

# Washington FAMILY

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FEBRUARY 2021

DIY Blogger

## LINDSAY PONTA'S

*"Perfectly Imperfect" Life*

24 Creative Ways to say  
*"I Love You"*

THE LONG-TERM  
BENEFITS OF CAMP

Improve your child's  
dental hygiene habits



FEBRUARY 2021



CISCARON / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS, T

The benefits of camp last long after summer ends. Pg. 18



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## READERS' RESPONSES

We welcome your feedback on specific articles, overall themes and anything else related to editorial content. Email your comments to [info@washingtonfamily.com](mailto:info@washingtonfamily.com).

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

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WE WANT  
YOUR  
FEEDBACK



## OUR FUTURE LEADERS WILL COME FROM MONTESSORI

If the COVID-19 crisis has taught us anything, it is that we are part of an interdependent, fragile world. It has also taught us the vital importance of scientific thinking. Finally, it has taught us that problems of this magnitude and complexity require adaptive leaders who can work with others to create effective strategies around which all segments of society can coalesce.

Fostering an interdependent mindset, scientific thinking and adaptive leadership skills has been foundational to the Montessori approach to education since Maria Montessori launched her first school in 1907. These outcomes are natural by-products of the way Montessori classrooms function: teachers introduce concepts in a big-picture perspective, allowing students to move about freely and work in small groups, experimenting and engaging in self-directed projects. This structure provides many opportunities for students to practice leading teams and working together to accomplish a goal.



Sometimes parents ask, "How will my child be prepared for the real world?" Our answer is that Montessori principles are the very things our children need to learn to not only be successful in the world, but to improve the world. Montessori principles such as self-motivation, initiative, creative thinking, scientific theory, emotional intelligence, ethics, communication and leadership will be integral if we want to see a world that can better address the next global crisis.

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**FEBRUARY 2021**

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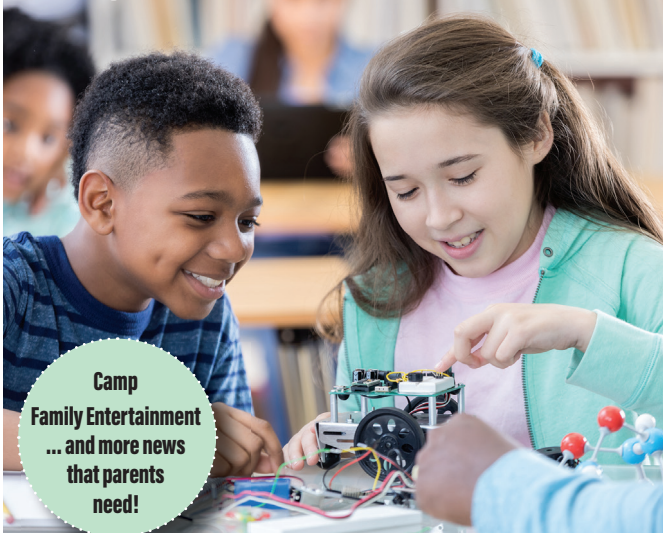
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# Love Languages

Even if you haven't read the bestselling book, you're probably familiar with the gist of "The 5 Love Languages." According to author Gary Chapman, there are five distinct ways that each of us prefers to give and receive love: words of affirmation, acts of service, gifts, quality time and physical touch. The key to building stronger relationships, whether with a spouse, a child or a friend, is to speak the other person's love language.

My first grader, for example, craves physical touch. He can't get enough hugs and kisses, loves to snuggle on the couch and is constantly climbing into my lap. My fourth grader, on the other hand, asks for hugs but really lights up when I can focus my attention on him. He feels loved when we have one-on-one time to take a walk, do a crossword puzzle or play a game together.

Keeping in mind that all children (and adults, for that matter) respond to different kinds of affection, we're sharing 24 creative ways to show them that you care. These ideas are perfect for Valentine's Day

or any day of the year. And to make February 14 even more special, we have a heart-shaped cookie recipe and a list of books about love and the other sweet parts of life.

Of course, February is also Black History Month, and there are so many important stories to share about the contributions of Black men, women and children to American history. We explore one of them in our interview with Louisa Jagger, author of a new children's picture book about James Herman Banning, the first Black man to fly a plane across the U.S.

Last year we were lucky to have Silver Spring mom Lindsay Ponta contribute crafty DIY projects for parents and kids. Get to know her better in this month's Parent You Should Know column.

I hope your February is filled with love and joy. Happy reading!

*PJ Feinstein*

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# HERE'S WHAT WE'RE **LOVING** FOR **YOU** AND YOUR **FAMILY** THIS MONTH

*For more product reviews, visit [nappaawards.com](http://nappaawards.com)*

By Elena Epstein/Director of the National Parenting Product Awards



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## EVEREDEN BABY LIP BALM

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## LULLA OWL

This soother and sleep companion provides the sounds of a natural heartbeat and breathing to comfort and support babies. It's soft, small and lightweight, with no plush filling, making it a safe option for most sensitive babies. \$39, ages birth+, lulladoll.com



## POTTY TIME ADVENTURES

This toy combines the design elements of an Advent calendar with a potty training chart to encourage and reward children. Available in three themes: Farm Animals, Dinosaurs and Busy Vehicles. \$24.99, ages 18 months+, liladvents.com



## "I AM KIND"

Enjoy this album imbued with joy and respect for children. Listeners gain both inspiration and practical tools, including suggestions for those who are neurodiverse. In addition to the original title song, the 16-song album includes Raffi favorites like "The More We Get Together" and "Des Colores." \$11, ages 2+, lindsaymunroemusic.com

# VIRTUAL SUMMER CAMPS & ACTIVITIES 2021 FAIR



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## February 26–28, 2021

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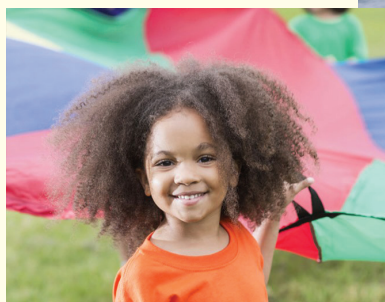
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This year, we're bringing our popular Summer Camps and Activities Fair to Facebook. Join us from February 26-28 on the *Washington Family's* Facebook page and website. Each day, we'll introduce you to summer camps for children of all ages: day camps, overnight camps, specialty summer programs and more.

- Meet area camp experts who will share their summer camp 2021 plans.
- Pick up a virtual tote bag featuring camp information and fun children's activities to download.
- Discover stories and more ideas to help your child have the best camp experience this year.

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Join in the fun of our online camp scavenger hunt. Enter our drawing to win a \$250 camp scholarship for your child.



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# Fall in Love

RECIPES

WF

## WITH VALENTINE'S DAY COOKIES

BY MICHAEL VYSKOCIL

**T**here's a certain amount of sweetness that comes during February. Cookies, it seems, are a way to reach anyone's heart—a task easily achieved with Valentine Heart Sandwich Cookies. These cookies are inspired by the famous Linzer torte named after the Austrian town of Linz where the torte originated. Sandwiched together by flavorful jams and dusted with a sprinkling of confectioners' sugar, these cookies contain a special ingredient found only in the heart—love.

