a holiday parade, horse-drawn carriage rides, pictures with St. Nick and more than 20 rides that are even more fun at night. Younger kids will enjoy a PEANUTS Guide to Christmas and cookie decorating with Mrs. Claus.

Snowland at Great Wolf Lodge

If a few hours of holiday magic aren't enough, head to Great Wolf Lodge in Williamsburg, Va. to immerse yourself in Snowland. There is nightly snowfall in the lobby, seasonal crafts, a Frosty Family Dance Party and plenty of other holiday cheer. When it's time to warm up, head to the toasty 84-degree indoor waterpark. ■



ICE! slide at Gaylord National



KIDS AND MONEY

TEACHING KIDS EARLY SO THEY CAN PARTICIPATE IN CHARITABLE GIVING

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

Every day, we make financial decisions. Decisions about where to eat, where to go, what we do and how we do it. But as parents it's important to make sure kids know why.

Janet Currie, president of Bank of America for Greater Maryland, and mother of two, had this realization as she was shopping with her daughters. After telling them they couldn't buy something, she recalls one of her daughters replied, "Of course we can have that, Mommy. You just need to pull out your card."

"I had the revelation that they didn't realize there was real money behind card

transactions," Currie says.

Educating children about money at a young age can help them form good habits that will set them up for responsible saving and spending down the road, and as we approach the holiday season, it also allows them to learn about—and maybe even participate in—charitable giving.

By incorporating charitable giving into these early financial lessons, you can help your children understand the value of community and generosity.

"The longer I live, the more I understand that the world is a lot bigger than just me," says Greg Murset, a financial planner with

six children of his own.

"When kids understand that early in the game, it helps keep them grounded. A component of philanthropy is just a good thing for kids to understand, so they don't think it's all about them. You make a living by what you get, you make a life by what you give," Murset says.

After more than 20 years in the financial planning field, Murset founded BusyKid, a program designed to help parents teach their children about smart money management.

Below, Murset joins other experts in sharing how parents can best educate

MONEY AND TECH

Here are some resources you can use to prepare yourself for having these conversations with your child.

Better Money Habits curriculum is available for free online at bettermoneyhabits.bankofamerica.com/en. It covers topics like credit, saving and budgeting, debt, taxes and more.

BusyKid is designed to teach kids about saving, sharing and spending their allowance. Kids spend their allowance with the BusyKid Spend Card, a debit card, so they can learn to manage money they can't see. Download the app from the App Store or Google Play. Learn more at busykid.com.

The United States Senate Federal Credit Union (USSFCU) provides good tips for families teaching their kids about money, broken down by early years, middle years and teen years.

ussfcu.org/best-life/parent-resource-center/teaching-kids-about-money.html#

EP Federal Credit Union provides additional tips and good money habits. epfcu.org/membership/news-promotions/how-to-teach-your-kids-about-money.aspx

Sagevest Kids by Sagevest Wealth Management has local resources for in-person and online money lessons for kids in the DMV, including Junior Achievement of Greater Washington's real-life simulations on money management for middle and high school students.

kidsfinancialeducation.com/tools-and-resources-for-introducing-kids-to-money-management/



their kids about money. With these tools, families can ensure their kids begin to understand its value—and how it can benefit not only them, but others, too.

LEARNING HOW MONEY WORKS

“The most important thing that a parent can teach their kids after the basics is how to work, earn and manage money,” Murset says.

He suggests having kids earn money from chores because children need to learn how money works before they have to worry about a real job.

D.C.-based EP Federal Credit Union encourages connecting kids to the real-world scenario of running their own business to help them understand the relationship between money and work.

“There’s a reason why lemonade stands have stood the test of time. These micro businesses represent many children’s first exposure to earning money. If lemonade’s not their thing, encourage them to offer pet sitting or yard work to your neighbors,” EP notes.

The United States Senate Federal Credit Union (USSFCU), based in D.C., suggests an allowance for children once they’re in school to get familiar with earnings. Older teens can learn more advanced concepts such as how to maintain a credit score.

The USSFCU adds that parents can include teens as joint account holders on one of their credit cards, and once they have a card of their own, they can begin charging a small amount to pay off each month.

SAVING AND BUDGETING

Another important lesson every child needs to learn is about saving. By helping them set long-term and short-term goals for their money, parents can teach children patience and how to appreciate the value of their money more.

USSFCU’s advice for parents of middle school students is to match what they save at the end of the year. It will give them an incentive to put more of their money into savings.

Julie Weaver, executive director of The

Maryland Council on Economic Education, and mother of two, suggests using candy for teaching children about budgeting. Tell your children that they can have five pieces of candy that week, and let them learn that if they eat them all in one day, they won’t have any when they want it later on.

It’s also helpful to give them a set amount of spending money and a list of relatives or friends to buy Christmas presents for. Show them how by spending more on one gift, they have less money left for the others. This way, your child will learn that money is finite and get practice with making decisions with future transactions in mind.

You can also teach your child budgeting, investing, and earning with family games such as Life, Monopoly or Exact Change.

WANTS AND NEEDS

Another important lesson, according to Weaver, is about the difference between things you want and things you need. A way to teach this lesson is by bringing your child with you next time you go to the grocery store. Each

time you put an item in the cart ask them, “Is this something we need? Or something we just want?”

