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JANUARY 2021

SCAVENGER
HUNTS

FAMILY
GAME NIGHT

STEM
EXPERIMENTS

AND MORE!

Indoor Winter Fun

**What Will Camp
Look Like in 2021?**

JANUARY 2021



CISCARON / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS 1

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We welcome your feedback on specific articles, overall themes and anything else related to editorial content. Email your comments to 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.

At Oneness-Family Montessori High School, the only Montessori high school in the Washington area, we are building a 21st Century Leadership program founded upon Maria Montessori's vision. We've gathered a team of exceptional thought leaders to create a program that incorporates essential leadership skill sets and will have students joining together for a real-world capstone project in their community each year. The program will launch in September 2020.

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Banishing Boredom

I recently read an article in The New York Times that makes the case for letting children play outside all winter. They'll enjoy themselves, the writer explains, as long as they have suitable clothing, activities to keep them moving and plenty of snacks.

Now, my kids are happy to bundle up if there's snow on the ground, but as the temperature drops, so does their enthusiasm for being outside. Even if I can manage to convince them to run around in the yard for an hour or so every day, winter is long. Without the possibility of indoor playdates to pass the time, am I doomed to listen to my boys whine that they're bored until spring?

After working with the editorial team on our cover story, "Indoor Family Fun" (page 9), I'm feeling a little less concerned about the potential for cabin fever. Our guide offers inventive ways to entertain the kids at home, from building the ultimate arts and crafts closet to picking the perfect game for family game night. When combined with some outdoor play, these activities are sure to keep little ones busy and, most importantly, happy.

Looking ahead to warmer weather, our January issue also explores what summer camp might look like across the region (page 18). Jennifer Marino Walters spoke to camp directors and local parents about how they dealt with COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 and what they are planning to do in 2021.

Finally, I'm excited to introduce two new departments in this issue: Parent You Should Know (page 8) and My Turn (page 35). If you'd like to nominate a mom or dad for Parent You Should Know or submit a personal essay on parenting for My Turn, please email me at PFeinstein@midatlanticmedia.com.

Indeed, 2020 was the most challenging year many of us have ever experienced. While hope is on the horizon, let's all continue to wear masks, wash our hands and take care of one another.

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

By Elena Epstein/Director of the National Parenting Product Awards

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Shelly Bell

Founder and CEO of The Black Girl Ventures Foundation

BY PJ FEINSTEIN

a flow. The COVID-19 quarantine laughed at my rhythm and threw me off beat. Trying to be a great mom while managing virtual kindergarten, speaking engagements, coaching, facilitating and fundraising meetings is really challenging. Juggling motherhood and my career was a little easier when my Josiah was living at home and everyone had somewhere to go during the day. Now that Damien and Josiah are in college, it's just Skylar and me toughing it out every day.

overly watery, not mixed properly and had mushrooms floating in the grit of the cocoa bits. I smiled and pretended to drink knowing I was absolutely not about to drink it. I sat it on the counter, got busy doing something and forgot to pour it out. Days later, I noticed him looking sad, so I asked him what was the matter. With the saddest face ever, he looked up at me and said, "You never drank my hot chocolate." I was like, "OMG! I didn't pour the friggin' brown water he made me down the drain." It is a story that we remember to this day.

When Shelly Bell became a mother at 17, she was determined to overcome the economic consequences that often result from teenage pregnancies. So she threw herself into overdrive—and has been going nonstop ever since. "It was like working a muscle that got stronger, and now I can lift a lot more than I ever could," she says.

We spoke to the Northern Virginia mom about the joys and challenges of raising three kids—Damien, 21; Josiah, 18; and Skylar, 6—while leading a national movement of thousands of female entrepreneurs.

Can you describe the type of work that you do?

I work to create a more equitable world for women and to inspire women to see themselves as deserving of a more equitable world. My company, The Black Girl Ventures Foundation, works to create access to social and financial capital for Black and Brown women-identifying founders. We believe that community, capacity and capital are the building blocks for creating a sustainable business. When women founders have these three pillars, they are able to generate generational wealth for their families.

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

For me, everything has to have a rhythm and

What's something that makes it easier to balance both?

Skylar's dad and I have week-week visitation, so she is one week with me and one week with him. Having an active co-parent is super helpful. I plan around the days she is with him to catch up on things and to work the longest hours. I also block time on my calendar to be sure I can be with her during class breaks. I have decided to hire help in areas that would slip while I am busy, including tutors, cleaners and sometimes a chef or a food delivery service. HelloFresh has been a bit of a lifesaver!