### Valentine Heart Sandwich Cookies

Makes approximately 12 filled sandwich cookies

#### Ingredients

- 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling out dough
- 4 tablespoons cornstarch
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> teaspoon ground cinnamon
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cup blanched almonds
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- 3 tablespoons seedless black raspberry jam
- 3 tablespoons seedless strawberry jam
- 3 tablespoons apricot jam
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup confectioners' sugar, for dusting

#### Directions

**1** In a large mixing bowl, sift together flour, cornstarch and cinnamon. In the bowl of a food processor, pulse almonds until finely ground. Whisk almonds into flour mixture; set aside.

**2** In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and sugar on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 2 to 4 minutes. Add egg, vanilla and lemon zest; beat to combine, scraping down sides of bowl. With mixer on low, add almond-flour mixture; beat just until flour has been incorporated.

**3** Turn out dough onto a work surface; divide dough in half and shape each half into flat rounds. Wrap each round in plastic wrap; chill in refrigerator for at least 1 hour.

**4** Remove one round of dough from refrigerator and let stand until slightly soft. On a large piece of parchment paper dusted with flour, roll dough out to 1/8-inch thickness. Transfer parchment paper and dough to a baking sheet; refrigerate until firm, about 20 minutes. Repeat with remaining dough.

**5** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Remove one sheet of dough and parchment from refrigerator; working quickly, cut into heart shapes with a 3-inch heart cookie cutter. Cut out center from half the shapes with a 2-inch heart cookie cutter. Transfer hearts to prepared baking sheets spacing them about 1 inch apart; refrigerate until firm, about 15 minutes. (Either bake the cutout centers of the hearts or reroll them to make the larger hearts.)

**6** Bake, rotating pans halfway through, until cookies are crisp and lightly golden, about 15 minutes. Transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool completely. Spread a third of the uncut cookies with one flavor of each of the jams. Sift confectioners' sugar over cutout hearts. Just before serving, place cookies with cutout middles on top of uncut cookies, so that jam shows through the cutout. ■





# Lindsay Ponta

## Marketing Professional and DIY Blogger

BY PJ FEINSTEIN

of life, and I put a lot of pressure on myself to always just “make it work.” When my daughter was born, I realized I have to take care of myself so that she’s growing up with a strong, balanced mother instead of a harried, defeated one. For me, that meant prioritizing: My family comes first and then my job. My side business happens if I have the time, instead of between midnight and 3 a.m.

I’m constantly battling the urge to do it all—and to do it all perfectly, no less. I want to teach my daughter the concept of “good enough” so that she isn’t in my shoes 30 years from now trying to cram an extra eight hours into the day. Because as hard a time as I have practicing what I preach, I truly believe that in many situations, done is better than perfect.

### How do you find time to nurture your own creativity?

I started writing Shrimp Salad Circus in 2010, and it has been a constant in my life through a lot of change over those years. I find that having a network of friends—even virtual ones—pushes me to keep creating.

Lately, I find that I’m making for the memories rather than just for the heck of it. I sewed up matching shirts for our last pre-pandemic trip, and I adore those photos because my daughter thought that matching with mommy was the coolest. I’m sure that when the teenage years hit, and matching with mom is cringeworthy, I’ll treasure them all the more!

### What do you love about being a mom?

I barely remember my first few weeks of parenthood because breastfeeding had us awake for a feed every three hours. One night I zombie-shuffled over for a diaper change, and as soon as I got the diaper off, my 8-pound little person shot poop 5 feet across the room, taking out a couple teddy bears along the way. I started laughing so hard that I woke up my husband, who ran off to get scissors to cut off the onesie.

I can’t stand it when people tell stressed-out, sleep-deprived new parents to treasure every moment. Sometimes there’s a blowout or a

grocery store tantrum when you have nothing left to give that day. But the unshiny moments sometimes end up being treasures that you can still laugh about until your stomach hurts years later, and I love the daily accumulation of those perfect little surprise moments.

### What’s your biggest parenting fail?

I like to think that we’re all doing the best we can with the circumstances we’re given, so I try not to think of anything as a parenting fail. But the area where I feel like I most often let myself down is modeling that it’s more important to do the right thing than to do the easy or comfortable thing. I feel a huge responsibility to guide my daughter toward becoming an empathetic, caring adult who stands up for others and is vocal against injustice but also treats her own time and mental health as the precious things they are. That’s a hard thing to navigate when you haven’t mastered it yourself.

### What’s your favorite way to spend a weekend with your family?

We love to hike and are lucky to have so many wonderful places for it in the region, so we started calling our weekend hikes “adventures.” We have an adventure song that we chant as we meander. We find treasures (sticks and leaves) along the way and try to spot animals like baby frogs, not-so-baby snakes, deer, squirrels and hedgehorns. They’re hedgehog unicorns, and they’re exceptionally rare.

### How will you be celebrating Valentine’s Day this year?

Valentine’s Day, like all recent holidays in our home, will be a very handmade affair. Every few months, we put together craft kits for some of our little friends, and then we drive around for a day dropping them on doorsteps. It helps us feel connected to the friends who feel like family and who we miss terribly. My self-proclaimed “little present elf” is always worn out by the end of the day, and my craft supply stash is a little bit more manageable. ■

If you’ve enjoyed any of the DIY projects we’ve published over the past year, you have *Washington FAMILY* contributor Lindsay Ponta to thank. For more than 10 years, Ponta has been inspiring busy people to explore their creativity on her curiously named DIY and craft website, Shrimp Salad Circus. These days, however, she’s spending less time blogging and more time attending to family—husband Andrei and their 3-year-old daughter—and her day job at a nonprofit.

Here, the Silver Spring mom tells us about her “perfectly imperfect” life.

### What’s the hardest part about juggling motherhood and your career?

I’ve struggled with severe anxiety for much



# Creative Ways to Tell Your Child

## 'I Love You'

Heart-warming  
ideas for  
Valentine's Day  
and any day  
of the year

By Kimberly Blaker

**V**alentine's Day is a perfect holiday to show your child how much he or she is loved. Try these creative ideas to show how much you care on Valentine's Day and any day throughout the year.

### Edible Ideas

**A HEART A DAY** Add a heart-shaped candy to your child's lunch box every day of the school year. Be sure to stock up during clearances after Valentine's Day so that you don't run out.

**HEART-SHAPED LUNCH** Use a large, heart-shaped cookie cutter to make heart-shaped sandwiches, toast and other treats. Your kids will love the shape once you've eliminated the crust.

**A CUPFUL OF LOVE** Give your child a "World's Greatest Son," "World's Greatest Daughter" or "I Love You" cup. Use it when you serve hot cocoa or graham crackers and milk.

**DO LUNCH** Pick up your child from school for a surprise lunch date. Order carryout from your kid's favorite restaurant or go on a picnic if the weather is pleasant.

### The Written Word

**A POET AND DIDN'T KNOW IT** You don't have to be a poet to write a poem for your child. If poetry isn't your strength, look up simple children's rhymes. Then make revisions,

especially for your child. Poems can be serious or fun, but either way, your child will love them.