Murset explains how kids can use an app he created with an in-app debit card to decide how best to use their money. “Once they earn money, they save some, share some with church or charity and spend the rest on a Visa card,” he says.

Sagevest Kids by McLean, Va. -based Sagevest Wealth Management also notes that some banks have kid-friendly checking accounts. Capital One’s MONEY checking account is specifically designed for children ages 8 and older, with no fees or minimum balance.

Parents have access and control of spending when needed. It’s an early opportunity to get kids directly involved with money, and it converts to a regular checking account when the child turns 18.

Giving children a way to easily check





THE MOST IMPORTANT THING THAT A PARENT CAN TEACH THEIR KIDS AFTER THE BASICS IS HOW TO WORK, EARN AND MANAGE MONEY.

their remaining funds from their allowance and chores helps them develop planning skills and avoid the dangerous money habit of “earning and burning.”

DEMYSTIFYING MONEY

A common mistake to avoid is just not talking about these things enough. For kids to make confident financial decisions, parents need to demystify money.

Explain how much things cost, and even let your kids participate in the exchange. EP Federal Credit Union recommends letting children hand the money to the cashier, then collect and count the change.

By showing children how money is connected to everyday life, it becomes less mysterious and scary. That also means explaining credit and debit cards—as Currie learned earlier when she shared about shopping with her girls.

GRAPHIC: PIKEPICTURE/STOCKBYTE/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

The Nutcracker
December 10 - 18, 2022 at Maryland Hall

With Sugar Plum Parties 1 hour before each Sunday performance!
Purchase your tickets at www.BalletMaryland.org/Nutcracker

BM Ballet Theatre of Maryland

Best for Families
Washington FAMILY

The Area's Leader in STEM Education

Where Gifted Minds Grow



Open House December 4th
from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Please call 301-770-4370 to register!

Preschool-8th Grade

www.feynmanschool.org

According to Currie, being as open and transparent as you can be with your children is important for teaching them which habits work for you and which financial decisions they may want to avoid.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

It's important to lead by example, too. Make sure your child's example of what not to do is not you.

Instead, demonstrate good habits including generosity with money. Kids might need help knowing where to start in terms of giving. Weaver suggests setting aside a portion of the family budget for charity.

Teach your children that there are three buckets—one for charity, one for immediate needs and one for savings and that charity can start at home. ■



The Center for Ballet Arts, Inc.
Presents

Nutcracker In A Nutshell
An abridged version of the beloved classic

Sunday, Dec. 18th - 1:00 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 18th - 5:00 p.m.

Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
4915 E Campus Dr, Alexandria, VA 22311

For tickets contact:
703 273 5344
www.thecenterforballetarts.com



"A TALE AS OLD AS TIME
[THAT] FEELS REFRESHINGLY NEW." *People*

DISNEY'S
**BEAUTY
AND THE
BEAST**

OLNEY THEATRE CENTER

NOVEMBER 9 – JANUARY 1

OlneyTheatre.org | 301-924-3400

All in This Together

Mental Health as a Family

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

What does it mean to approach mental health as a family? While children are among those who are experiencing a growing mental health risk, as a parent you might see it as a family problem with an individual solution. Connect a child with treatment and they will begin to heal, right?

While treatment can be an essential tool in the process, there's more you can do along the way. Here's how to take a family approach to mental health.

KNOWING WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Serving your child's needs often requires some research. Knowing what kids might be dealing with can ensure parents know what to look for so they can get kids treatment when they need it.

How common are mental health challenges in kids?

The CDC reported that 9.8% of children in the U.S. between the ages of 3 and 17 were diagnosed with ADHD, and of that age range, 9.4% were diagnosed with anxiety, 8.9% with other behavior problems and 4.4% with depression.

"I think a lot of youths are facing some repercussions from COVID," says Robyn Knecht, a school counselor for more than 18 years.

Now serving at St. Joseph's Indian School, a nonprofit residential boarding school in South Dakota, Knecht shares what she's noticed over the last few years.

"[Kids] have been disconnected from services they may have been getting and we're seeing the impacts of that. I think children can feel even more isolated than adults when their daily schedules are so disrupted."

With these extra pressures, it's no surprise that forming an accurate picture of what each individual child is dealing with might be difficult for parents and guardians.

It's not uncommon for children to have more than one disorder at a time, says Helen Egger, whose mental telehealth service Little Otter expanded to DC this summer. Egger is a child psychiatrist who has been in academic mental health for more than 30 years.

Some signs your child may be struggling include out of character behavioral changes, changes in their sleeping or eating habits, not keeping up with school work or hygiene and being late for things, she explains.

But mental health challenges can also present in different ways, notes Carrie Miller, who is a therapist and the clinical director of Ellie Mental Health Bethesda. Presentation can vary between children of different age



"[Kids] have been disconnected from services they may have been getting and we're seeing the impacts of that."

-Robyn Knecht, school counselor



groups, backgrounds, genders or environments, she says.

Sussan Nwogwugwu, the lead psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner at Done., a virtual platform for ADHD treatment, impresses the importance of noticing signs early so intervention can begin.

