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**GUIDE**  
INSIDE

# Washington FAMILY

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FEBRUARY 2022

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**FEBRUARY 2022**



COURTESY CAMP PEGASUS



IMGORTHAND/E+/GETTY IMAGES

Children with special needs can reap a host of good things from summer camp. **Pg. 10**

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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](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**



# Washington FAMILY

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**Craig Burke, Publisher**

**Jeni Mann Tough,  
Associate Publisher**



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11900 Parkdam Drive, Suite 300, Rockville, MD 20852.

## EDITORIAL

Michael Vyskocil, Editor  
mvyskocil@midatlanticmedia.com

Eleanor Linafelt, Staff Writer  
elinafelt@midatlanticmedia.com

Lindsay VanAsdalan, Staff Writer  
lvanasdalan@midatlanticmedia.com

## Contributors

Laura Farmer, Barbara Noe Kennedy  
Cheryl Maguire, Mimi Markopoulos  
Jennifer Rothschild

## ADVERTISING

Craig Burke, CEO/Publisher  
cburke@midatlanticmedia.com

## Sales Consultants

Lisa Gaglia  
Alan Gurwitz  
Pam Kuperschmidt  
Jodi Lipson  
David Pintzow  
Sara Priebe  
Mary Ramsdale  
Kim Coates Schofield  
Stacie Shapero  
Sylvia Witaschek

## MARKETING

Julia Olaguer,  
Audience Development Coordinator

## BUSINESS

Pattie-Ann Lamp  
Accounting Manager  
410-902-2300  
plamp@midatlanticmedia.com

## CIRCULATION

301-230-2222, ext. 1

## CREATIVE

Jay Sevidal, Art Director  
Sherley Taliaferro, Graphic Designer  
Rachel S. Levitan, Graphic Designer  
Paul McGuigan, Graphic Designer  
James Meskunas,  
Digital Media Manager  
Carl Weigel, Graphic Designer

## MID-ATLANTIC MEDIA

Craig Burke, CEO/Publisher  
cburke@midatlanticmedia.com

Jeni Mann Tough, Associate Publisher  
jmann@midatlanticmedia.com



**Overall Writing**



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Editor's Note**



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**Michael Vyskocil**  
Editor  
mvyskocil@midatlanticmedia.com

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# Lots to Love About February

**W**elcome to February, moms and dads! I hope that the beginning of this month finds you and your family safe and healthy as our nation and world continue to navigate the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic. All of us at *Washington FAMILY* hope that this month's issue offers you a chance to connect with your loved ones and learn something new inside these pages.

February is the perfect time to start planning ahead for your child's summer of fun at summer camp. Look for stories that present questions to consider when selecting a camp for your child and the benefits of summer camp for children with special needs.

In addition to the summer camp stories you can read in this issue, be sure to visit our website, [washingtonfamily.com](http://washingtonfamily.com), for more articles and resources to help you with summer camp planning. Turn to page 15 for our summer camps directory and visit our website for information about the diversity of summer camps and programs available for children throughout the DMV region.

February is American Heart Month and National Children's Dental Health Month. Read and share our articles on heart-healthy habits to teach your kids (page 29) and answers to questions about children's oral health (page 26).

Look for stories on ways to commemorate Black History Month in the DMV (page 19) and DIY-loving mom Mimi Markopoulos (whom you met in our November 2021 issue) shares a simple project for a Valentine's Day heart garland (page 8).

What did you think about the stories in this issue? What topics would you like to see us cover? Email me at [mvyskocil@midatlanticmedia.com](mailto:mvyskocil@midatlanticmedia.com). Stay connected with *Washington FAMILY* by subscribing to our newsletters at [washingtonfamily.com](http://washingtonfamily.com).

*Happy reading!* ■

*Michael Vyskocil*

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# {TOP 10}

BY LINDSAY C. VANASDALAN

## Family Events for February

Celebrate Valentine's Day and explore musicals and cartoons with this month's events.



**FEB. 4-6**

### "TROLLS LIVE!"

If you fell in love with Poppy, Branch and the rest of the gang from DreamWorks' "Trolls," you'll love the live show coming to EagleBank Arena in Fairfax, Virginia. The trolls are back with a mission to protect their Hug Time, and families can be a witness to all the music, glitter and humor that comes with it this dynamic performance. Tickets start at \$15.

[trollslive.com](http://trollslive.com)



**FEB. 5**

### PARENT & ME VALENTINE'S DRIP CAKE WITH A SUGAR COOKIE CAKE TOPPER

Join Dawn Alston of Food Network fame to make a 6-inch, two-layered cake with a pro. A team of parent and child (ages 6 and older) will meet at Fran's Cake & Candy Supplies in Fairfax, Virginia, to create their Valentine's Day-themed masterpiece and learn expert pastry techniques.

Tickets are \$125; includes parent and child.

[franscakeandcandy.com](http://franscakeandcandy.com)



**FEB. 5-20**

### BALLOONACY

Watch your toddler light up at this movement-based show providing a modern take on the classic "Red Balloon" story. This time, the young boy who was visited by a red balloon is all grown up. Antics ensue with physical comedy made famous by Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. Tickets are \$12.

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



**FEB. 11**

### ROCKVILLE LANTERN FESTIVAL

The Rockville Sister Cities Corporation celebrates the Maryland city's connections with Asia through a festival at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre in Rockville. The events features cultural performances, food and personalized calligraphy for kids to take home after the celebration.

Tickets are free; sales end Feb. 12.

[rockvillemd.gov](http://rockvillemd.gov); tickets on Eventbrite

**FEB. 13**

### HIKE & SEEK: I [HEART] NATURE

Challenge your family to a heart-themed scavenger hunt in honor of Valentine's Day. Work together and test your knowledge of nature trivia in this Hike & Seek adventure at Locust Grove Nature Center in Bethesda. Register before Feb. 11 to receive a prize for completing the hunt.

Ages 2 and older must reserve a time slot in advance online; tickets are \$3.

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





**FEB. 19**

### AIR AND SPACE ADVENTURES VIRTUAL GAME

Stay safe with virtual games from the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. Complete missions, activities and photo challenges with friends and family and earn points by downloading the GooseChase app. You'll have a three-hour block from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. to submit activities.

Free  
[si.edu](http://si.edu)



**FEB. 19**

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH FAMILY DAY

Families can drop in at the visitor center at Woodlawn Manor Cultural Park in Sandy Spring, Maryland, to pick up take-home activities for children ages 5-12 and trail maps for a self-guided walk through the Underground Railroad Experience Trail. Learn with your children during Black History Month.

Free  
[montgomeryparks.org](http://montgomeryparks.org)



**FEB. 25**

### SWEETHEART PARENT-CHILD DANCE

Don't forget your true Valentine this month. Spend some quality time with mom, dad or a favorite adult at the McLean Community Center on Friday evening. All ages will enjoy the light refreshments, DJ, photo booth and craft at this soiree.

Tickets start at \$20; register in advance. [mcleancenter.org](http://mcleancenter.org)

**FEB. 27-28**

### ART JAM - CARTOONING AND MANGA WORKSHOPS

Learn drawing, comic-making and storytelling techniques from professional cartoonists Caitlin Gumb (Waistcoat Stories apparel) and Jenna Ayoub (local illustrator for Adventure Time, The Regular Show) in this new workshop at The Clay and Metal Loft in Leesburg, Virginia, for ages 10-15.

Tickets are \$50.  
[theclayandmetalloft.com](http://theclayandmetalloft.com)



**FEB. 26-28**

### "P.NOKIO: A HIP-HOP MUSICAL"

A modern reimagining of the classic story of Pinocchio finds G.Petto discovering that his newest game character, P.Nokio, can live outside the computer. He calls on the Graffiti Fairy to help him teach his creation how to be a real boy. Dates through April 9 in Bethesda. Best suited for ages 5-11.

Tickets start at \$28.  
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## Make a Valentine's Day Heart Garland

BY MIMI MARKOPOULOS

Gather your supplies

Start crafting

I feel strongly that crafting and creating is a win-win for parents and children.

If there's one thing that I learned from being a mom is that kids want nothing more but to spend quality time with you. Add some crafting fun to it, and you've created memorable holiday traditions that will last a lifetime and that hopefully one day they will carry on with their kids.

My daughter Sofia and I decided to make a fun and easy Valentine's Day garland together that we used to decorate her new market cart. A garland is a great craft to create with your children; it's very simple and can be used as a décor piece anywhere in your home.