**A VALENTINE WELCOME** Welcome your child home from school with a Valentine banner across your front porch or entryway. Add cute sayings that remind your child why he or she is special. Create fun sentences by clipping words from magazine ads and add some Valentine doodles.

**SNAIL MAIL SURPRISE** Kids love to get mail. Why not send your child a card, letter or postcard? Don't forget to let your child check the mail to discover the greeting.

**SAY IT WITH EMAIL** Send your child an email with a link to a fun website or a funny animated e-greeting. With the abundance of

entertaining websites and free e-greetings, you can send your child something new every day of the year.

**SCRABBLE GREETINGS** Wish your child a "Happy Valentine's Day," congratulate him or her on a great report card, or show how much you appreciate your child's help with a Scrabble message. For younger readers, spell out a simple phrase leaving a space between words. For older kids, make them figure out your greeting. Intersect the words as you would in playing Scrabble and see if they can solve the message.

**C IS FOR...** Make a poster portraying your child's characteristics. Put your child's name at the top. List as many positive descriptive words as you can that begin with your child's initial. Use a thesaurus to find oodles of words. For example, for Cassandra, you could have cute, caring, creative, crafty and curious. When you finish, laminate or frame it and hang it in your child's room.

**POETRY PRAISE** Give your child a poetry book written especially for sons or daughters such as "To My Son with Love" or "To My Daughter with Love on the Important Things

in Life”, written by Susan Polis Schultz. These books offer encouragement and a new understanding of your love for and commitment to your child. Don’t forget to add your personal inscription inside.

## Do It Together

**LOVE IS SILLY** One thing kids love and do best is act silly, so loosen up and join in the fun. If being silly isn’t your style, take a few lessons from your child and practice. Letting loose is a great way to reduce stress and to let your children know they’re fun to be around.

**A GIFT OF TIME** For today’s busy parents, finding time to read to or play with your child isn’t always easy. Fortunately, quality, rather than quantity, is what matters most. Show your child you care by setting aside a few minutes each day to talk, read or play together. You’ll both reap the rewards.

**A CLASS CONNECTION** As kids grow, together time becomes increasingly rare. Decide with your adolescent on an activity or hobby the two of you would enjoy together. Sign up for a class or set a regular schedule for the activity. Then mark it on your calendar.

**A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE** Flip through photo albums or watch family videos together.

Reminisce about favorite holidays, vacations and family times you’ve had together.

**EVENTFUL GIFTS** Get tickets to a virtual concert or sporting event your kids have been dying to see. But keep it a surprise. On the day of the event, say you’re holding a family meeting or some other concoction. Catch your kids by surprise when you tune in to the event.

**MAKE A DATE** Plan a regular date with your child for one-on-one time. This strategy works exceptionally well for families with more than one child. Each parent should take a turn with each child. You can pick up carryout for lunch or supper, build a snowman together or take a wintry walk in the park. Set a regular schedule so that your child can look forward to your dates together.

## Gifts from the Heart

**FLOWERS FOR HER** Arrange fresh flowers for your daughter to brighten her room and her day.

**RACE CARS FOR HIM** Clip sports cars from magazines for your son and post them on a bulletin board in his room.

**ENGRAVE YOUR THOUGHTS** Have a necklace or bracelet engraved for your child. Be sure to

include his name, your sentiments and who it’s from.

**VAN GOGH IN THE MAKING** Sift through your child’s art collection and select a piece to display. Then mat, frame and hang it in a room other than your child’s for everyone to see.

**PHOTOS SAY A THOUSAND WORDS** Choose several pictures of your child from infancy through the present. Then use paper edgers and trim them into different sizes and shapes. Overlap and tape them to the backing of a frame using double-sided tape. Add matting and frame the collage.

**IT’S IN THE WRAPPING** Don’t wait for a special occasion to give your child a gift. Kids love presents. The next time you pick up something for your child, wrap it as a surprise. Don’t forget the ribbon—the gift will take longer to unwrap with one—and include a small gift card that says how much you appreciate your child.

**SCRAPBOOKING FUN** Put together a memory scrapbook of your child. Use photos, locks of hair, vacation postcards and ticket stubs. Dedicate each page to a special holiday, event or theme. Include dates and any details you remember, along with cute sayings and stickers to fit the themes. ■

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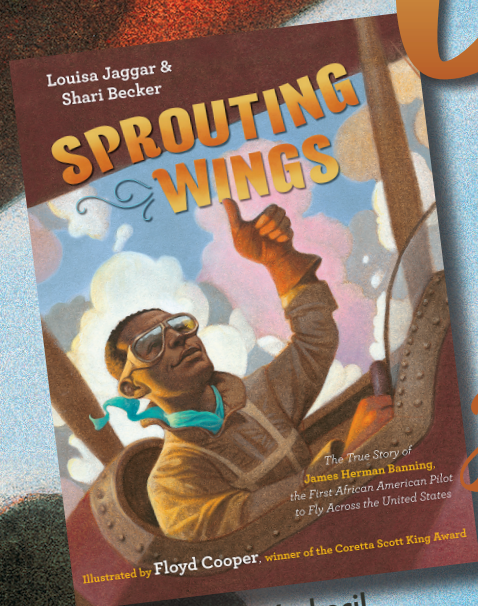


# 'SPROUTING WINGS'





# Pursuing Dreams



By Michael Vyskocil

New children's picture book by Louisa Jaggar tells story of first Black airman to fly across the U.S.

**A**s a farm boy growing up in Oklahoma around the turn of the 20th century, James Herman Banning dreamed big. He dreamed of one day touching the sky. But how could Banning, a young African American boy, find a plane much less locate someone who could teach him?

In a new children's picture book "Sprouting Wings: The True Story of James Herman Banning, the First African American Pilot to Fly Across the United States" (Crown Books for Young Readers, 2021), author Louisa Jaggar shares Banning's story of pursuing a dream that would ultimately span 3,300 miles in 21 days across one nation. Jaggar, who lives near Washington, D.C., is the co-founder of Greatest Stories Never Told, a nonprofit that shares the untold stories of minority and women STEM heroes. Jaggar weaved together more than seven years of research, including personal accounts written by Banning himself and an interview with Banning's great-nephew, to create this account of one individual's historic mission to become the first Black man to fly from Los Angeles to New York City.

In honor of African American History Month, *Washington FAMILY* invites you to explore with your children Banning's story and its message of moving beyond doubt in the pursuit of accomplishing your dreams. We spoke with Jaggar about her desire, along with co-author Shari Becker and researcher Pat Smith, to make sure Banning's life and legacy weren't forgotten.





SHARI BECKER



LOUISA JAGGAR



FLOYD COOPER

*"We were gifted with the artistry of Floyd Cooper (winner of the Coretta Scott King Award for his illustration work), who captures Banning's emotions so completely and beautifully in the illustrations of "Sprouting Wings.""*

**Why do you think James Herman Banning's story is relevant for children today?**

So many children are taught that the heroes who shaped America were white. But we know that is not the real America. Our America is filled with heroes from all ethnicities, genders, religions and sexualities. During our research, we found over 90 articles written about Banning. In 1932, he was a superhero to many people. Yet most people have never heard his name because 89 of those articles we read were published in African American newspapers. Books such as "Sprouting Wings" give all children the chance to see themselves in the heroes who shaped our country.