What do you love about being a parent?

The simple things like laughter and playing. I love the first words, first steps, first school day, first college acceptance letter, etc. I love the feeling when my children are happy to see me and they say, "Mommy!" There is no better feeling than that for me. I also love knowing that I am contributing three amazing leaders to the world that I want to be a better place. Being a parent reminds me to look at life from all angles. Watching my children grow up into amazing adults has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had.

What's your biggest parenting fail?

When Josiah was about 7 or 8, he made me his version of hot chocolate. It was


How has your family been handling the pandemic?

Damien and Josiah are in college and handling it pretty well. I am home with Skylar two weeks a month, and being an entrepreneur has been challenging for her to understand. At her dad's, the work hours of the adults are typically consistent. At my place, I may be on calls from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. fundraising, coaching and speaking. Josiah didn't realize all the work I was actually doing until now. In July, he said, "Wow, Ma. I thought you were sleeping all day." I would be asleep when he left and taking a nap when he would come home from school, so he assumed that I was sleeping all day. It never occurred to him that I needed rest from all the working I had been doing.

What's the one thing you hope your kids learn from you and your career as an entrepreneur?

I hope my kids learn to believe in themselves and to try something new. I want them to develop a playbook for their own successes. I want them to know that they can dream up something, activate it and that it can be a viable business. ■

This interview has been lightly edited and condensed. To nominate a future "Parent You Should Know," please email PFfeinstein@midatlanticmedia.com.



Keep the kids
entertained
this winter
with crafts,
scavenger
hunts, science
experiments
and more

By WF Staff

INDOOR *Family Fun*

Many families have already made the decision to forgo favorite indoor activities this winter—exploring museums, going to the movies, having playdates with friends—in order to protect themselves and their loved ones from the coronavirus. That means kids will be spending a lot of time cooped up at home. While screens are an easy way to keep them occupied, they definitely aren't the only option.

We've consulted with experts, chatted with parents and revisited our own childhood memories to create this guide to indoor family fun. Whether your kids enjoy science, games or arts and crafts, there are plenty of ways to help them stay busy in the months ahead.

zeijkosantrac / E+



HERE ARE THE MUST-HAVE MATERIALS THAT NO CRAFTY KIDS SHOULD BE WITHOUT:

- Adhesive tape
- Copier and construction paper
- Crayons
- Glue sticks and craft glue
- Hole punch
- Kraft paper
- Paintbrushes
- Paints (finger paints and tempera paints)
- Pencils (both graphite and colored)
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Stapler

FOR MORE ADVANCED CRAFTERS, GO BEYOND THE BASICS AND ADD SOME SPECIALTY SUPPLIES:

- Beads
- Craft foam and craft sticks
- Decorative paper punches
- Plasticine and polymer clay, for modeling
- Rubber stamps and stamp pads
- Specialty papers, such as origami and tissue paper
- Stencils



Craft PROJECTS

Scavenger hunts have always been popular activities for children. Not only are they simple, inexpensive and fun distractions, but they also encourage kids to interact with their environment and practice problem solving. Get them moving and thinking with these easy, creative scavenger hunt ideas.

THE ALPHABET HUNT

Grab a sheet of paper and write down the alphabet. Challenge your kids to find objects around the house that start with each letter. They can either collect the items and put them in one spot or, if you'd rather not have a gigantic pile of 26 random objects on your floor, have them write down the object next to the letter.

THE SENSORY HUNT

Encourage sensory exploration by creating a scavenger hunt where kids can touch, see, taste, hear and smell. Challenges can include finding items that feel soft, bumpy or squishy, or that make noise, smell nice, taste good, are heavy, are bright or can move.

THE COLOR HUNT

Help your little ones learn their colors with this simple scavenger hunt. Take an array of markers and draw colorful boxes on a sheet of paper with the name of the color underneath. Then ask your kids to find an object to match each color. As an added challenge, use different shades of the same color and encourage your little ones to explore items with different hues.

THE EXERCISE HUNT

This activity is a great way for your kids to have fun and get active. Write down eight to 10 different exercises on index cards, such as 10 jumping jacks, 15 seconds of jogging, five pushups or 30 seconds of dancing. Place the cards around the room where they can be easily seen. Dividing your children into teams, have them find the exercise cards in the order printed on a separate card and complete them. You can make this activity a competition to see who can complete all of their exercises first and offer a prize as an incentive.