### Valentine's Day Heart Garland

#### Materials

- Scissors or a cricut cutting machine (available from [michaels.com](http://michaels.com))
- Baker's twine (my favorite for garlands)
- Cardstock (choose any color—we chose pink and white)
- Hot glue gun (you can also use a craft tacky glue)

#### Directions

1. Decide how long you want to make your garland. We made one for a market cart, so we cut our twine for the garland about 24 inches long.
2. Cut your hearts from the cardstock. We cut about five hearts to fit nicely with about 2 ½ inches of space between each heart. You can keep the cutouts as close or as far away from each other as you'd like.
3. Position the hearts over the twine so that you can visualize the placement of each one in the garland.
4. Hot glue two spots on each side of the heart at the top of the cutout.
5. Place the twine on the hot glue spots on the hearts and press to close. Keep applying until you finish the garland.

Sofia enjoyed placing the twine on the glue spots while I focused on hot gluing each heart in the garland. There is something about crafting with my kids that brings me so much

joy and fulfillment. I know these memories will last a lifetime, and we both will cherish them forever. ■

*Here's to creating more holiday traditions with your children and making memories that will leave a long-lasting impression.*

*More Fun Ways to Celebrate Valentine's Day*

- Bake Valentine cookies together.
- Create heart-shaped food.
- Make a coupon for a one-on-one date with your kiddos.
- Dress in pink or red together.
- Read a Valentine's Day-themed book.
- Wear matching Valentine's Day-themed pajamas together.
- Make Valentines and deliver them to the neighbors.
- Organize a Valentine's Day movie night.
- Prepare a "berry" delicious smoothie with fresh strawberries or raspberries.
- Plan a Valentine's Day family photo shoot.

XO,  
Mimi



# Questions to Consider When Selecting a Summer Camp for Your Child

BY MICHAEL VYSKOCIL



It may be cold outdoors, but summer camps in our region are thinking ahead to warmer weather and summer camp season. Explore the following questions to ask when considering camp options for your child.

## What to ask day camp staff

- What's the background and experience of the camp director?
- What criteria do you consider for hiring staff? Does the camp check for ages, experience levels and criminal history backgrounds of its staff?

- What's the ratio of staff to camp attendees? The American Camp Association's recommended ratios range from one staff member for every six campers ages 7 and 8, to one staff member for every 10 campers ages 9 to 14, to one for every 12 campers ages 15 to 17.
- What's the expertise level of staff at specialty camps such as music, art and drama?
- What's the cost? Find out about camp fees and any other expenses. Inquire about the possibility for financial aid. Ask about refund policies.

- What's the condition and safety of equipment? How does the camp ensure campers' safety? Find out what types of safety and security protocols are in effect.
- How is medical care handled?
- What's the camp's mission?
- What are the types of activities planned?
- What does a typical day at camp look like?
- What is the age range of campers?
- What are the camp's hours?
- What type of transportation is available?

## What to ask overnight camp staff

In addition to the questions above, parents considering overnight camps for their children should also ask the following:

- Is the camp director available outside regular business hours?
- What type of overnight supervision does the camp offer?
- How do staff handle kids and homesickness?
- What are the sleeping arrangements like? Does the camp provide electricity in the cabins? Where are the bathrooms?

To view camp offerings available in our region and beyond, browse the summer camp directory on our website. ■



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## Summer camps around the mid-Atlantic region offer inclusive and fun programming for kids

BY LAURA FARMER

**A**s the chilly winds of winter blow through the mid-Atlantic region, many of us long for the sunny days of summer. For our kids, it's not only the warmer weather that boosts summer's appeal. They look forward to swapping school days for pool days at summer camp.

Attending summer camps has long been a part of the quintessential childhood experience. And happily, the variety of summer camps available in our region are as varied as our children's interests, offering everything from outdoor adventures and musical theater to coding, art and cooking-focused camps. Children reap a host of benefits from attending such camps, such as learning new skills, developing a new hobby and making new friends.

### THE SUMMER CAMP SEARCH

Children with special needs, too, can find summer camp to be an especially valuable experience. Sometimes, however, finding an inclusive environment that supports your child's unique needs requires some searching.

"I found that summer was a time of great struggle for the children I worked with in the therapy office," says Mike Fogel, MA, ATR-BC, LPC. Fogel is an art therapist with 27 years of clinical experience who also founded and serves as executive director of Camp Pegasus, a day camp located in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, that focuses on social skills training. "Kids would get kicked out of camp because it wasn't a good fit, or they had power struggles with parents because they were anxious and didn't want to go to camp. For many of these kids, camp felt overwhelming to them because it wasn't tailored to their needs."

The community need prompted Fogel to found Camp Pegasus, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year.

Kelly Presnell, outreach and inclusion director for the YMCA of Frederick County, found a similar lack of resources in her community.



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"We started Kids Unlimited in 2009 at the request of a parent who could not find appropriate camp experiences for her son. A lot of the camps that this parent looked into didn't have the support system or weren't able to make accommodations necessary to serve all kids," she says. "We believe that every kid should be able to go to summer camp, so we spent a year researching and planning to create Kids Unlimited."

## INCLUSIVE FUN!

Many of the inclusive summer camps in the region offer an effective combination of classic summer camp fun infused with social and life skills training.

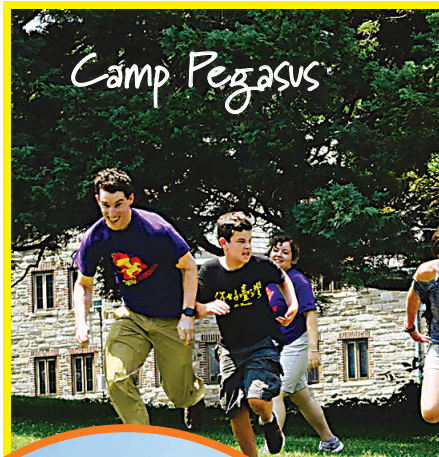
"At Camp Pegasus, campers engage in sports, theater, computer play, art therapy, music therapy, dance-movement therapy and more," says Fogel. "These activities provide the structure to support how kids interact. But we layer in an intensive therapy piece, which barely registers as therapy because the kids are having so much fun."

Camp Pegasus offers key supports to ease campers' anxieties, such as providing the day's schedule on a lanyard that campers wear around their necks. Plus, many staff members have advanced degrees in behavioral health, and the camp maintains a low staff-to-camper ratio.

A low staff ratio is also a key component of TIC Summer Camp, an inclusive day camp with three locations in the Washington, D.C. metro area. TIC Summer Camp seeks to foster the minds and bodies of campers with equal half days of technology and athletics.

"We have a low staff-to-camper ratio; kids with mild learning disabilities can be very successful at TIC," says Emily Riedel, TIC Summer Camps' owner and director of operations. "We believe that all children benefit from diversity. That includes

*Camp Pegasus*



*Living Classrooms Foundation*

neurodiversity but also diversity of race and gender. Because a basic philosophy of inclusiveness guides our camp, we work hard to remove any barriers that would keep kids from participating."

Working to remove barriers was among the founding goals for the Living Classrooms Foundation, which provides experiential learning programs, including summer camps, for nearly 30,000 youth and adults in 30 sites across Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

"For nearly two decades, Living Classrooms partnered with The Arc and schools to offer Bay Buddies," says Living Classrooms Foundation President and CEO James Bond. "Bay Buddies was designed to provide fun, hands-on, skill-building opportunities for students with developmental disabilities with activities like sailing, horseback riding and gardening.

"Participants benefit from low staff-to-student ratios, highly qualified staff and an inclusive, welcoming environment."





PHOTO: CAMP PEGASUS

## BIG BENEFITS

While all kids stand to benefit from a quality camp experience, the benefits for campers with special needs are amplified. A primary benefit for neurodiverse kids is an

opportunity to build their social and life skills.

“At our camp (Kids Unlimited), kids have the opportunity to do a lot of the things they may not be able to do without the support system offered by our staff,” says Presnell.

“For example, we foster their independence by taking field trips into the community to restaurants, the pool and a pediatric movement center, to name a few.”

In addition, many of the campers may experience bullying during the school year, so an inclusive summer camp offers a safe space where kids can improve their self-esteem.

“We (at Camp Pegasus) create a culture of positivity and affirmation and a structure in which kids can be successful,” explains Fogel. “We do a special kind of social coaching where we encourage the camper to do the social thinking instead of just telling them what to do. This sort of social training is invaluable for teaching the interpersonal skills the kids will need throughout their lives.”

Max\*, an alumnus of Camp Pegasus, has benefitted from this type of instruction.