**What inspires you the most about Banning and his quest to take to the sky in flight?**

I admire so many things about Banning—most of all that he built his own plane to earn his solo hours and gain his pilot's license. Would you build your own car in order to earn your driver's license? No pilots would let him fly their planes because he was Black. But that prejudice didn't stop him. He ordered a Jenny Biplane manual that gave instructions on how to put an airplane together. He took parts from crashed biplanes and parts from salvaged automobiles and built a flightworthy craft. Wow! Think of the ingenuity combined with passion and determination.

**What are some of the ways you hoped to capture this idea for children in this book?**

We were gifted with the artistry of Floyd Cooper (winner of the Coretta Scott King Award for his illustration work), who captures Banning's emotions so completely and beautifully in the illustrations of "Sprouting Wings." All of Banning's dialogue in the book is taken from his own words and the many articles he wrote about his journey. We also wanted to capture Banning's love of flying from the time he was a child and throughout his adulthood.

**What was it like to interview the aviator's great-nephew for this book?**

I had a fabulous time interviewing Philip Hart, a truly gifted storyteller. Philip Hart shared family stories and made me and researcher Pat Smith feel as if we were getting to know Banning personally. He gave me permission to write the story, and it was an honor to do so.

**How were you able to connect with this individual for your research?**

Philip Hart had written a number of articles about Banning. We called and asked if we could meet with him. We were able to meet with him numerous times. Meeting in person was a gift because it's rare to be able to interview a relative or someone with such a close connection to your subject.

**What were some of the challenges and surprises you encountered along the way in your research and writing?**

Challenges? There are three different death certificates for Banning. Each had a different cause of death and told a different story. We had to slow down and research carefully to find the truth. Checking and double-checking sources was crucial. One of the best surprises that came our way was when Pat Smith found Thomas Cox Allen's manuscript in the bottom of a mouse-chewed box in the attic of an Oklahoma museum. Allen was Banning's mechanic on the flight, and he wrote down all the details of the flight as well as all the names of the people who donated and helped along the way to make their historic flight possible.

**What is the biggest takeaway you hope to leave with readers of your book?**

When communities come together, they can do almost anything. Twenty-four communities and over 72 people made the Banning flight possible. The second takeaway is that some of the heroes who contributed to the Golden Age of Flight were Black men and women determined to follow their dreams. They did so even though their paths were filled with people and laws that tried to hold them down on what to them was "freedomless ground." Banning was resilient, showed grit and worked incredibly hard for his dream—that might make three takeaways. Being resilient is important in life and particularly important when you fly against the odds. ■



A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a dog's face, likely a Weimaraner, with brown and white fur and striking green eyes. The dog is looking slightly to the left of the camera.

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# Thanks for

A young boy with short blonde hair is sitting on a wooden dock, seen from behind. He is looking out over a calm lake with green trees and bushes in the background. The scene is bright and sunny, with the water reflecting the light. The boy is wearing dark swim trunks.

**Former campers,  
now adults, reflect  
on lessons learned  
at summer camp**

**By PJ Feinstein**



# the Memories

A young boy with short blonde hair, seen from behind, sits on a wooden dock. He is looking out over a calm pond that reflects the surrounding greenery. The background is filled with lush trees and foliage under a bright sky. The title 'the Memories' is written in a large, orange, cursive font across the top of the image.

Anyone who attended camp as a kid will tell you that there's more to the experience than simply staying busy when school's not in session. Sure, it's fun, but there are benefits of being a camper that linger long after the summer—and even childhood—ends.

"Camping experiences push a child's boundaries in the best way possible," said Barry A. Garst, Ph.D., an associate professor of youth development leadership at Clemson University. According to Garst's research, camp improves social skills, builds self-confidence and gives kids a sense of independence. Additionally, the majority of camp alumni he surveyed credited their camp experiences with their success as adults.

Washington FAMILY spoke to five former campers to learn what they loved about camp and how their experiences shaped them into the adults they are today.



JENN  
ZUSSMAN

## JENN ZUSSMAN

**Camp:** Camp Louise

**Location:** Cascade, Maryland

**Years attended:** 10

I don't know if I necessarily chose Camp Louise. I think it was just a given. My mom went there—she was a camper and a counselor—and always spoke so highly of it. When it was my turn to go to sleepaway camp, I didn't even think about any other options. I just knew we would continue to legacy.

Louise is an all-girls camp, and that really helped me develop a lot of my self-confidence. As a young girl, I became much more self-conscious when I was around boys; I wasn't able to really be my true self. At camp, especially an all-girls camp, you really take away all of the vanity. It's simply focused on friendships and just having fun and discovering who you are at a very vulnerable age. Camp helped me become much more confident and comfortable in my skin.

You become a trainee when you're 14, and then you become a counselor's assistant. So even at a young age, they're giving you roles and responsibilities and allowing you to make judgment calls. Whereas in the real world, you're still looked upon as too young, in camp, even as a young teenager, you are looked upon as someone who has decision-making skills and is competent. That helps prepare you and gives you the confidence you need to say, "Yeah, I might be young, but I can still be very successful. And my opinion matters."

## BEN KLINGER

**Camp:** Capital Camps

**Location:** Waynesboro, Pennsylvania

**Years attended:** 10

My parents were looking for a Jewish sleep away camp that kept kosher for me and my brothers. A local agency referred them to a man named Steve Makoff who was starting a brand new camp that year called Capital Camps. Steve came to our house to pitch my parents on the idea, and my brother and I became the first and second campers ever enrolled in Capital Camps history.

While I have fond memories of activities such as sports, art, Israeli dancing and boating, it is the people who I have kept a place in my heart forever. In fact, four of the seven groomsmen at my wedding were friends of mine from Capital Camps.

I don't know if camp gave me any specific "skills" as that is not really what it was intended to do. However, what camp did do was help me as a young man become more independent and develop more self-confidence. To have to be responsible for yourself because your parents are there to do everything for you at a young age is really

beneficial in the development of a child.

Camp also taught me the importance of supporting the Jewish community, which my wife and I enthusiastically do today. Camp helped me become a better leader and a better public speaker, which has benefitted me tremendously in my professional career. And, most importantly, I believe camp taught me to slow down and appreciate the moments in life that are truly worth appreciating. That is a lesson that a lot of us as adults struggle with because of the fast pace of our daily lives.

## SARAH SHAH

**Camp:** Camp Tel Noar

**Location:** Hampstead,

**New Hampshire**

**Years attended:** 12

Being at a sleepaway camp forces you to become more independent and trust that you can take care of yourself without your parents present. I learned a lot about living with others and not always getting what I wanted; for example, we had a "shower order" and a few times each summer you'd have the last shower, which would inevitably be a cold one! We also had to clean our own area and our bunks daily, which certainly didn't make me great at cleaning (as my mom can attest), but it did teach me the importance of working as a team and trying to have fun while doing it. We'd blast fun music and dance around while cleaning each morning.

Another great thing about camp is that it allowed me to try activities I might not have tried otherwise. Whether it was sailing, ceramics or archery (which I surprised myself by loving), camp gave me those opportunities to explore.