If mental health problems aren't treated they can significantly affect children's education and personal lives. By getting your child the help they need early on their self-esteem can improve, along with their overall mood regulation, she says.

LOOKING TO MOM AND DAD

It might be hard for a child to have the courage to ask for help or even let their parent know they are struggling. Parents can help by setting a good example in how they care for their own mental health.

"A lot of people see asking for help as a sign of weakness, but really it's a sign of strength. Parents can model that," Knecht says.

Parents should let their kids know that going to a counselor doesn't make them weak and won't get them in trouble. According to Knecht, parents can model positive behavior by talking about their own feelings and thoughts and sharing what helps them.

"Respond in a caring and supportive way to get your child the help they need," Knecht said, "When you have a broken arm you go to the doctor, it's the same for mental health."

Families can even go to therapy together.

Many treatment centers offer family therapy, a chance to be with your child each step of the way. One such place is Miller's mental

health center in Bethesda, which she opened with local resident, Shahzad Dastgir this summer. It's the first of six locations slated for Montgomery County.

What drew Dastgir to the franchise was the "authentic, fun and interactive way that Ellie provides mental health services," she says in a news release. With a comfortable environment that feels more like a friends house or a family home, it doesn't have to be intimidating.

Eggers' services take comfort even one step further and does provide service in the comfort of the family home. Founded with her daughter Rebecca, Eggers' telehealth service focuses on providing mental care to children ages 0-14 and the entire family.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Of course, parents also don't need to wait to respond to mental health concerns. There are ways to be proactive in creating a positive environment for your child.

Some basic tips from Egger, who is a parent herself, for providing a solid foundation for your child's mental health are to make sure they have a regular bedtime, set clothes and school supplies out the night before and have a regular, special way to say goodbye in the morning.

For families who need extra support in managing day-to-day family life, home-based community programs that take a whole-family approach can be beneficial.

Philadelphia-based Intercultural [Family Based Mental Health Services takes a holistic approach to serving youth ages 15-21 who are

living with families or caregivers and dealing with serious emotional disturbances.

Families work together with Youth Empowerment Trauma Resiliency Teams for eight months in the home, school and community setting.

Finding community resources that work for your family can take a lot of the pressure off doing everything right.

That's what Raena, a first-time mother in the Frederick area, expressed when she shared her experience working with Healthy Families Frederick on the program's website.

"I've been a part of Healthy Families since July of 2019. I was a new mom back then, and I was scared," she writes. "Healthy Families means so much to me, being a single mother. I didn't want to make any mistakes, but as we all know that's impossible not to make mistakes. I wanted to be the best parent I could be for my daughter."

The program, a service from the Mental Health Association of Frederick County, was designed specifically to help first-time parents through family-centered services. It has served more than 300 families in the past 11 years.

The program's description drives home the important role these services can play in childhood—and in adult mental health:

"A child's experiences in their earliest years can lay the foundation for health and well-being throughout their entire lives. A safe, healthy, and positive childhood can give children the tools and confidence they need to become self-sufficient, successful adults." ■



As a parent you want to protect your child from the harsh realities of the world and let them be a kid for as long as possible, but one day the question will come up. Why is that person sleeping outside? Where is their coat? What does that sign say?

Talking to Kids About Homelessness

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

As of 2019, more than half a million people experienced homelessness in the United States, according to the Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress.

As a parent, you want to protect your child from the harsh realities of the world and let them be a kid for as long as possible, but one day the question will come up, ‘Why is that person sleeping outside? Where is their coat? What does that sign say?’

These questions can be uncomfortable, but your answers will shape the way your child learns, grows and interacts with the world around them.

They may first see homelessness on TV, read about it in a book or encounter a homeless person face to face. Children are naturally curious and empathetic. As these cold months roll in, your children are going to notice when people aren’t inside or don’t have warm enough clothes.

Start out with simple, empathetic language when explaining homelessness—especially if your child is very young. Here are some ways to talk about why it happens and what you can do to help.

It Can Happen to Anyone

People become homeless for many reasons. Fleeing violence, loss of income, mental health challenges and natural disasters can all cause displacement. The important message to get across to your child is that something happened that caused a person to not have a home or safe place to go.

This is a good time to bring up homeless shelters. Tell your child that sometimes these shelters are full or there might be special circumstances preventing people from using them—such as being unable to house a beloved pet or having

a work schedule incompatible with the shelter’s curfew.

According to a 2021 study from the Becker Friedman Institute for Economics at the University of Chicago, 53% of people living in homeless shelters and 40% of unsheltered people are employed. People experiencing homelessness are not homeless by choice. Many are unable to work, and those who are able typically do.

Explain to your child that even though a person may work very hard, that person still might not have enough money to afford a home. This might be because of low income, too many other expenses or because the cost of where they were living increased.

It’s Often Temporary

The median spell of homelessness is 2.6 months, according to an article published in the Journal of Urban Economics. Some people are homeless for longer, but the important thing to convey to your child is that a homeless person will probably have a place to stay again soon.

There are Ways You Can Help

Talking to your kids about homelessness is not an easy conversation. It can evoke feelings of helplessness and sadness. To help your child process what they are learning and feel empowered, let them know that there are ways people can help and set a good example.