“Max still uses many of the phrases and lessons he learned during his time at Pegasus,” says his mother. “The camp is also an opportunity for quirky kids to understand that their peers are also struggling with the same things, and sometimes these peers become friends who truly understand each other.” ■

*\*Max's name has been changed to protect his identity per parent/guardian request.*

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# Washington FAMILY

W

With each new milestone that our children reach comes the need for information to guide them (and us) through this stage. This point 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, parents can find many options. Use our summer camp listings presented here to learn more about the camps, what they offer and the ages they serve. Visit [WashingtonFAMILY.com](http://WashingtonFAMILY.com) for even more listings to help you in your search. Be sure to check our website and our digital issues for more stories about camps for your children. Good luck! Here's to a great summer.

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[manormontessori.com/summer-camp](http://manormontessori.com/summer-camp)  
 10500 Oaklyn Drive  
 Potomac, MD 20854  
 11200 Old Georgetown Road  
 Rockville, MD 20852  
 5450 Massachusetts Ave.  
 Bethesda, MD 20816  
 Educational activities, arts, music, swimming  
 and sports

**SILVER STARS GYMNASTICS**

Ages: 3 ½-15

[gosilverstars.com](http://gosilverstars.com)  
[classregistration@gosilverstars.com](mailto:classregistration@gosilverstars.com)  
 301-589-0938  
 2701 Pittman Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20910  
 301-352-5777  
 14201 Woodcliff Court, Bowie, MD 20720  
 Gymnastics

**SPRING BILINGUAL  
MONTESSORI  
SUMMER CAMP**

Ages: 2 1/2-6

[spring-bilingual.org](http://spring-bilingual.org)  
[info@spring-bilingual.org](mailto:info@spring-bilingual.org)  
 301-962-7262  
 3514 Payers Mill Road  
 Kensington, MD 20895  
 Sibling discount, extended day, arts and  
 educational activities

**DAY CAMPS  
VIRGINIA****BROOKSFIELD  
SUMMER CAMP**

Ages: 3-10

[brooksfeldschool.org](http://brooksfeldschool.org)  
[camp@brooksfeldschool.org](mailto:camp@brooksfeldschool.org)  
 703-356-5437, ext. 2  
 1830 Kirby Road, McLean, VA 22101  
 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](http://westminsterschool.com/campgriffin)  
[campgriffin@westminsterschool.com](mailto:campgriffin@westminsterschool.com)  
 703-340-7268

Westminster School  
 3819 Gallows Road, Annandale, VA 22003  
 Day camp, boys and girls, sibling discount, extended  
 day, arts and crafts, cooking, dance, field trips, music,  
 sports, swimming and travel

**CAMP MSNV - MONTESSORI  
SCHOOL OF NORTHERN  
VIRGINIA**

[msnv.org/page/programs/summer-camp](http://msnv.org/page/programs/summer-camp)  
 703-256-9577  
 6820 Pacific Lane, Annandale, VA 22003  
 Extended day camp

**CAMP SHEEO – SHEEO  
ACADEMY**

Ages: 7-16

[beasheeo.com/camp](http://beasheeo.com/camp)  
[contact@BEaSheEO.com](mailto:contact@BEaSheEO.com)  
 Check website for various locations in  
 Virginia  
 866-697-4336  
 Girls only, teens, educational activities

**CHESTERBROOK ACADEMY  
SUMMER CAMP**

Ages: 5-12

[chesterbrookacademy.com/camp](http://chesterbrookacademy.com/camp)  
 877-959-3746  
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Ages: 4-14

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

[info@congocamp.org](mailto:info@congocamp.org)

703-533-0931

School Affiliation:

Congressional School

3229 Sleepy Hollow Road

Falls Church, VA 22042

Day camp, boys and girls, extended day, transportation, arts and crafts, CIT program, computers, cooking, field trips, horseback riding and swimming

## HARMONIA SCHOOL OF MUSIC & ART

Ages: 4-18

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

[harmonia@harmoniaschool.org](mailto:harmonia@harmoniaschool.org)

703-938-7301

204-F Mill St., NE

Vienna, VA 22180

Teens, sibling discount, extended day, arts, drama, music

## MASON GAME & TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY - GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Ages: 9-18

[mgta@gmu.edu](mailto:mgta@gmu.edu)

[mgta@gmu.edu](mailto:mgta@gmu.edu)

703-993-7101

10900 University Blvd., Bull Run Hall 147, MS 1J2

Manassas, VA 20110-2203

Teens, computers, cooking and other educational activities.



VIEW SCHEDULE ►



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**Smithsonian Associates**

## MEDSTAR CAPITALS ICEPLEX

**Ages:** 4-14  
627 N. Glebe Rd, Suite 800,  
Arlington, VA 22203  
**Categories:** Coed, Sports  
medstarcapitalsiceplex.com  
571-224-0555  
Info@MedStarCapitalsIceplex.com

## MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF MCLEAN

**Ages:** 3-6 years (must be potty trained)  
mcleanmontessori.org  
703-790-1049  
1711 Kirby Road, McLean, VA 22101  
Day camp, boys and girls, educational activities

## PINECREST PAVILION AT PINECREST SCHOOL

**Ages:** 4-12  
pinecrestschool.org  
camp@pinecrestschool.org  
703-354-3446  
7209 Quiet Cove, Annandale, VA 22030  
Sibling discount, extended day, arts, computers,  
cooking, drama, educational activities and  
field trips

## RESTON MONTESSORI SCHOOL

**Ages:** 3-9  
restonmontessori.com  
office@restonmontessori.com  
703-481-2922  
1928 Isaac Newton Square West  
Reston, VA 20190  
Extended day, arts and field trips

## ROER'S ZOO FARI - JUNIOR SAFARI SUMMER CAMP

roerszooafari.com  
703-757-6222  
1228 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna, VA 22182  
Educational activities

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

**Ages:** 3-adult  
thecenterforballetarts.com  
ctrbalarts@aol.com  
703-273-5344  
3955 Pender Drive, Suite 105  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
Teens, sibling discount, arts and crafts, dance  
and drama

## TRAVELING PLAYERS

1961 Chain Bridge Road  
Tysons, VA 22102  
703-987-1712  
info@travelingplayers.org  
Traveling Players brings out the best in  
every performer. Acting day camps are  
taught in our Tysons Studio; sleepaway  
camps are 1 hour outside of DC.

## DAY CAMPS WASHINGTON, D.C. CAMP ARENA STAGE

**Ages:** 8-16  
arenastage.org/camp  
camp@arenastage.org  
202-600-4064  
Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School  
1524 34th St. NW, Washington, DC 20024  
Camp Arena Stage is where community  
and art make magic. Campers ages  
8-16 choose activities in theater, dance,  
music, visual art, filmmaking, writing and  
more, taught by professional artists and  
educators. Two- and three-week in-person  
sessions begin in July at Georgetown  
Visitation Preparatory School.  
**Categories:** day camp, boys & girls, teens,  
sibling discount, extended day, arts and  
crafts, dance, drama and theater, music

## SMITHSONIAN ASSOCIATES

summercamp@si.edu  
202-633-CAMP  
1100 Jefferson Drive SW  
Washington, DC 20560  
Smithsonian Summer Camp is back. With both  
in-person and online options, Smithsonian  
Associates brings the Smithsonian's ever-  
expanding world to life. Camps are offered for  
kids in first through 11th grades.

## THE THEATRE LAB

**Grades:** 1-8  
theatrelab.org/camp  
contact@theatrelab.org  
202-842-0449  
900 Massachusetts Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
Boys & Girls, Teens, Extended Day, Drama/  
Theatre

## OVERNIGHT CAMPS BURGUNDY CENTER FOR WILDLIFE STUDIES

**Ages:** 8-15  
burgundycenter.org  
bcwsdirector@burgundyfarm.org  
703-842-0470  
3700 Burgundy Road  
Alexandria, VA 22303  
Summer Location: Capon Bridge, WV 26711  
Hands-on workshops with art and nature themes

## CAMP HORIZONS

**Ages:** 6-16  
camphorizonsva.com  
camp@horizonsva.com  
540-896-7600  
3586 Horizons Way  
Harrisonburg, VA 22802  
Residential camp, boys and girls, teens,  
sibling discount, arts and crafts, cooking,  
dance, drama and theater, hiking,  
horseback riding, music, overnight  
camping, photography and swimming

## CAMP KIRCHENWALD

**Grades:** K-12  
kirchenwald@lutherancamping.org

717-964-3121  
1 Cut Off Road, Lebanon, PA 17402  
Summer location: Lebanon County, PA  
Residential camp, outdoor adventures

## CAMP TALL TIMBERS

**Ages:** 7-16  
campalltimbers.com  
info@campalltimbers.com  
301-874-0111  
1115 Reflection Lane  
High View, WV 26808  
Residential camp, sibling discount,  
transportation, aerial adventure park, archery,  
arts, canoeing, CIT program, dance, drama,  
educational activities, hiking, horseback  
riding, riflery, ropes course, swimming, tennis,  
tubing, zip line

## CAPITAL CAMPS

Second-12th grades  
capitalcamps.org  
301-468-2267  
12750 Buchanan Trail East  
Waynesboro, PA 17268  
Join us for the Jewish overnight camping  
experience of a lifetime! We empower  
campers of all abilities to lead while cultivating  
their boundless curiosity. From splashing in  
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and throughout the entire spirited summer,  
Capital Camps is a wondrous playground for  
the mind, body and soul. ■

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(703) 340-7268



# Erika Gonzalez

## Loving the moments of motherhood

INTERVIEW BY MICHAEL VYSKOCIL

### FAMILY FAVES RECIPE:

Well, not that Isabela can have it, but my husband makes a mean coquito. It's a coconut-based, Puerto Rican holiday beverage. He makes several batches every year, and we share them with close friends and family. We still have a few bottles we're enjoying down to the last drop.