Probably the most useful skill I learned at camp was how to care for and deal with younger children. Once I became a CIT and then counselor, I was suddenly in charge of helping little girls as young as 8 adjust to being away from their parents for the first time. I learned how to comfort a camper experiencing homesickness, how to help solve fights between friends and how to have the "warm-strict" balance that I still use today as a middle school teacher.

## DAN HAYDEN

**Camp:** Lake Owego Camp

**Location:** Greeley, Pennsylvania

**Years attended:** 4

There are a number of great memories from Lake Owego: the river canoeing trip where I rescued a bunkmate's capsized canoe, winning both a basketball and softball tournament against other camps in the area and the friendships that were made with people from all over the East Coast.



BEN  
KLINGER



SARAH  
SHAH





DAN  
HAYDEN

The biggest skill that I learned is to be able to be an advocate for myself. You are, in a good way, on your own at a residential camp. You quickly learn to speak up for yourself in most situations.

My camp experience helped me grow as a person overall, from learning to appreciate the cultures and experiences of those from another part of the country to gaining confidence in myself as an individual. It likely, although unknown at the time,



STEPHANIE  
PHILLIPS

turned me into a person who is now a camp professional as the director of Barrie Camp.

### STEPHANIE PHILLIPS

**Camp:** Congressional Camp

**Location:** Falls Church, Virginia

**Years attended:** 10

My favorite memories of camp are the special events. We have big campus-wide relays and something called Congo Conquest at Congressional that is like a

color war. The biggest takeaway for me from camp was the friendships that I built, these long-lasting friendships. You see the same people year after year, and you spend a significant amount of time with them over the summer, so you really get to develop those close bonds.

My camp experience is one of the things that guided me toward the path of teaching. I fell in love with the programming and the people, and then I continued to work there when I became a teenager and an adult. That encouraged me to work with children.

I love the educational learning environment, but camp is such a special place because kids just get to be kids. They don't have the academic pressures, and those kids who might not shine in the classroom or might not shine in a school environment really thrive in a camp setting. They get to have these different experiences where they can push themselves and maybe do something out of their comfort zone. Camp programs give such a variety of choices so that kids can do what they want to do, but within that they're also trying new things. It gives them flexibility in their thinking, and when they go back to school or get a job in the future, they can rely on those experiences and just be a little bit more confident in themselves. ■

# Listen. Learn.

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# 2021 SUMMER CAMP Directory

**W**ith each new milestone that our children reach comes the need for information to guide them (and us) through this stage. This is particularly true when our children are old enough to attend summer camp. How do we know which camp is right for them? In an education-centered community like ours, there can be a lot of options—where do we even get started? Right here, actually, with these listings. Read about these camps, what they offer and the ages they serve. Then visit their websites to learn more. On our website, WashingtonFAMILY.com, you can find even more listings to help you in your search. Be sure to check back on our website and in our magazine in upcoming months for more stories and helpful tips.

**Note:** *The camps on the following pages were still planning to be open as we went to press; however, that may change as we get closer to summer. Please be sure to contact the camps directly for up-to-date information about their operating status.*

Good luck! Here's to a great summer.



## DAY CAMPS

### MARYLAND

#### SPRING BILINGUAL MONTESSORI SUMMER CAMP

Ages: 2.5-6  
spring-bilingual.org  
info@spring-bilingual.org  
301-962-7262

3514 Plyers Mill Road  
Kensington, MD  
Categories: Sibling Discount,  
Extended Day, Arts, Educational  
Activities

#### SUMMER AT SANDY SPRING

Ages: 3-Grade 12  
SASS.Camp@ssfs.org  
301-774-7455 x167  
16923 Norwood Road  
Sandy Spring, MD  
Categories: Traditional Day, Day  
Camp, Coed, Swimming Daily,  
Custom Schedule

## DAY CAMPS

### VIRGINIA

#### BROOKSFIELD SUMMER CAMP

Ages: 3-10  
brooksfeldschool.org

camp@brooksfeldschool.org  
703-356-5437 ext. 2  
1830 Kirby Road, McLean, VA  
Categories: Extended Day, Arts,  
CIT, Cooking, Dance, Educational  
Activities, Field Trips, Hiking,  
Horseback Riding, Music, Sports,  
Swimming, Yoga

#### CAMP GRIFFIN AT WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

Ages: 3-14  
westminsterschool.com  
campgriffin@westminsterschool.com  
703-340-7268  
Westminster School  
3819 Gallows Road  
Annandale, VA  
Categories: Day Camp, Boys &  
Girls, Sibling Discount, Extended  
Day, Arts and Crafts, Cooking,  
Dance, Field Trips, Music, Sports,  
Swimming, Travel

#### SUMMER DANCE CAMP/ INTENSIVE AT THE CENTER FOR BALLET ARTS

Ages: 3-adult  
thecenterforballetarts.com  
ctrballetarts@aol.com  
703-273-5344  
3955 Pender Drive



Suite 105, Fairfax, VA  
Categories: Teens, Sibling  
Discount, Arts & Crafts, Dance,  
Drama

#### PINECREST PAVILION AT PINECREST SCHOOL

Ages: 4-12  
pinecrestschool.org  
camp@pinecrestschool.org  
703-354-3446  
7209 Quiet Cove, Annandale, VA  
Categories: Sibling Discount,  
Extended Day, Arts, Computers,  
Cooking, Drama, Educational  
Activities, Field Trips

#### PRINCESS DANCE CAMP

Ages: 3-6  
Affiliation: Cuppett Performing

Arts Center  
CuppettPAC.com  
CuppettPACdance@gmail.com  
703-938-9019  
135 Park St. SE  
Vienna, VA  
Categories: Day Camp, Girls  
only, Sibling Discount, Arts and  
Crafts, Dance, Drama/Theatre,  
Music.

#### RESTON MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Ages: 3-9  
restonmontessori.com  
office@restonmontessori.com  
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# 2021 EDUCATION *Directory*



Now more than ever, parents are thinking about where to send their children to school and the various possibilities.

Our Education Directory is filled with listings of school opportunities for your children from classic to STEM to Waldorf and more!



## PRIVATE SCHOOLS

### BROOKSFIELD SCHOOL

brooksfieldschool.org  
sarah@brooksfieldschool.org  
703-356-5437

1830 Kirby Road, McLean, Va.

**Ages Served: 3-10**

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

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### FEYNMAN SCHOOL

feynmanschool.org  
admissions@feynmanschool.org  
301-770-4211

11810 Falls Road, Potomac, Md.

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### GLENBROOK COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL

glenbrookschool.org  
membership@glenbrookschool.org  
301-365-3190; 10010 Fernwood Road  
Bethesda, Md.

**Hours: 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

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

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### GOOSE CREEK PRESERVE

goosecreekmontessori.com  
info@goosecreekmontessori.com  
571-417-3999

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## HOLLY BROOK MONTESSORI SCHOOL

preschoolmontessori.com  
info@hollybrookmontessori.com  
703-573-7800

2455 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring, Va.

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### HUNTER MILL

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preschoolmontessori.com  
info@huntermillmontessori.com  
703-938-7755

2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, Va.