Homeless shelters rely heavily on donations and volunteers from the community to operate and provide the best care and support possible. Donating your time, money or items is a great way to help those experiencing homelessness and demonstrate generosity and compassion to your child.

Volunteering or dropping off items are the most visible ways to teach your child about helping those in need. The

most common items in demand for homeless shelters include underwear, socks, shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, soap, feminine hygiene products, laundry soap, clothing for cold weather, backpacks and deodorant. Check your local shelter's website for a list of needed items.

Another way to teach your child generosity is to go through their old toys with them and donate those in good condition, or go to the store and have them pick out one item to keep and one to donate to a homeless child.

Above all, remind your child that children experiencing homelessness are no different from them. They enjoy gifts and birthday parties and favorite foods. Learn how you can help locally together as a family. ■

A Party to Remember

Extra-Ordinary Birthdays partners with homeless shelters and other organizations that serve the homeless in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia to provide unique and imaginative birthday parties for children who are experiencing homelessness.

Founder Schinnell Leake, former owner of for-profit Extra-Ordinary Moments—which specialized in creating children's birthday parties—was inspired to create the nonprofit after she learned more than 2,000 children live in homeless shelters throughout the D.C. area.

Now she has thrown more than 800 parties with Extra-Ordinary Birthdays because, as a mother, she

knows how important it is for children to feel confident, valued and recognized.

"Each party costs approximately \$200 and we are largely dependent on community donations," says board chair Andrea Shearin.

To volunteer, sponsor or donate towards the cost of a party, learn more at extraordinarybirthdays.org or by calling 301-531-5196.

Learning and Giving

The Giving Tree is a parent-founded organization dedicated to teaching children about the importance and impact of helping those in need. This nonprofit based in Montgomery County, Pa. relies on volunteers and donations to provide those



in need with food, clothing and even school supplies.

The Giving Tree partners with other local organizations such as Cecil and Grace Bean's Soup Kitchen to feed those experiencing food insecurity, including people experiencing homelessness.

With an education-based approach, The Giving Tree is perfect for teaching children about the meaningful ways they can help their community. Learn more at 215-872-9328 and givingtreefamilies.org

FATCAMERA/E+/GETTY IMAGES



BarrieSchool

Give your child the gift of lifelong learning!

Join us to learn more!
Open House
Sunday
Jan. 8, 2023

Ask about our Millennium Scholarship for Grades 6-12

6 Weeks to Grade 12 barrie.org



Washington FAMILY

ADVERTISE in our **JANUARY ISSUE!**

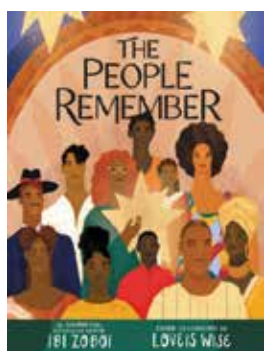
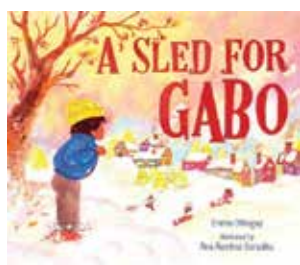
CAMPS AND INDOOR FUN and more news that parents need.

EMAIL us at advertising@washingtonfamily.com

OR CALL us at 301-230-2222, EXT. 2

SMART. LOCAL. PARENTING FOR THE DMV.
 Print | Digital | [f](#) [i](#) [t](#)





Holiday Stories to Warm Your Heart

14 Books That Celebrate the Season

BY LAUREN MARTINO, HEAD OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES,
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

This December, warm up with a hot beverage and a good book! These holiday reads available at Montgomery County Public Libraries will put you in the spirit of the season—no matter what you celebrate.

PICTURE BOOKS

"Little Red Ruthie: a Hanukkah Tale"
by Gloria Koster, illustrated by Sue Eastland

A hungry wolf wants to eat Little Red Ruthie! But why not wait until she's full from eight days of eating Bubbe Basha's latkes? And why not sample some latkes himself? A little girl who's brave like the Maccabees fools a greedy wolf in this Hanukkah take on Little Red Riding Hood.

"A Sled for Gabo"
by Emma Otheguy, illustrated by Ana Ramirez Gonzalez

In a sea of pale blue-and-white winter books, "A Sled for Gabo" glows warm and bright. Like in Ezra Jack Keats' "Snowy Day," the red-orange city sky and colorful houses provide a cheerful backdrop to a boy exploring his neighborhood-turned-winter-wonderland. Kind English-and-Spanish speaking family and neighbors help Gabo navigate his winter adventure with bags over sneakers for boots, Dad's hat, an unexpected sled and multiple paths for a boy feeling shy to make a friend.

"A Big Bed for Little Snow"
by Grace Lin

The look on Mommy's face says it all. She's telling Little Snow, "This bed is for sleeping, not jumping," but she knows what's going to happen. A snowflake pajama-clad little boy jumps and jumps and jumps to an end that is as predicted, but still surprising.

"The Christmas Cat"

by Maryann Macdonald, illustrated by Amy June Bates

"Jesus was beautiful, like all babies. And like all babies, he cried."