### WAY TO SPEND A WEEKEND WITH YOUR FAMILY:

We're pretty active people, so we hope our love for exercise and the outdoors translates to our little one. Now that she's getting bigger, we can't wait to put her in the running stroller and go exploring through Rock Creek Park. Then, we can stop for some pizza and beer because ... balance. Am I right?

### LIFE HACK:

We're still learning the ropes on this parenting thing. Pro tips are welcome.

### BOOK TO READ TOGETHER:

It's hard to narrow it down to just one book. We're big fans of the "Lil' Libros" bilingual series which highlights important figures, places and favorite pastimes of the Hispanic community. How could I not read to her about "Loteria" and "Selena"?

### VACATION SPOT:

My husband is Puerto Rican. We love traveling to the island to not only visit family, but also enjoy the beautiful beaches. I can't wait to see Isabela dip her toes in the sand for the first time.

### RAINY-DAY ACTIVITY:

Does shopping at HomeGoods count? I mean, that's golden rain or shine. But, seriously, our basement is a cozy place to watch a movie and enjoy her toys. We primarily live on the first two floors of the house, so going down to the basement is a nice change of scenery.



**E**rika Gonzalez is an anchor and reporter for NBC News4 and Telemundo 44. She spearheads the "4 Your Home" segments where her storytelling revolves around home improvement, design and unique real estate in the DMV. She's called the area home for the last 10 years, which is saying a lot for a native Texan. She and her husband, Jason, met and married here as well. In August 2021, they welcomed their first child, daughter Isabela Ivana, into their family. Together, they live in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

### How is new motherhood treating you?

Motherhood has been the hardest, most rewarding experience of my life. My husband and I enjoyed six years of marriage before welcoming our baby girl. Now, we wonder how we went so long without her. She's the best thing we never knew we needed.

### What excites you about being a mom?

I get such a kick out of hearing Isabela giggle. It's the sweetest sound I've ever heard,

and I'd act like a complete fool just to get her to laugh.

### What do you love the most about raising your family in the DMV?

Living and now raising a family in the DMV is such a privilege. We're spoiled, really. There are wonderful parks all around us, scenic drives and a zoo that people travel to see. And it's all in our backyard.

### How do you create balance between your career and your family?

I'm writing from the comforts of maternity leave, but the time is coming—I'll be back on the air in mid-February—when we'll be navigating child care, workflow, dinnertime and house chores all at the same time. I know it's going to be hard, and that's probably the understatement of the year, but so many people do it. That gives me comfort ... knowing we won't be alone and that someone is always around to share their perspective or provide a listening ear. A glass of wine at night doesn't hurt either. ■

PROVIDED PHOTO





*6 places to  
commemorate*

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

in the **DMV**  
With Your Family

BY BARBARA NOE KENNEDY

February commemorates Black History Month, an ideal time to experience one of the DMV's many related history and cultural sites with the family. Of course, the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., is a must-visit site with its 35,000 treasured artifacts, but consider a day trip to Maryland or Virginia with your family. Start with the following six important sites that delve into the stories and lives of Black Americans, from iconic Harriet Tubman to a community that built a school for its kids during segregation. Some have special events taking place throughout the month.





James Parks bust



Gray family quarters

## 1 ARLINGTON HOUSE, THE ROBERT E. LEE MEMORIAL

Arlington, Virginia

703-235-1530; [nps.gov/arho](http://nps.gov/arho)

While Arlington House was the home of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, who fled the house when he joined the Confederate Army at the onset of the Civil War, it has recently undergone a multimillion-dollar restoration to provide a new narrative showcasing the lives of the more than 100 enslaved individuals who built the plantation house and lived and worked here. The interpretive exhibits don't shy away from challenging questions, leaving much to discuss later at the family dinner table.

Two surviving quarters of enslaved people are out back. Several artifacts of African American history are on display for the first time, including the bust of James Parks, who toiled on the plantation until 1861. He's the only person born on the property who is buried at the cemetery. Exhibits, including family photos, letters and books, relate to the Syphaxes, Norrises and other enslaved families.

As of press time, no tickets are needed to enter the plantation house, enslaved quarters or museum. All are free and open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Parking for Arlington House is available at the Arlington National Cemetery Visitor Center.

## 2 HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD BYWAY

Eastern Shore, Maryland

[harriettubmanbyway.org](http://harriettubmanbyway.org), [nps.gov/hatu](http://nps.gov/hatu), [adkinsarboretum.org](http://adkinsarboretum.org)

After escaping to freedom from the Maryland Eastern Shore plantation where she was born, legendary freedom fighter Harriet Tubman—who celebrates her 200th birthday this year—risked her life time and again to return, freeing dozens of enslaved people along the Underground Railroad. Many of the sites relating to this daring history remain throughout the Eastern Shore, and they have been linked on a 125-mile route from Cambridge to the Delaware border—a fun family outing with plenty to think about along the way.

Visit Church Creek, Maryland, site of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center (stop 13), where kids can see where Tubman lived and worked and learn about her life through multimedia exhibits. Walking trails and a memorial garden are also there. Another important site is Bucktown General Store (stop 17), where young Harriet received a near-death blow in the head when she defied authority to protect an enslaved boy. At the Adkins Arboretum (stop 34), trails wander through woodland and marshland very much resembling the terrain through which Tubman journeyed.



Harriet Tubman



Illustration of Charles Ball, slave and sailor, War of 1812

## 3 JEFFERSON PATTERSON PARK & MUSEUM

10515 Mackall Road

St. Leonard, MD 20685

410-586-8501; [jefpat.maryland.gov](http://jefpat.maryland.gov)

The Battle of St. Leonard Creek unfolded during the War of 1812 on these present-day parklands overlooking the Patuxent River. Families can listen to the various tales via cell phone (call 410-246-1966) and read interpretive markers along the 1.8-mile "War of 1812" driving and walking trail. Different perspectives are shared, including that of Charles Ball, an enslaved man who had fled north to freedom. During the war, he enlisted under Commodore Joshua Barney as a free man, serving as a seaman and cook for the Chesapeake flotilla. Be sure to ask at the visitor center for access to the War of 1812 exhibit in the Exhibit Barn.

The park also has miles of trails along St. Leonard Creek (where the War of 1812 battle occurred) and woodlands, and through the former lands of a Woodland Indian village. The park and grounds are open daily from 7:30 a.m. to dusk; admission is free.



## 4 LAUREL GROVE SCHOOL MUSEUM

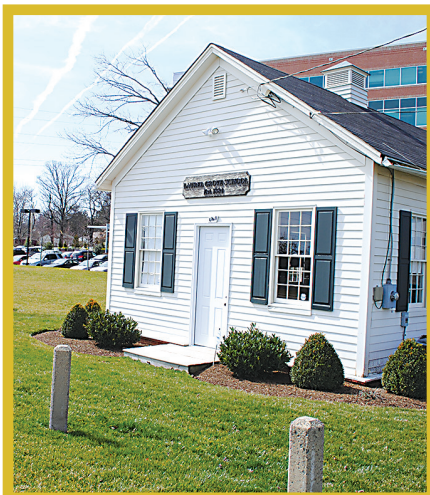
6840 Beulah St.

Alexandria, VA 22310

703-313-4690; [laurelgroveschool.org](http://laurelgroveschool.org)

Kids may take a different stance toward school after visiting this 19th-century, one-room schoolhouse built by the first generation of African Americans born to freedom in Fairfax County to educate their community's children. The schoolhouse is now a living museum, where intriguing insights come to light. Some kids had to walk up to 5 miles to attend this school, where students shared books and desks, studied geography without maps and helped cook meals with items brought from their home gardens.