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### MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF CEDAR LANE

preschoolmontessori.com  
info@cedarlanemontessori.com  
703-560-4379

3035 Cedar Lane, Fairfax, Va.

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### MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF MCLEAN

mcleanmontessori.org  
703-790-1049  
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[pinecrestschool.org](http://pinecrestschool.org)

[admissions@pinecrestschool.org](mailto:admissions@pinecrestschool.org)

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### RESTON MONTESSORI SCHOOL

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703-481-2922  
1928 Isaac Newton Sq. West, Reston, Va.  
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# No Comparisons

## Measuring children's development during the pandemic

BY ERICA RIMLINGER

**S**ince the COVID-19 pandemic began in March, child development specialist Dr. Mary L. O'Connor Leppert has noticed a significant drop in referrals to the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program, the state's early intervention program. Referrals have also declined at Kennedy Krieger Institute, where clinicians diagnose and treat pediatric developmental, behavioral and mental health disorders.

The drop appeared so steep that Leppert checked the numbers. When comparing referrals from March through August 2019

to the same months in 2020, she found Kennedy Krieger Institute's referrals for children younger than age 4 had declined 41% overall, with variations based on programs. The drops in program enrollment included a 35% reduction in medical referrals, a 47% reduction in behavior referrals and a 69% reduction in mental health referrals.

Leppert, a member of the medical staff at Kennedy Krieger Institute's department of neurodevelopmental medicine, is the director of its Center for Development and Learning and co-director of its Infant



Neurodevelopment Center. She wondered what was keeping kids away from diagnosis and services.

### **What happens when you can't 'trust your gut'?**

The question “brought me back to my initial training in development,” says Leppert. She asked herself, “How do children come to the attention of the professionals who can help them?” First, parents can “trust their gut” with their kids to “identify when something's not right.” Early childhood educators and pediatricians make up two potential developmental delay identifiers.

“Access to all of these appraisals is different now,” says Leppert. “I don't know what's happening, but these are the factors I see coming into play.

“We say ‘trust your gut’ to parents,” says Leppert, but gut instincts are now hampered by social distance. In these circumstances, parents no longer see their child interacting in a normal social context. Humans are social animals, but under pandemic restrictions, kids are no longer “playing or having much interaction with children outside their household,” she says.

Leppert and her colleagues recently submitted an editorial to the journal *Pediatrics* that states, “As families isolate, parents do not have the same opportunity to draw comparisons with other children to appraise development.”

Comparison is key to identifying developmental issues, Leppert believes, because developmental milestones are based on collective averages. Today, however, first-time parents can't compare their child's development to that of other children. Even experienced parents have fewer opportunities to compare their child to children outside their family. In these circumstances, only “the youngest child of a mother of multiple children” might be well-positioned to spot developmental differences, says Leppert.

The experience of daycare and school also places parents at a disadvantage to meet and interact with other families. While some preschools and daycares continue to be closed, even the ones that are open enforce strict limitations on interaction between families and children at school and at “aseptic” drop-off and pickup times.

Teachers and daycare providers, who occupy the next tier of familiarity in children's lives, no longer have the face-to-face interaction they used to have.

Declines in pediatric wellness checks may also impact screening for physical and cognitive development, including social, learning and behavioral differences, autism spectrum disorders and genetic syndromes.



## **PARENTS SHOULDN'T BE AFRAID TO “TRUST THEIR GUT” WHEN IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS WITH THEIR CHILDREN.**

A 2020 University of Oregon Rapid Assessment of Pandemic Impact on Early Childhood (RAPID-EC) study found that 28% of families were missing a well-child visit since the pandemic outbreak began.

“Diagnosing and addressing these issues as early as possible is essential for achieving optimal outcomes over time,” the study's research team notes. “If barriers to childhood preventative health measures are not addressed as the coronavirus pandemic continues, we are likely to see many children experience serious health consequences.”

### **What are the risks for referral decline?**

Leppert sees another risk from the decline in early identifications. Problems that parents may label as behavioral may instead have a root cause in developmental issues. “The younger the child presents with behavior problems, the more likely they are to have an underlying developmental cause,” Leppert says.

Not all behavior changes indicate a developmental issue, Leppert says. “Children are living in environments of stress—because parents are living in environments of stress—and there are going

to be behavior problems from that.”

Child development services can help develop the skills we now lack the opportunity to practice in our daily lives. Leppert says these services are “so invaluable in the early years, when children are developing and forming patterns.” In addition, a therapy service provider brings an expert's eye to problems caused by the condition that might not be recognized by a parent. “For example, if your child has cerebral palsy and gets a fancy, expensive wheelchair,” she says, “if they don't have the neck tilt, or the table at the right height, you're not treating tight muscles or working with movement patterns that optimize development.”

If parents have concerns or gut feelings that something isn't right, says Leppert, she recommends bringing it to the attention of their child's pediatrician, who can then refer them to a child development specialist. Even if you aren't comfortable coming into a doctor's or specialist's office, many pediatricians offer telehealth.

Although diagnoses and assessments of developmental conditions have dropped dramatically, disabilities continue to exist whether they are identified or not. ■



# Healthy DIET,

# Healthy TEE

## How the foods and drinks your children consume can affect their oral health

BY JENNIFER MARINO WALTERS

**F**ebruary is National Children's Dental Health Month, and this year's theme is "Water: Nature's Drink." We all know that drinking enough water is important for our health, but how much does it really have to do with teeth? A lot, it turns out.

"The diet is among the leading causes of tooth decay in children," says Dr. Srotalina Khanna, a dentist at Bethesda Family Smiles. "Sugary foods and drinks can cause damage to the teeth that become decay and cavities."

When these sugary items sit on the surface of teeth for extended periods of time, bacteria develop around them. The bacteria eat away at the enamel and create holes, or cavities, in the teeth. Cavities can cause pain and infections as well as speech, eating and learning problems.

Unfortunately, cavities are among the most common chronic childhood



nccd.cdc.gov/doh\_mwf. (If it doesn't have enough, ask your child's dentist if he or she should take fluoride supplements.)

You should also have your child avoid foods that contain excess sugars, such as candy, cookies and other sweets. Be extra careful with sticky foods like dried fruits and fruit snacks, which tend to stay on teeth longer than other types of food. The best diet for your kids' health—and their teeth—is a varied one that includes lean meats and fish, whole grains, cheese, yogurt, fruits and vegetables.

But let's be honest—the chances of eliminating sugary foods and drinks altogether are pretty slim. So, it's best to

pediatric practice because the dentist and hygienist have experience working with kids and making them feel comfortable. Kristin Fuerst, a Maryland mom of two, says her kids actually get excited to go to their pediatric dentist.

"The environment is inviting, and the staff is kid-centric. They show movies and they give great prizes," says Fuerst.

### Encourage proper brushing

Although the average person brushes for 45 seconds, the proper brushing time is two minutes, twice a day (morning and evening). Khanna suggests using a timer or singing a two-minute song to ensure your



feed these items to your children alongside or shortly after meals. Saliva production increases during meals, which helps to rinse away food particles and eliminate acids produced by bacteria.

Proper oral hygiene and dental care can also help to keep your kids' teeth healthy. You can also take the following measures:

### Start early

Wipe your baby's gums with a soft, clean cloth twice a day, in the morning and right before bed.