Have you ever seen an illustration of the nativity story where Mary and Joseph are at all ruffled at the demands of having a newborn? They are in this book. You just want to hug them. They are trying so hard. But it takes an irrepressible kitten bounding onto Mary's lap to stop the baby's tears—and kindle first friendship. Inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's drawings featuring the Madonna of the Cat.

EARLY ELEMENTARY

"The People Remember"

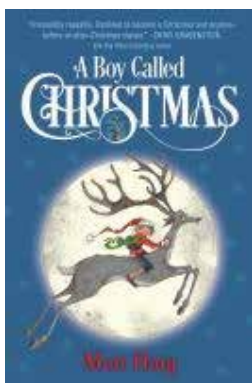
by Ibi Zoboi, illustrated by Loveis Wise

Read this book aloud. It traces the story of the African diaspora in verse, each epoch illustrating a different principal of Kwanzaa. There's a note at the back about lighting the kinara and what people do on each of the seven days of Kwanzaa. But this book's strength is in bringing to light the rich, difficult and beautiful history of why this holiday is celebrated. Well beyond December, this is a great selection for Black History Month, Poetry Month or nightly bedtime reading.

"The Christmas Mitzvah"

by Jeff Gottesfeld, illustrated by Michelle Laurentia Agatha

"A mitzvah. A good deed. But also a commandment. What God wants."



Can you love a holiday you don't celebrate? Al Rosen loved Christmas but celebrated Hannukah. In 1969, he offered to work for anyone who wanted to spend Christmas with their families and kicked off several decades of doing this for strangers, inspiring others of all faiths to help their friends and neighbors of different religions—sometimes with hilarious results.

"Petals"

by Gustavo Borges and Cris Peter

In this Brazilian import, a stranger comes to town, faced with a spreading coughing illness and bad news on the radio—sound familiar? Oddly prescient for a book written in 2018. The stranger spreads fun and healing with magic tricks and the petals of a mysterious flower. But when the visitor falls sick himself, a young boy looks for a way to return his love and kindness. This (almost) wordless graphic novel features anthropomorphic animals against a snowy woodland backdrop for a sentimental, bitter-sweet wintery journey.

"Weird but True! Christmas: 300 Festive Facts to Light Up the Holidays"

by National Geographic Kids

Did you know you could buy gingerbread-scented dog shampoo? Or that hot chocolate was once used as medication? Or that the amount of ribbon used to wrap presents every Christmas is enough to tie a bow around the whole planet? This colorful, engaging book filled to the brim with fascinating tidbits is handy for holiday conversation starters.

MIDDLE GRADE

"Dog Driven"

by Terry Lynn Johnson

McKenna has the chance to race her sled dogs over a historic dogsled mail route to raise awareness for Stargardt disease, which has caused her younger sister to lose her vision and her parents to become overprotective. What her parents don't know is that McKenna, too, is starting to lose her vision from the same disease. Historic letters punctuate a girl's struggle to lead her dogsled team to victory over snow and ice and show her family, and herself, what she's capable of.

"The Forgotten Girl"

by India Hill Brown

When Iris and Daniel sneak out to make snow angels one night, they don't worry about Suga's snow spirits—they're superstitions, right? Then they find the forgotten grave of Avery, a girl that starts haunting Iris' dreams and forging a jealous, demanding friendship with her. Research for a school project reveals that Avery's grave is part

of a neglected African American cemetery and Iris wants to help. Experiences at school have led her to feel forgotten, too. But how far will Avery go to be remembered? Will Daniel and his grandmother be able to save his best friend before it's too late? Ghost stories and history meld for a gripping winter read.

"A Boy Called Christmas"

by Matthew Haig

Stay with evil Aunt Carlotta, or find the father who left on a quest to prove the existence of elves? Thus begins the journey of Niklaus—nicknamed Christmas—a poor boy who can only remember receiving two Christmas presents his entire life and who only has a mouse and a reindeer for friends. Good thing he believes in magic and has a good heart to help him when he falls afoul of the head of the elf council—whose members staunchly oppose outsiders in his domain. He'll need all the help he can get. A wryly funny Santa origin story with exploding troll heads, mischievous reindeer and a search for one's life purpose that should appeal to fans of Roald Dahl and How to Train Your Dragon. Now a Netflix film.

TEEN

"Grand Theft Horse"

by G. Neri, illustrated by Corban Wilkin

Gail Ruffo always wanted a horse for Christmas. She just never thought she would be stealing hers back from her racing partners late one Christmas Eve night. Author G. Neri recounts the true story of his cousin: how she made a business deal with an unscrupulous lawyer to purchase her first racehorse, how that lawyer and his partners subjected her horse to harsh training methods and drugs and how she spent years dodging poverty, police and private investigators, fighting a corrupt system that values cash over horses' wellbeing. This graphic novel blends court drama, horse sense and a call to activism to protect the animals whose bones line "the path of human progress."