Special programs include pictorial history exhibits, talks by history makers, children's story hour and other topics that bring to life the school's history. Visitation is currently by appointment only.



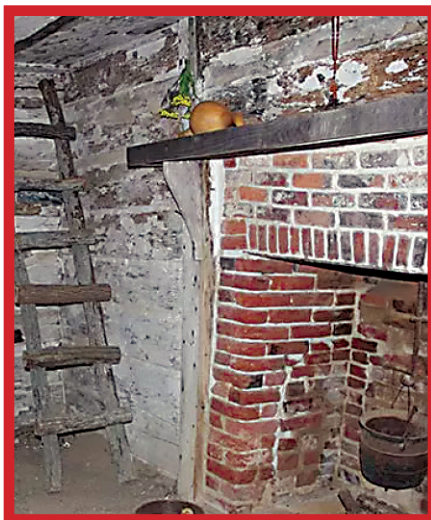
Laurel Grove School



COURTESY OF LAURELGROVESCHOOL.ORG



Sotterley Plantation



1830s slave cabin

## 5 SOTTERLEY PLANTATION

44300 Sotterley Lane

Hollywood, MD 20636

301-373-2280; [sotterley.org](http://sotterley.org)

For centuries, enslaved people worked this 18th-century tobacco plantation overlooking the Patuxent River in Southern Maryland, at a site where many captured Africans first stepped ashore in America. This history is today recounted through a restored one-room, pine-log cabin from 1830, where a dozen or so people lived. Kids can duck their head to enter the low doorway and take in the dirt floor, simple pallet bed, and low stairs leading to an attic space.

Throughout February, Sotterley celebrates the life and legacy of Dr. Agnes Kane Callum, a historian and genealogist whose ancestors were enslaved at Sotterley during the 19th century. The grounds are open year-round, and the tour season runs May through October (Friday-Sunday). Call 301-373-2280 to reserve a tour time; tickets are \$10 for adults, \$6 youth (6-18), and children younger than 6 are free.

## 6 SULLY HISTORIC SITE

3650 Historic Sully Way

Chantilly, VA 20151

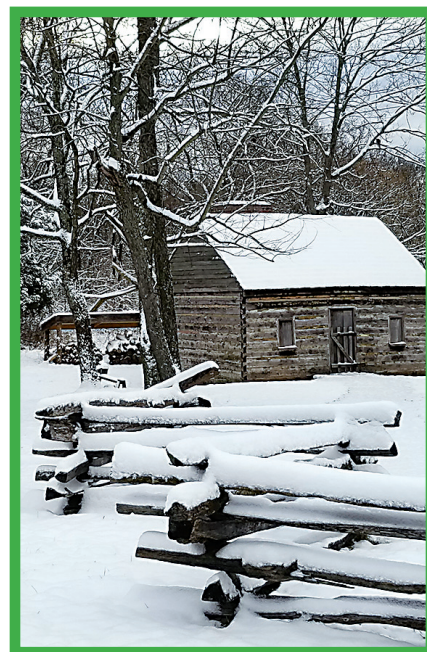
703-437-1794; [fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully](http://fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully)

Northern Virginia's first Congressman, Richard Bland Lee, built Sully Plantation, where enslaved people cultivated wheat, corn and rye. Today, thanks to archaeological evidence (such as squirrel and herring bones, broken pottery and coins), record-keeping and letters, researchers found a slave quarter. A slave cabin was built in 2000 to represent the enslaved community.

Today, we know about Thornton, who cooked in the kitchen; Madam Juba, who laundered the clothes; Sam, who worked as a blacksmith and many others whose stories need to be shared. All this history can be discovered by visiting the site and taking a tour of the house and an outdoor walking tour—the Forgotten Road Tour.

Several special events will take place this February, including a free virtual lecture on Saturday, Feb. 5, by Dr. Richard Bell on the "Fire of Frederick Douglass" and a "lunch and learn" on Saturday, Feb. 17, a chance to learn about Sully's enslaved people.

February tours, available Thursday through Sunday at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., will focus on the work and lives of Sully's enslaved people. The grounds are open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, and the visitor center is open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. The fee for the house tour and Forgotten Road tour is \$10 for adults and \$8 for children (5-15); the grounds, outbuildings and garden are free. ■



Slave quarters

COURTESY SULLY HISTORIC SITE





## ACADEMIES AND SCHOOLS

### BASIS INDEPENDENT MCLEAN

8000 Jones Branch Drive  
McLean, VA 22102  
703-854-1253  
mclean.basisindependent.com  
mclean-info@basisindependent.com  
Ages 2-3

Students at BASIS Independent McLean get the best possible start to their education. The toddler and early learning programs, led by nurturing experts, are designed to empower curiosity, independence and social-emotional development from day one.

### (THE) BETHESDA MONTESSORI SCHOOL

7611 Clarendon Road  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
301-986-1260  
bethesdamontessori.com  
admissions@bethesdamontessori.com  
Ages: 3-6

BMS, established in 1983, is located in the heart of Bethesda, offering two years of preschool and a kindergarten year. Open 8 a.m.-6 p.m. AMI-trained teachers, art, French and computer are offered, plus after-school activities.

### BROOKSFIELD SCHOOL

1830 Kirby Road  
McLean, VA 22101  
703-356-5437  
brooksfieldschool.org  
sarah@brooksfieldschool.org  
Ages Served: 2-10

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

Brooksfeld School offers mindfulness, nutrition, Spanish, dance, music, art, outdoor adventure, extracurricular activities and summer camp.

### CONGRESSIONAL SCHOOL

3229 Sleepy Hollow Road  
Falls Church, VA 22042  
703-533-9711  
congressionschool.org  
gherbst@congressionschool.org

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

### EARLY LEARNERS ACADEMY

474 Ridge St. NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
703-589-0990  
earlylearnersela.com

At Early Learners Academy, each child learns how to identify letters and words, make letter and sound connections, use writing tools, build

relationships, respond to text and conquer personal goals. Early Learners Academy is staffed by exceptional educators who have been trained to teach early learners. Early Learners Academy has received recognition by the National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs.

### HUNTER MILL MONTESSORI SCHOOL

2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, VA 22124  
703-938-7755  
preschoolmontessori.com  
info@huntermillmontessori.com

Tours are available by appointment.

Hunter Mill Montessori School provides an intimate and nurturing environment for children ages 2 years, 9 months to 6-year-old children to develop their independence through the Montessori experience. Hunter Mill offers a complete educational and social environment and uses the discoveries and methods of Dr. Montessori to help children develop more fully the potential within them. The school provides a program specially suited to a child's needs and offers individual attention for whole development.

### (THE) MANOR MONTESSORI SCHOOL

10500 Oaklyn Drive, Potomac, MD 20854  
5450 Massachusetts Ave.  
Bethesda, MD 20816  
11200 Old Georgetown Road



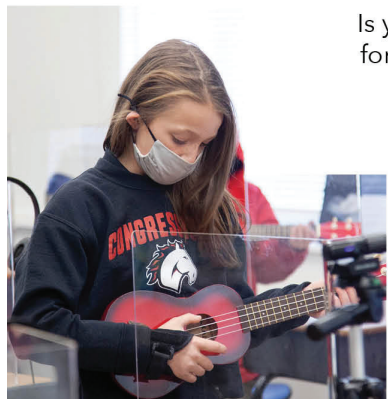
CONGRESSIONAL  SCHOOL

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Preschool - Grade 8 Co-ed, Private School • Contact us about our Infant and Toddler Program



Rockville, MD 20852  
301-299-7400  
manormontessori.com

Ages: 2-9

Discover Maryland's first Montessori School, teaching generations of children since 1962. Offering school day, extended day and summer day camp.

#### MARVA COLLINS COTTAGE SCHOOL

703-942-9817  
mccottageschool.org  
director@mccottageschool.org  
Private/Independent School  
Grades accepted: PreK-Second  
Ages accepted: 4-7 years

Offering half- and full-day programs and culturally responsive education while prioritizing the joy of learning. Please visit the school's website for information session and open house details.

#### (THE) MONTESSORI SCHOOL AT GOOSE CREEK PRESERVE

42470 Rosalind St., Ashburn, VA 20148  
571-417-3999

goosecreekmontessori.com  
info@goosecreekmontessori.com  
Tours available by appointment.