### Visit the dentist regularly

Take your child to the dentist every six months as soon as he or she turns 1 year old or the first tooth appears. "This will develop good oral hygiene habits and get kids comfortable learning how to brush and floss at home," says Khanna.

It's a good idea to find a family or

child brushes long enough. Try to make sure that time is divided evenly among all of the areas of the mouth. Use a brush with soft bristles to protect your child's sensitive gums, and be sure to help until he or she is ready to brush alone.

Generally, it's best to use a nonfluoride toothpaste until your child turns 2, then switch to one with fluoride. Use toothpaste and mouthwash with flavors or characters that appeal to your child so he or she will be less likely to resist.

"I rotate the flavors so my kids get excited to try something new, which makes them actually want to brush," says Fuerst.

Remember that kids who develop good oral hygiene habits when they're young are more likely to continue those habits into adulthood. Taking care of your children's teeth now—even if they still have their baby teeth—will also help to protect their teeth in the future. ■

diseases in the U.S. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 20% of children ages 5 to 11 and 13% of adolescents ages 12 to 19 have at least one untreated cavity.

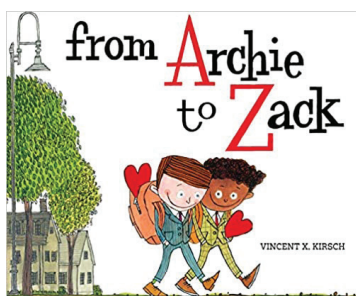
That is why it is best to have your child drink water instead of sugary juices and sodas. Tap water containing fluoride also makes teeth stronger and protects them from decay. You can find out if your water has enough fluoride—the optimal amount is 0.7 milligrams per liter—by visiting



# 12 Children's Books for Valentine's Day

These stories reveal favorite characters celebrating the holiday, sweet treats to bake, awkward crushes, touching moments of generosity and retellings of classics such as "Cyrano de Bergerac" and "Pride and Prejudice."

BY JENNIFER ROTHSCILD, COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT LIBRARIAN,  
ARLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



## PICTURE BOOKS

### "From Archie to Zack"

Written and illustrated by  
Vincent X Kirsch

Archie wants to tell his friend Zack how he feels and decides a letter, from A to Z, is the best way. The only problem is that Archie has a lot of friends whose names start with Z! Luckily, Zelda, Zinnia and Zuzella all know who the letters are really for and deliver them to their true recipient, who has been writing letters of his own.

### "This is NOT a Valentine"

By Carter Higgins,  
illustrated by Lucy Ruth Cummins

A little boy gives a friend things that are NOT valentines. Valentines are pink with lacey edges, and he's gifting his lucky rock and gumball machine jewelry that matches her shoelaces. Besides, he likes her all the days, not just on Feb. 14, in this sweet story about meaningful and everlasting gestures. This story, much like the gifts it features, outlasts the holiday.

### "A Valentine for Frankenstein"

By Leslie Kimmelman,  
illustrated by Timothy Banks

Poor Frankenstein—he's just not very good at being a monster. He doesn't have a tail and only has two eyes and one head. On top of that, he's just too nice! At the Valentine's Day Bash, he gets in trouble for wiping his mouth and decorating his cupcakes with glitter instead of fungus. Despite his setbacks, someone has slipped a Valentine into his pocket, and his secret admirer is set on the getting the other monsters to accept Frankenstein just as he is.

## EARLY READERS

### "What is Given from the Heart"

By Patricia C. McKissak,  
illustrated by April Harrison

After his father died, James Otis and his Mama don't have much—they had to leave the family farm and now live in a small house that floods when it rains. But for Valentine's Day, their pastor organizes "love boxes" for needy families. Despite not having much, Mama uses her best tablecloth to make an apron for a family that has lost everything in a fire. James Otis takes his time to think before finding something he can also give. Published posthumously, this work is the last book written by Patricia McKissak.

### "Llama Llama Be My Valentine"

Based on the works of Anna Dewdney

It's Valentine's Day, and Llama Llama and his friends are having a party at school. Their teacher tells them they each need to bring something only they can make. Gilroy Goat is worried, as he's not very crafty, so what can he bring to the party? Luckily, his friend Llama Llama is there to help!

### "Mouse Loves Love"

By Lauren Thompson,  
illustrated by Buket Erdogan

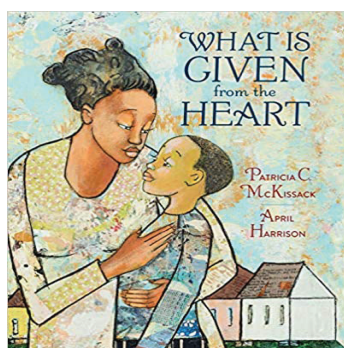
Mouse's sister Mika is being very mysterious. Mouse follows her around the house as she gathers her treasures—shiny red paper, pink ribbons and paste. What could she be doing and why doesn't she want Mouse to see?

## MIDDLE GRADE

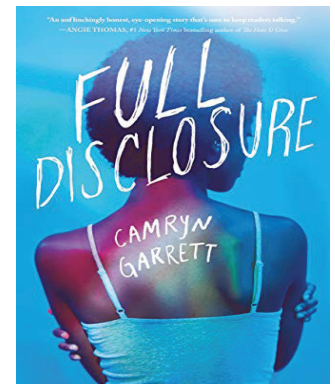
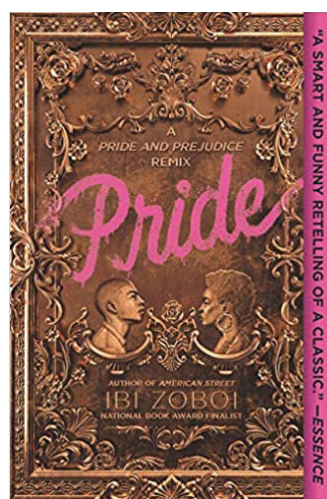
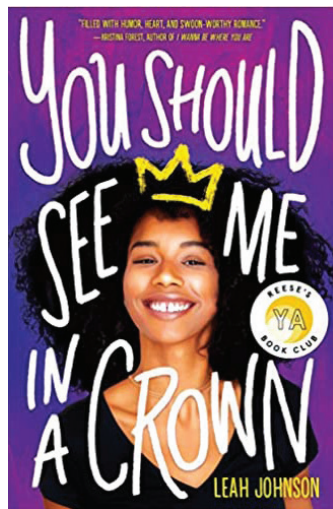
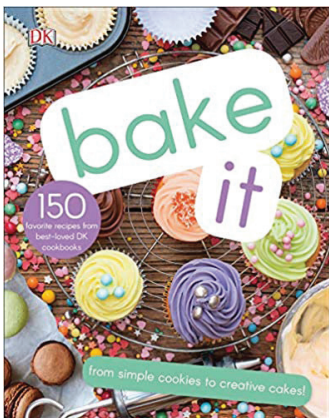
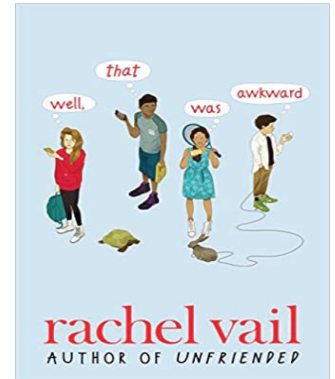
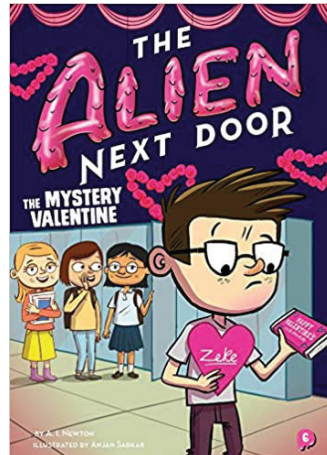
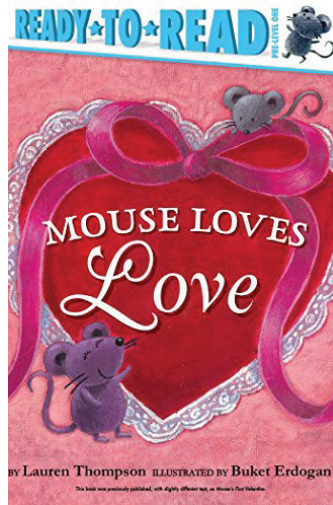
### "Alien Next Door: The Mystery Valentine"