"One Way or Another"

by Kara McDowell

Paige is paralyzed by decision-making. In her mind, every choice she makes has the power to ruin her life. When she must choose between the trip of a lifetime to New York City with her mom or a cozy getaway with her best friend/unwitting crush for Christmas, there's no way to pick—except to use a Magic 8 Ball app and split her existence into two separate universes so we the readers can follow the consequences of each option. This fuzzy rom-com book bends the possibilities of fiction and explores life through the lens of anxiety.



Weathering the Cold

Winter Safety for Your Family

BY KIMBERLY BLAKER

Every year in the United States, approximately 20,820 children and teens are treated for injuries related to sledding, according to a U.S. emergency room analysis. A chilling 9% of these suffer traumatic brain injuries.

In Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania—where temperatures can fall below freezing, depending on the year—these aren't the only dangers of winter. Travel, snow removal, heating and even walking pose risks to children and adults alike. Families should prepare for cold-weather etiquette now, including safe winter play and staying warm and dry.

Review this winter safety guide with your family. In it, we focus on how parents and relatives spending time with kids during the holidays can ensure everyone stays safe in the cold.

WINTER PLAY

Sledding

This fun but potentially dangerous activity can result in injuries from falls, collisions or loss of control. Make sure children abide by these safety rules.

1. Dress in layers with waterproof outerwear.
2. Make sure sledding equipment is in good condition.
3. Don't sled in extremely cold temperatures or wind chills.
4. Never sled toward railroad tracks, roads, parking lots or bodies of water.
5. Stick to gradual hills with plenty of runoff.
6. Look for trees, signs, rocks and other sledders before heading down.
7. Never sled on icy surfaces or when visibility is poor.
8. Never stand or go down headfirst. Keep clothing, arms and legs within the sled.
9. If you stop or fall, quickly move out of others' way.
10. Never sled behind or be pulled by a car or other vehicle.
11. Children under age 12 should be supervised; they should ride along with children younger than age 5.

Ice Recreation

Frozen lakes and ponds are a big winter temptation, so make sure kids know these rules.

1. Never skate or walk on ice less than 4" thick and that isn't approved by an adult.
2. Never go on ice alone.
3. Follow the same direction of other skaters, and never cut directly in front of someone.
4. Make sure ice skates are neither too tight nor too loose. Blades should be sharpened and clean.
5. When playing hockey, wear a face mask, helmet and pads.
6. If your child falls through thin ice, don't attempt to pull your child out since you could fall through yourself. If ice is thick enough, have your child try crawling out by reaching their arms across the ice while kicking for momentum. Then go for help.

Snowmobiles, snowboarding and skiing

Fractures, abdominal injuries and even death are risks associated with these activities. Protect your family in the following ways.

1. Before skiing or snowboarding, obtain basic instruction from a professional on how to prevent and break falls.
2. Make sure boots and bindings fit properly and that all equipment is in good condition.
3. Wear helmets, goggles and waterproof outerwear.
4. Never go on the slopes alone. Make sure they're approved for the activity, and only go on those for which you have adequate experience.
5. Don't allow children under age 16 to drive snowmobiles.

BATTLING THE ELEMENTS

Walking in the winter cold

Make sure children have hats, mittens, scarves, waterproof boots and bright or reflective (but not white) outerwear when they head outdoors. Also, inform them:

- 1 If under age 10, don't cross streets alone in slippery conditions.
- 2 Walk on sidewalks when possible. If snow and ice make sidewalks impassible, walk on the street close to the curb and against traffic.
- 3 Don't wear anything that hinders vision or hearing when walking on or crossing streets. And never cross roads until cars are at a complete stop. ■

Kimberly Blaker is a freelance writer. She also owns an online store, Sage Rare & Collectible Books, specializing in out-of-print, scarce, signed, and first editions and fine bindings at sagerarebooks.com

When temperatures fall below freezing, travel, snow removal, heating and even walking pose risks to children and adults alike.

LOCAL WINTER SAFETY RESOURCES

- ✦ Frederick County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services on how to avoid fires from winter lighting and heating: <https://www.gearupfirerescue.com/safety/winter-fire-safety/>
- ✦ Frederick Health shares indoor and outdoor safety tips, including how to stay safe in a blizzard: <https://www.frederickhealth.org/news/2019/december/stay-safe-stay-warm-this-winter/>
- ✦ "No bulky coats in car seats!" and more essential tips from Safe Kids DC via Children's National Hospital: <https://riseandshine.childrensnational.org/winter-safety-tips-from-safe-kids-dc/>
- ✦ Don't make this holiday like "Home Alone" – anti-burglary tips from the Metropolitan Police Department in D.C.: <https://mpdc.dc.gov/page/winter-holiday-safety-tips>
- ✦ Learning how to fall, and other winter sport tips from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: <https://www.chop.edu/news/health-tip/perfect-10-winter-sports-safety-tips>
- ✦ Need a checklist? Delaware Safety Council's got one for winter food, car winterization and more: <https://www.delawaresafety.org/resources/Documents/Safety%20Documents/Winter%20Preparedness.pdf>
- ✦ CBS Baltimore shares driving safety experts' best advice on traveling in the snow: <https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/winter-driving-tips-for-baltimore/>
- ✦ Looking for a workshop or other helpful info to prepare for the season? Reach out to Safe Kids Baltimore, which also has coalitions in counties including Carroll, Howard and Montgomery. <https://www.safekids.org/coalition/safe-kids-baltimore>



Your best friend is waiting...