Discover this brand-new Montessori school in the Broadlands area of Ashburn. All of the classrooms are spacious with an abundance of natural lighting. The classrooms open to the playground with patios allowing children to freely work inside and outside. Goose Creek offers a complete educational and social environment and uses the discoveries and methods of Dr. Montessori to help a child develop more fully the potential within him or her.

#### MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF CEDAR LANE

3035 Cedar Lane, Fairfax, VA 22031  
703-560-4379

preschoolmontessori.com  
info@cedarlanemontessori.com

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

Montessori School of Cedar Lane has been providing over 50 years of Montessori tradition to Northern Virginia. The school offers a complete educational and social environment and uses the discoveries and methods of Dr. Montessori to help a child develop more fully the potential within him or her.

#### (THE) MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF MCLEAN

1711 Kirby Road, McLean, VA 22101  
703-790-1049

mcleanmontessori.org

Ages: 2-12

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

Offering preschool and elementary classes, Spanish, French, science, drama, music, physical education, computer, art and summer school. Transportation available.

#### NYSMITH SCHOOL FOR THE GIFTED

13625 EDS Drive, Herndon, VA 20171

703-713-3332

nysmith.com

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A close-up photograph of a child's mouth, showing a wide smile with visible upper and lower teeth. The lips are pink and slightly parted, revealing the tongue and the roof of the mouth. The background is a soft, out-of-focus skin tone.

# dental details

Answers to questions about your  
child's oral health

BY LINDSAY C. VANASDALAN



We all know that feeling: Uh-oh, my child has a cavity. Was it too much candy? Not enough time spent brushing? Should we have come in sooner for a checkup?

Preventive care is always the goal with any dental visit, but many questions abound. What age should my child first come to the dentist? What measures can I take to ensure that first visit doesn't have any unfriendly surprises?

We polled dental professionals from across the mid-Atlantic region to address common questions in pediatric oral care.



**DR. MICHAEL  
VIRTS, DDS**

Mount Airy  
Children's Dental  
Associates  
Frederick County,  
Maryland

*What causes cavities in children's baby teeth?*

Bacteria causes cavities. The bacteria eat the sugar that is left on the teeth after eating or drinking, then create acid, and the acid erodes the teeth, making a cavity. Cavities are caused by a combination of bacteria and a carbohydrate source.

If the bacteria were left on the teeth by not properly brushing or flossing, cavities can develop. And a proper diet low in carbohydrates is almost just as important as brushing and flossing to prevent cavities as well as seeing the dentist by the time your baby is 12 months old.

*When should children get their first oral health exam?*

Children should see a dentist no later than 12 months of age or when the first tooth appears in the mouth—whatever comes first. For example, if a 6-month-old baby gets a tooth in, then it's time to see the dentist. Unfortunately, many children end up seeing a dentist for cavities for their first visit instead of seeing a dentist preventively at any early age. Cavities are a very preventable but common disease of childhood. Dental illness accounts for millions of school hours lost each year.



**DR. MARIA  
CORDERO-  
RICARDO, DMD,  
MS, MPH**

Philadelphia  
Pediatric Dentistry  
Philadelphia,  
Pennsylvania

*When are children old enough to brush their teeth on their own?*

I use a helpful benchmark of when children can tie their shoes or cut food with a fork and a knife. That's a good benchmark of manual

dexterity. Until then, it's great to let them practice by doing it first and having a grown-up go over it (with them). Some kids are ready around age 6. Some kids need a little more help until age 8 because we all develop at different rates.

*What's the best way to encourage children to brush their teeth correctly and regularly?*

Children learn best from modeling of behaviors. Make sure to include them in your own family's routines and rhythms. The littlest children see you brushing, the older children in the house—or if you have just one child—brushing side by side and making it part of a happy routine before bed and sometime in the morning after breakfast is ideal. But I like making it part of family routines because children learn from what the grown-ups do.



**DR. DAVID R.  
ROSS, DDS, MS**  
Orthodontist  
Baltimore County,  
Maryland

*When should parents consider orthodontic treatment for their children?*

The best time to take your child to an orthodontist for an evaluation is when they're around 7 years old. Why 7? Well, by the time your kiddo is 7, they'll have lost several baby teeth already and an orthodontist can look at their smile and see if any potential issues may be popping up. Not only that, the American Association of Orthodontists recommends that all children see an orthodontist by the time they're 7.

During your child's first visit, most children find out that they don't need early intervention and are monitored every few months to make sure their teeth are coming in correctly. If it turns out that your child does need early intervention, this allows an orthodontist to guide your child's teeth and jaw development while their mouth is still growing, greatly reducing the need for tooth extractions or surgery later. David Ross Orthodontics offers free orthodontic evaluations for children ages 7 and older.

**DR. TRACY BOWDEN, DDS**

Kids First Pediatric Dentistry  
Baltimore County, Maryland

*What's the best way for children to protect their teeth from injury due to sports and injuries?*

Many parents bring their children in with mouth injuries from sports, so custom mouthguards or mouthguards that you can buy over the counter are pretty good. That's probably one of the best ways to not have mouth injuries, of course, and also to prevent concussions. Sixty percent of concussions are supposedly from that fall where you hit your chin.

(Also it's) just wearing mouthguards in sports where children normally don't. Kids in soccer don't usually wear mouthguards. They don't wear them in basketball, and that's where we see all the injuries.



**DR. PETER  
MARKOV, DMD**  
VK Pediatric  
Dentistry  
Arlington, Virginia

*How effective is toothpaste containing fluoride for kids?*

Fluoride in kids' toothpaste is one of the most effective and important ingredients to look for! In general, as soon as a child has teeth, we want to make sure there's fluoride in their toothpaste.

Fluoride helps in a variety of ways, but most importantly, fluoride helps strengthen the teeth so they are more resistant to cavities. This (fluoride) is especially important for kids as their teeth, and their hygiene habits, are still developing. For kiddos who can't spit out the toothpaste yet, aim for a grain-of-rice-sized smear of toothpaste on the brush. For older kiddos, a pea-sized amount is adequate for protection.

*At what age should parents consider sealants for their children's teeth?*

Sealants are very effective at preventing cavities on the smooth biting surface of teeth. Although some children receive sealants on baby teeth, typically the first teeth to be sealed are the permanent molars which start coming in around age 6.

Permanent molars have deep grooves that can be difficult to fully clean, even for the most diligent of brushers. Adding a sealant to these teeth is a relatively easy process and can go a long way to protect the teeth and prevent cavities in the future. Some studies show up to a 50% reduction in cavities on sealed teeth! A benefit of a sealant compared to a filling is that it requires no drilling or numbing and is a very conservative option that offers great protection. ■





Look, Mom and Dad,



i Brushed my teeth!

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MONTH: .....



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TUESDAY								
WEDNESDAY								
THURSDAY								
FRIDAY								
SATURDAY								
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# Heart-Healthy

## HABITS FOR KIDS

Diet, exercise and proper sleep form the building blocks for wellness

BY ELEANOR LINA FELT

**F**ebruary is American Heart Month. Now is a great time to think about your child's cardiovascular health. Eating a well-rounded diet, exercising regularly and getting good sleep are all important habits to form as kids and carry into adulthood. By making heart-healthy choices a part of your family's routine, everyone is more likely to sustain them.





## Diet

A heart-healthy diet includes multiple fruits and vegetables each day, a decent amount of fiber and a limit of fried foods.

To make your child's diet a bit more heart healthy, forego the sugar-sweetened beverages.

"A lot of kids love juice; it's nice and sweet, but that bleeds into sodas and energy drinks," says Sarah Clauss, an advanced imaging cardiologist at Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C. "Try to encourage water and low-fat milk as much as possible."

Be creative in making healthy foods more appealing to your kids.

"Serve it in a creative way, like making smiley faces or some unique presentation, to make it more appetizing to them," Clauss says.

Peter Gaskin, a pediatric cardiologist at the University of Maryland Children's Hospital and assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, says that when you can make changes in diet gradually, you should always keep moderation in mind.

"There are many ways that you can eat healthy foods and have tasty healthy foods," he says. "I'm not saying that you can't have a steak or red meat, but don't expect to do that three or four times a week. If you do that once a week that's fine."

Maintaining a healthy diet is easier to do when everyone in the family does it together.

"Cooking and eating meals as a family, when possible, is one of the ways children can feel supported and empowered in these habits," says Emmanuelle Favilla, an attending physician with the division of cardiology at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

## Exercise

Regular exercise is also a crucial part of maintaining a healthy heart.

"Your heart is a muscle you need to condition and keep well-tuned," Gaskin says.

The American Academy of Pediatrics

recommends that kids get an hour of exercise five days a week. Although that number may seem daunting, Gaskin says that even 30 minutes of exercise a day would be great for young people.