By A.I. Newton,  
illustrated by Anjan Sarkar

This installment of the series sees Zeke, an alien trying to fit in on Earth, try to make sense







of the mysteries of Valentine's Day. He has his first crush, but all of his attempts to be noticed aren't working. Zeke and his friends also have a mystery to solve: Who sent him the anonymous Valentine? Will Zeke get everything figured out in time for his first Valentine's Day to be a success?

### "Well, That Was Awkward"

By Rachel Vail

Grace's life gets overly complicated when she develops a huge crush on AJ, but he likes Sienna. Grace is used to being in second place, so she helps Sienna write a text to AJ. Meanwhile, AJ is getting help from his friend Emmet, and soon it's hard for everyone to keep track of who is texting who and why. Enjoy this humorous and touching modern twist on "Cyrano de Bergerac."

### "Bake It!: 150 Favorite Recipes from Best-Loved DK Cookbooks"

One of the best things about Valentine's Day is the sugar rush. This cookbook is full of recipes

for young bakers at all levels. You'll find great ways to make treats for your friends and grow your skills at the same time. The steps are well-illustrated, and recipes range from savory to sweet, including pizza, pastries and everything in between.

### YOUNG ADULT

#### "You Should See Me in a Crown"

By Leah Johnson

When her music scholarship falls through, Liz has one other option to get the money she needs for college—become prom queen, which comes with its own scholarship. Only, Liz is a poor, queer, Black girl in a largely white, rich, prom-obsessed town. Things are further complicated by Liz's crush on the new girl in school—who also happens to be a prom queen legacy.

#### "Pride"

By Ibi Zoboi

Zuri Benitez cannot stand Darius Darcy, who just moved in across the street. He may be rich,

gorgeous and vaguely mysterious, but he's also pretentious and snooty. It doesn't help when her older sister starts dating his older brother. This remix of "Pride and Prejudice" set in modern-day Bushwick tackles class, gentrification and cultural identity in a delightful romance.

#### "Full Disclosure"

By Camryn Garrett

Simone is doing great at her new school. She is student directing the musical and her crush, Miles, just might return her affections. But then she gets a note that proves someone knows her secret—she was born HIV-positive, and if she doesn't leave Miles alone, her status will become public knowledge. Simone is healthy, but she was bullied out of her last school after everyone found out. Now she's torn between giving up a new friendship that might turn to more and disclosing on her own terms or risking it all and hoping it doesn't come crashing down again. Be captivated by this refreshing and hopeful romance story. ■

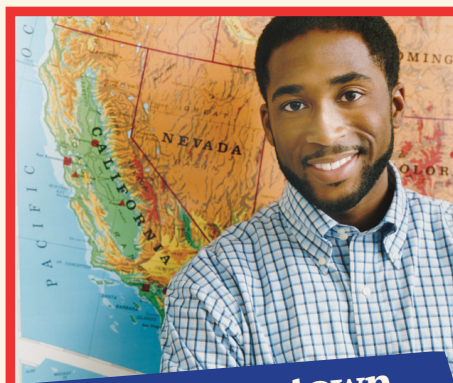


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# LETTERS TO LUCY: *What I'll Tell My Daughter*

BY DR. VANESSA R. CORCORAN

Since my husband and I found out we were pregnant with our daughter Lucy in October 2019, I started to write little notes to her: things I hope to share with her one day when she's older. My letters to Lucy started as a bonding process and a way to document my pregnancy. As the pandemic hit the United States in the spring, at the beginning of my third trimester, the letters shifted as documentation of the unusual and chaotic world she was about to join.

My letters described wearing masks at the grocery store and social distancing. They are practices that I hope will be entirely foreign to her. I've also documented the hospital protocols that I had to follow during my prenatal care and how her birth was shaped by policies associated with the pandemic. Yes, the story of her birth also included what it was like getting tested for COVID-19 and wearing a mask during labor, but the larger emphasis was on all of the amazing doctors and nurses who worked so hard to safely and joyfully welcome Lucy into this world. With every visit we make to MedStar Georgetown University Hospital for Lucy's wellness checkups, I remain in awe and gratitude for all of the health-care providers who are taking care of us.

My letters talk about what it was like to introduce her to her grandparents via FaceTime. Every day at dinnertime, I FaceTime with my parents while Lucy plays on the floor. While they've thankfully been able to visit on occasion, these nightly FaceTime sessions provide Lucy with a regular connection to her Gigi and Papa. They "play" peekaboo with her and watch her play. They're able to say goodnight to her every day. Even though it's remote, it's clear that she recognizes them. She beams every time they appear.

My letters describe what it was like to go back to work at Georgetown University in a virtual environment, which means that Lucy is usually no more than 2 feet from my "office" (my laptop). They record what it was like having her "sit in" on staff meetings and how, on more than



one occasion, I've had to deal with diaper blowouts mid-meeting. But my notes also recall funny moments when she's babbled along during work conversations and how my office has "watched" Lucy grow up.

But the main theme that encapsulates these letters is the outpouring of love and kindness we've received. I never doubted that Lucy would enter this world already loved by so many people. That was evident throughout my entire pregnancy. But as it increasingly looked like it would just be my husband and I caring for Lucy without any additional help, friends and family sent food, baby supplies, and anything else they thought could be helpful for raising a newborn in a pandemic. Each time a package arrived, I was filled with

gratitude for people offering their virtual support. Even if people couldn't physically be there for Lucy, their loving support was profoundly evident.

Our beautiful baby girl is now 7 months old and is blissfully unaware of what a tumultuous year it has been. Her unbridled joy provides daily joy, even when so much of our future seems uncertain. When she's older, I cannot wait to share these letters with her and remind her that even when the world feels upside down and loved ones are far away, she has always been surrounded by love. ■

*Vanessa Corcoran is Lucy's mom and is an academic counselor and medieval historian at Georgetown University.*



# Shake it off.\*

## \*Bad advice for broken bones — and mental health

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