Montgomery County Humane Society is a private, non-profit, no-kill cat and dog rescue that does not receive any operational funding from the government or from national humane societies. It relies on the support of the community to keep its doors open.


Cats and dogs available for adoption today. Come meet your new best friend.

 MONTGOMERY COUNTY
HUMANE SOCIETY
Let's be humane together®


601 S. Stonestreet Ave.
Rockville, MD 20850
240-252-2555
mchumane.org

MARYLAND YOUTH BALLET

The Nutcracker





TICKETS



DEC 16-26
Montgomery College, Rockville

Find us on

Washington FAMILY

 **THE BETHESDA MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

 Join us for our **40th year**

ENROLLING NOW FOR 2023-2024
IN-PERSON ACADEMICS & AFTER CARE
8am – 6pm
7611 Clarendon Rd.
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-986-1260

Email us to learn more and tour the school
admissions@bethesdamontessori.com

www.bethesdamontessori.com

Jenna Liu

BY WF STAFF, PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID STUCK

Moms looking to meet other moms locally and carve out some space and time for themselves now have that option, thanks to Jenna Liu.

Founder of Sixx Cool Moms, a national network of social groups for moms, Liu launched its flagship chapter in Montgomery County, where she has lived since 2017. Now the network has 43 chapters in 17 states with 110,000 members, and Liu hopes to continue to grow nationally.

“We are the modern village for cool moms everywhere!” she says.

Born and raised in Staten Island, New York, Liu eventually landed in the Washington, D.C. area for college at American University and hasn’t looked back. She met her husband, Christian, a lifelong resident of Montgomery County, and they now live in Germantown with their daughter Poppy, 3.

Liu studied political science and was working as a political account executive with Fox5 DC until she decided to pursue Sixx Cool Moms full time in November 2020.

“I told my husband around August of 2020 that I felt like I had something big with Sixx Cool Moms, and I wanted to go all in,” Liu says.

From a small beginning—it started with just six women at the first meet up—Liu is proud of how far her idea has come. The extra “x” in the name nods to the female XX chromosome—representing the bond of womanhood she has been able to foster.

Learn more at sixxcoolmoms.com.

Sixx Cool Moms is about providing opportunities for moms to meet other parents, take time for themselves or even network. What in your own parenting journey inspired its creation?

In July of 2019, I was six months pregnant with my first child, Poppy. I realized quickly that although I had a wonderful support system of friends, they all lived nearly a one-hour drive away. It was important for me to build a community of mom friends that were local and likeminded. I didn’t know much about



being a first-time mom, but I knew how to be Jenna. I didn’t want to lose me entirely in the motherhood journey but wanted to add on to who I already was. Sixx Cool Moms is for moms who love their children but want time away from their family to explore their own interests and hobbies.

How do you balance work and family life, and what makes it easier?

At the end of each day, I put my phone on the charger upstairs and leave it there until the next morning. Although the internet never sleeps, what I am doing isn’t life or death, and almost any issue can wait until the morning.

What do you love about parenting?

The humor of it. Recently, my husband was away for the day, and it was just me and my daughter. Poppy requested to watch The Lion



FAMILY FAVORITES

Meal

BBQ Tofu Cauliflower Pizza

Vacation

We LOVE the beach. Any beach!

Local Spot in Mont. Co

Glen Echo Park. I worked there in college, and it always holds a special place in my soul. When I visit now, it still feels like home.

Parenting Tip

Erase the phrase 'I can't' from your home. It's not 'I can't,' it's 'I need your help.' I learned that one from Matthew McConaughey!

Activity to do with the Kids

We love taking Poppy to the DC museums, especially the Museum of Natural History

King. When Mufasa [fell] off the cliff, she frantically asked me to call her dad to make sure he was not in a stampede. It's those little silly moments that make my heart so happy.

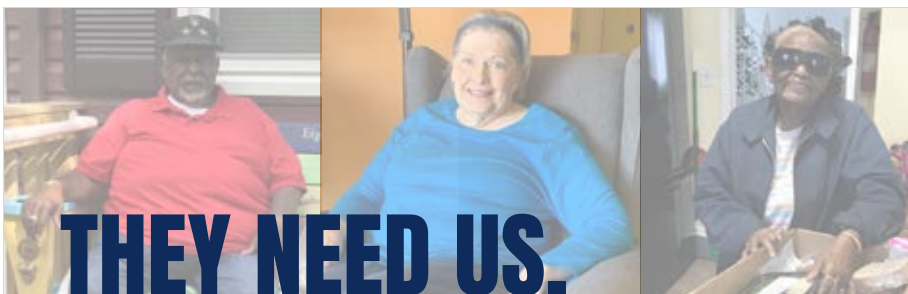
What has your experience with Sixx Cool Moms taught you?

I have learned to be patient and kind, but also assertive and no-nonsense. I trust my gut significantly more now than I did when I first started Sixx Cool Moms. The biggest lesson I have learned is to not make decisions in an

emotional state. When I stop to think logically, I feel more in control of the situation. Being logical can be incredibly hard in a job that lives on social media, but every day is a new day to try, learn, grow and keep on scrolling.