Clauss also says that the exercise can be broken up throughout the day into smaller increments. She recommends that especially for older kids, who are often more busy, scheduling exercise can help ensure they still do it.

"If they put in their schedule 30 minutes of a walk or treadmill time, it's more likely to get done than if it is not on the schedule," she says.

You don't have to be an athlete or play a sport to make exercise a consistent part of your lifestyle.

"Encourage the kids to turn on some music and dance to a few songs. They can do some situps and pushups. They can jump rope in the house, run up and down stairs or run around and play in the snow," Gaskin says. "All those things are ways of getting some regular exercise."

Additionally, try to limit screen time and replace it with exercise that everyone in the family can do together.

"Instilling limitations on screen time as a family—and in turn embracing daily activities that encourage movement, without singling out certain individuals who might be at higher risk due to weight—is important," Favilla says.

## Sleep

Getting good sleep is also necessary for a healthy heart.

"You really need a good night's sleep to help with your body's metabolism and to maintain a healthy weight," Clauss says.

Parents play an important role in making sure that their kids get regular sleep.

"Make sure your kids have some kind of routine—that they're going to bed at a good hour, getting enough sleep and not having screen time right before bed because

that's going to make it hard to fall asleep," Clauss says.

## Holistic Benefits of Heart Health

Adopting a heart-healthy lifestyle at an early age pays off in the long term.

"Our cardiac health as children and adolescents, as evaluated by proxy measures such as weight and blood pressure, reflects our risk of heart disease as adults," Favilla says. "Thus, it is never too early to promote a heart-healthy lifestyle to our children. (It's) instilling healthy habits for them to grow with and in turn more easily sustain in adolescence and adulthood."

Many occurrences of heart disease that adults develop start as kids. But parents can take preventive measures early on.

"It's very important if you can get your kids screened for cholesterol. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that kids get screened between 9 and 11," Clauss says. "Get the screening and take care of it as best as you can early on because that is reversible, but once you get to be older, it's not."

One can avoid many health issues by developing heart-healthy habits now.

"If you have a heart-healthy lifestyle in place, you avoid things like obesity, hypertension and having an abnormal glucose profile leading to metabolic syndrome or diabetes," Gaskin says. "By working on these things from childhood, it's easier to develop those good habits rather than having to make changes in your lifestyle to fix something that has already happened."

By making heart-healthy habits a part of your family's routine, kids will pick them up easier, and adults will also see the benefits in themselves.

"A lot of what I talk about with my families is modeling good behaviors," Clauss says. "I want parents to eat these foods, too, and the parents to exercise and limit their screen time. I want them to be role models." ■



# Emergency Room Injuries and How to Prevent Them

BY ELEANOR LINAFLT



**G**etting hurt is a part of childhood, but it's essential to prevent serious injuries in children. Parents can take several steps—in the home, on the playground and in the car—to try to avoid a trip to the emergency room.

But if your child gets seriously hurt, it's crucial to know when a trip to the ER is necessary to get the care needed.

## Accidents

According to Dan Taylor, medical director of St. Christopher's Hospital for Children outpatient clinic and associate professor of pediatrics for Drexel College of Medicine in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the most common injuries in children occur because of accidents such as falls or bike crashes.

"Those are typically either broken bones or cuts, which we call lacerations or sprains," he says.

Parents need to watch for certain signs after an accident that signal they should take their child to the emergency room.

"If it's a cut or a laceration—not just a scrape—those typically have to go to an ER or an urgent care center," Taylor says. "If it's a small laceration that might need a few stitches, or a staple or two, most urgent care centers can do that, and all emergency rooms can do that. If it's a larger cut or laceration, definitely an emergency room."

If a child falls on an outstretched arm and is experiencing swelling, an ER professional needs to evaluate this injury. "Any type of injury on an outstretched arm where a kid is in a lot of pain and they're swelling in the elbow especially needs to be evaluated pretty quickly or else there can be nerve damage," Taylor says. "Any kind of injury where there is pain and swelling in a joint or extremity or ribs should be evaluated in an ER to make sure there's no fracture."

## Motor vehicle accidents

More serious injuries can occur from motor vehicle accidents, according to Marjorie Galler, an emergency department pediatrician at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and assistant professor of clinical pediatrics and emergency medicine at Georgetown University School of Medicine.

"While most of the injuries I see are not life-threatening, certainly the ones related to motor vehicle accidents can be," she says.

Prevention is key in avoiding life-threatening injuries from car crashes.

"You want to have a really good infant car seat. You want to make sure people are transitioning out of the infant car seat into an appropriate toddler preschool-age car seat when they hit that weight limit," Galler says. Additionally, she notes that "the American Academy of Pediatrics is pushing for people to keep children as rear-facing for as long as possible."

## Winter injuries

### *In the home*

During the winter, injuries in the home are more common since families spend more time inside. The American Academy of Pediatrics offers a home safety checklist that Taylor recommends families review.

"It includes things like stair gates and having cribs that have sides that are the right height so kids can't crawl out of cribs and fall down," he says. "Knowing the development milestones of kids is really important."

### *Burns*

Scalding burns are common for children during the winter.

"Whether that's pulling down mom or dad's coffee from the table, or going to grandma or grandpa's house and having the kettle on (the stove), scalding burns are deep, and they're serious," Galler says. "You want to be really cautious about placement of things, especially when you have family visiting."

Families should also be careful if they light fires in the fireplace or in outdoor fire pits. "Make sure you're thinking about having a safe fire grate and constant supervision," she says.

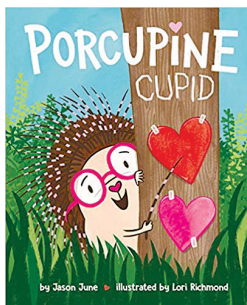
## Always a balance

While parents should allow their kids freedom to play, they also need to be vigilant about the potential for serious injury.

"That delicate balance is something that all parents have to struggle with a little bit," Taylor says. "Most kids are resilient and can bounce back from injuries, but it's important to ensure that there's no chance for them to have a major life-threatening injury."

But when serious injuries occur, emergency room pediatricians are available to address them. "You can always remember we're here 24/7," Galler says. "Every emergency department is prepared to care for your child while in need." ■



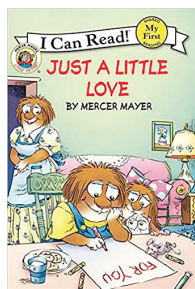
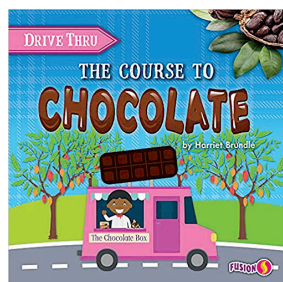
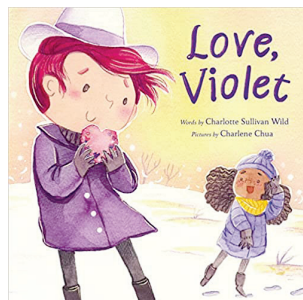
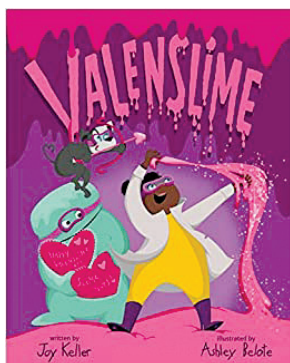


# 12 Heartfelt Books for February

Discover Stories to Warm the Heart This Month

BY JENNIFER ROTHCHILD, COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT LIBRARIAN  
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Love is in the air with these books about romance, Valentine's Day and sweet treats. Explore stories of first crushes, elaborate Valentines and subverting romantic tropes.



## PICTURE BOOKS

### "Porcupine Cupid"

by June Jason,  
illustrated by Lori Richmond

Porcupine loves romance and decides to play Cupid for his friends. Unfortunately, he thinks this activity means he should stick them all with arrows (he uses his quills.) The reaction is not quite what he hoped, until he posts a sign for a party where everyone can complain about the "Poke-y Porcupine Problem." As the animals complain, they each find someone to pair off with—even someone for Porcupine in this cute, pun-filled story.

### "Valenslime"

by Joy Keller, illustrated by Ashley Belote  
Victoria Franken is a slime scientist. She even brought some of her slime to life to make her friend Goop. As Victoria makes Valentines for all her human friends, Goop realizes he would like some slime friends, so Victoria sets off to make the perfect slime companion for him. This book is filled with all types of slime and a few of Victoria's nonsentient slime recipes to try at home.