What's one thing you hope your kids learn from you and your career?

I hope my daughter inherits my creativity, but also my drive. Being creative is wonderful but having the drive to turn that creativity into success is where the magic lives. ■



You can help keep Maryland seniors nourished, safe, and connected.

Volunteer to pack or deliver meals, grocery shop, or make wellness calls.



Learn more or sign up to volunteer at mealsonwheelsmd.org/volunteer-application

Connections Through Correspondence

How Letter Writing Can Encourage Your Kids

BY PATTI GARIBAY



AMERICAN HERITAGE
GIRLS IS BRINGING
BACK THE
OLD-FASHIONED
ART OF LETTER
WRITING TO A
GENERATION OF
GIRLS DESPERATE
FOR MEANINGFUL
FRIENDSHIPS.

When was the last time you opened your mailbox with a twinge of excitement, wonder or glee? If you're anything like the rest of us, it's probably been a while.

As an adult, the word "mail" is synonymous with "junk," or worse yet, "bills." But think back to your younger days, when "snail mail" reigned supreme, and a letter with your name on it opened a world of possibility. Could it be a letter from a friend? A prize from a write-in contest? A card from grandma? Through our national Pen Pal Program, American Heritage Girls, a faith-based character and leadership development program for girls ages 5 to 18 with troops in counties including Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, Frederick and Camden, is bringing back the old-fashioned art of letter writing to a generation of girls desperate for meaningful friendships.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that youth who feel connected at school and at home are less likely to experience negative health outcomes related to sexual risk, substance use, violence and mental health. Humans were created to be in connection with one another—we thrive in true, authentic community. In a digital age where our kids are always on alert for fake, filtered and fame-seeking people, opportunities for true friendship can feel few and far between.

But offline, there's a world of opportunity away from the disappointment of low views or post likes. Putting pen to paper (in real life—not fingers to a keyboard!) helps develop critical written communications skills and the ability to focus while fostering a real connection between the writer and the recipient. Plus, kids can experience that same rush of dopamine they feel online when they open the mailbox to see a new letter (without the pendulum swing of emotion that toxic social media comparison inevitably brings).

Letter writing is woven into the fabric of our nation. I think of the letters First Lady Abigail Adams wrote to her husband—she poured out her heart, spoke her mind and dreamed of the future in those letters.

Instead of performing for the crowds on social media, what if your son or daughter could instead find one like-minded friend with whom they could confide and dream via mail? Kids of Gen Z and Gen Alpha are valuing genuine personal relationships more than ever before. Taking on a pen pal is one "vintage" but effective way to connect.

When I founded American Heritage Girls (AHG) nearly 30 years ago, I would have never believed that today over 55,000 members in all 50 states and 15 countries would be forming lifelong friendships through our program. For a lot of families, AHG is a haven away from the screen, giving their girls the opportunity to unplug, form life-giving relationships and discover new passions. We started the AHG Pen Pal Program to connect girls nationwide in 2005, just as people were beginning to chat online. Today, it's fostering offline friendships in a generation longing for deep, meaningful relationships. I recently heard from a family who embarked on an 8,000-mile road trip across the U.S. with two special stops—meet-ups for both daughters and their pen pals! You'd never know these girls hadn't met in person before. Their bonds made each joyful meeting feel like a reunion of old friends. In these days of isolation, don't we all want that sweet sense of acceptance and familiarity for our children?

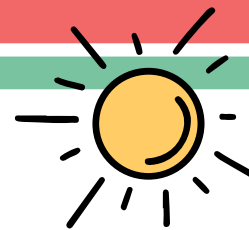
As we enter a new year, encourage your child to commit to one letter per month to a pen pal throughout all of 2023. Splurge on a few colorful pens or a pack of stickers and watch the creativity, thought and emotions flow. Soon she'll be eager to check the mailbox, just as you once were, hopeful for correspondence from her newfound connection ■

Patti Garibay is mom to four, grandmother to 11, and the founder & executive director of American Heritage Girls (AHG). AHG is the premier character and leadership development program for girls ages 5-18 that embraces Christian values and encourages family involvement. To learn more about the program or to find a Troop near you, visit americanheritagegirls.org



SAVE THE DATE!

JOIN US FOR A DAY
OF FAMILY FUN!



SUMMER CAMPS
& ACTIVITIES

2023  FAIR



Fair Oaks Mall, VA

11750 FAIR OAKS MALL,
FAIRFAX, VA 22033

SATURDAY
FEB 18 2023
NOON TO 3 PM



Montgomery Mall, MD

7101 DEMOCRACY BLVD.
BETHESDA, MD 20817

SUNDAY
FEB 26 2023
NOON TO 3 PM



REGISTER: [washingtonfamily.com/campfair](https://www.washingtonfamily.com/campfair)

WIN A
\$100
CAMP
SCHOLARSHIP!



For advertising opportunities contact us
at advertising@washingtonfamily.com
or call 410.902.2300, ext. 2

**Washington
FAMILY**





OPEN
INVITATION
TO

Wonder

VIRGINIA
BEACH
LIVE THE LIFE

VisitVirginiaBeach.com