### "Love, Violet"

by Charlotte Sullivan Wild,  
illustrated by Charlene Chua  
Violet thinks that Mira is the greatest and wants to impress her with grand adventures and treasures, but every time Mira tries to play with her, Violet gets shy and can't speak. In order

to tell Mira how she feels, Violet makes her a special Valentine. When the Valentine falls in the snow, Violet must find her courage to still give it to Mira with wonderful results.

## EARLY READERS

### "The Course to Chocolate"

by Harriet Brundle

Follow along with the Chocolate Box food truck to discover how chocolate is made and turned into some of our favorite treats. This book is part of the Drive Thru series, which uses food trucks to explore the journeys our favorite foods take to arrive on our plates.

### "Little Critter: Just a Little Love"

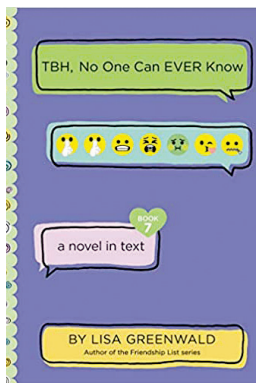
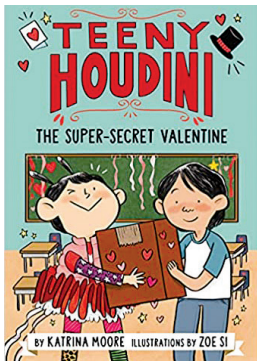
by Mercer Mayer

Little Critter has delighted generations of young readers. When Grandma gets sick, Little Critter and his family decide to visit to make her feel better. They make a card, pick flowers and apples and make egg salad to bring, but something goes wrong at each step. No matter what happens though, a little love at each hiccup can help solve any problem.

### "Teeny Houdini: The Super-Secret Valentine"

by Katrina Moore, illustrated by Zoe Si  
Bessie Lee doesn't let her lack of height stop her grand ideas. When she is asked to make a special Valentine to welcome a new student, she thinks big. Bessie's Valentine has glitter, tape and her special brand of magic. When nothing works





out the way she planned, will she be able to fix her problem?

## MIDDLE-GRADE READERS

### "The Big, Fun Kids Baking Book" from Food Network Magazine

Aimed at beginning bakers, this book helps young chefs create the sweetest Valentine's Day. A range of sweet cookies and cakes and savory muffins and quick breads give children much to explore. Kids will love the section of fakeout recipes, with cakes designed to look like grilled cheese sandwiches or spaghetti and meatballs. Tips, tricks, trivia and a photographic index help round out this useful (and delicious) book.

### "TBH, No One Can EVER Know" by Lisa Greenwald

Victoria has been working hard to plan the school's Valentine dance, but her mother's anxiety-fueled overprotectiveness has hit new levels and now she may not even be allowed to go. Victoria will need the help of her best friends if she's going to find a way to repair her relationship with her mother. Told entirely in text messages, emojis and notes, Greenwald makes full use of this communications form, from the perfect reaction emoji to misunderstanding the tone behind a friend's text.

### "A Batch Made in Heaven" by Suzanne Nelson

Mina is excited to get an internship at the local bakery. She wants to hone her baking skills so that she can win an upcoming cookie challenge and help her family, but she's instead captioning Instagram photos because the owner's son, Flynn, won't let her anywhere near the kitchen. Will she be able to discover what Flynn is hiding and make her dreams come true? This light, sweet romance also includes recipes to help recreate Mina's mouthwatering cookie creations.



## TEEN READERS

### "Happily Ever Afters"

by Elise Bryant

Tessa loves writing romance stories, but when she enrolls at a new school with a creative writing program, she develops a huge case of writer's block. Her friend Caroline decides the thing Tessa needs is some real-life romance to get the words flowing again, and she's picked out the perfect Prince Charming. Tessa follows Caroline's program but finds she's getting further away from her heart in the process. Maybe Tessa's Happily Ever After isn't the one she put down on the page, and she has a new story to tell.

### "Chocolate: Sweet Science and Dark Secrets"

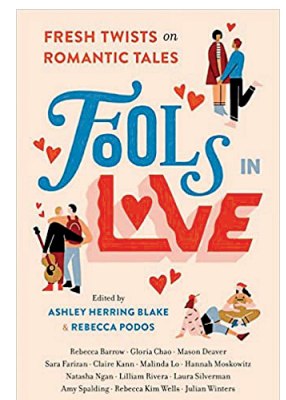
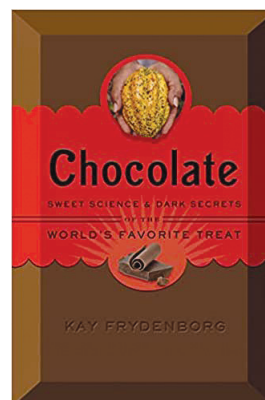
by Kay Frydenborg

Enjoy this wide-ranging exploration of the many facets of chocolate. Frydenborg looks at how chocolate was used in Mesoamerica and how European conquest and colonization exported it around the globe. From examining the science behind why humans find it so delicious to the use of slavery in its cultivation, this book offers a fascinating and sweeping look at a favorite treat.

### "Fools in Love: Fresh Twists on Romance Tales"

edited by Ashley Herring Blake and Rebecca Podos

Fifteen short stories from authors such as Malinda Lo, Hannah Moskowitz and Sara Farizan each tackle a romance trope such as fake dating, secret royalty and being snowed-in together with a fun and intriguing new spin. From sports championships to Seder dinners, from boy bands to fleeing monsters, this collection offers a fun assortment of romance tales. ■





# 5 Things Only a Mom Would Say on Valentine's Day

BY CHERYL MAGUIRE



My Turn gives readers a voice. To submit a piece for consideration, email us at [mvykocil@midatlanticmedia.com](mailto:mvykocil@midatlanticmedia.com). My Turn opinion pieces do not reflect the views of Washington FAMILY.

**O**n Valentine's Day, long before your mom days, you probably dined by candlelight in some swanky restaurant. Once you gave birth to your sweet little munchkins, your meal is more likely to involve baby spit up or chicken nuggets. Besides the lack of a romantic dining experience, you may also find yourself saying the following:

## 1. "Thank God this holiday doesn't entail elves, fairies, leprechauns or any other magical night creatures."

I'm not sure who came up with the brilliant idea of having "magical night creatures," but I can guarantee it wasn't a mom. At night, moms are counting down the seconds until they can go to sleep. The last thing on a mom's mind is remembering to move an elf, retrieve a tooth or paint green leprechaun footprints on the floor. Plus, who would want to create a "leprechaun mess" knowing who will have to clean it up later? Definitely not a mom. We have enough messes we already clean daily. Please don't create a magical "Cupid" that comes in the night. We already have more magic than Harry Potter at our house—thanks but no thanks.

## 2. "I just need about 10 more hours on Pinterest to find the perfect Valentine's Day craft, cupcake and card."

Pinterest is a black hole that will suck all of the hours out of your day. Just when you think you found the perfect craft, cupcake or card to replicate for the 25 kids in your child's class, you will see another one and then another one. Before you know it, the whole day is gone and you still haven't picked up a glue gun or spatula.

## 3. "I know you already have five Valentine's Day T-shirts, but I couldn't resist buying another one. I mean what other time

## can you wear a shirt that reads 'Love-a-saurus' with an adorable red dinosaur on it?"

Valentine's Day kid shirts are adorable. Let's face it ... your teens aren't going to let you dress them up in a "Love-a-saurus" shirt, so I'm going to dress up the kids in as many as I can while I still can. Some of my favorites besides "Love-a-saurus" are "More Spice than Sugar," "I Choo-Choo Choose You" and "You Have a Pizza of My Heart."

## 4. "Roses are red. Violets are blue. I'll give you some candy if you go number two—in the potty this time."

Oh, the joys of potty training on Valentine's Day! Enough said.

## 5. "I think a fair cut of your Valentine's Day school candy would be half since I wrote all 25 of your Valentine cards."

Not only do you have to write each kid's name on the Valentine card, but then you have to lick each envelope and then put a candy or sticker on it. If you are lucky enough to have three kids, that is 75 cards in one night since, of course, you waited until the night before to do this "work." Surely this effort warrants at least half of the candy take if not more—actually 60-40 is probably a fairer cut.

Once that Hershey Kiss starts melting in your mouth, that hand cramp will be a distant memory—until next year. ■

*Cheryl Maguire holds a Master of Counseling Psychology degree. She is married and is the mother of twins and a daughter. Her writing has been published in The New York Times, Parents Magazine, AARP, Healthline, Your Teen Magazine and many other publications. You can find her at Twitter @CherylMaguire05.*

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A close-up 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.

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