THE STATE HUNT

Break out the maps for this scavenger hunt. Create a list of geography-based questions about the 50 states and encourage your child to explore our nation. For example, ask kids to find a state that is next to the Pacific Ocean, a state surrounded by other states on all sides, a state that borders another country, a state that starts with a specific letter, a state next to one of the Great Lakes or a state made up of islands.

THE GRATITUDE HUNT

On this hunt, children can find items to be grateful for and discover what makes them happy. Ask your kids to find items that they like to wear, enjoy playing with, are useful to them, are good for giving as gifts to someone else, make them laugh, reflect beauty or remind them of a place that they like to visit. ■

— Katie Beecher

Art class shouldn't be the only times kids get to be creative. "It's important for kids to use their imaginations to help them express themselves through their creativity," says Rachel Dorton, public relations manager for Kid Made Modern.

In order to let imaginations

run wild, you'll want to stock up on some craft supplies. Just make sure they are kid-friendly items. For example, scissors with a rounded tip are the safest type for young kids. And kraft paper is great to protect work surfaces and can also double as a background for creating a large drawing or painting.

Of course, don't overlook household items, such as milk cartons and paper-towel rolls, which kids can use for their artistic creations.

You may not have the luxury of having your own craft room in your home, but you can easily transform an old armoire or a cupboard into a well-stocked craft space.

"It's really great to give your kids the materials they need to let their minds run with their imagination and let them create something," says Dorton.

If your child struggles to get started on independent artwork, Kid Made Modern holds regular one-hour virtual crafting sessions for kids around the country. Or you can sign up for the Kid Made Modern Monthly Craft Club and receive a new box of crafts each month with all the materials and directions your child needs to complete a project on their own. ■

— Michael Vyskocil



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Scavenger HUNTS

While you certainly can't go wrong with Monopoly, this winter is the perfect opportunity to try out a new family board game. Today's tabletop games can be just as engaging as their digital counterparts, requiring kids to move, draw, build, strategize and most, importantly, enjoy themselves. Best of all, unlike Monopoly, they don't require a full night (or longer!) to complete.

Many game options are available, so we tapped an expert—Dominic Crapuchettes, a professional board game designer and founder of Maryland-based North Star Games—for his top picks for off-screen family fun. Discover his game recommendations.

Happy Salmon will get your heart pumping as you run around the room to match cards with the other players. When you find a match, you celebrate together by performing the action on your card (high five, fist bump, etc.), then you throw the card on the ground and look for your next match. The first player to go through their 12 cards wins. Happy Salmon works great across several generations and is sure to put a smile on everyone's face. *2 minutes, ages 6+, four to six players (or up to 12 people with two copies)*

Monster Match is a speed game. Every round, two dice are rolled showing a number and a body part (arms, legs, or eyes). Players quickly scan the 10 monster cards on the table to find one that matches what is showing on the dice. Hundreds of speed games are on the market, but Monster Match is unique because multiple players can get a match each round. This allows younger kids to participate and have fun. *10 minutes, ages 6+, two to six players*

Beasts of Balance is a cooperative game where players work together to build a tower of animals without any of them falling. The beautifully sculpted animals interact with a downloadable app, which keeps score for you and displays an interactive ecosystem of the animals you've played. Beasts of Balance sells



for \$100, but the unique experience it provides is worth every penny. *10-20 minutes, Ages 7+, one to five players*

Rat-a-Tat-Cat is a simple strategy game that requires a mix of memory skills, calculated risk-taking and a bit of interactive

CRYSTAL STAR ORNAMENT

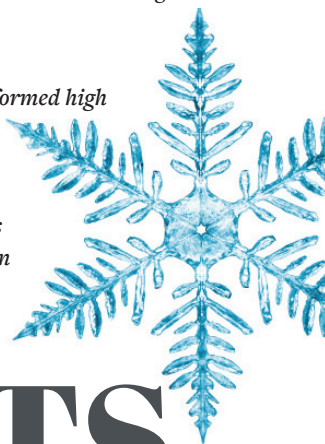
What you need:

- Table salt
- Water
- Bowl
- Spoon
- Measuring cup
- Plate
- Pipe cleaners
- Cookie cutter – simple shape like a star or snowflake
- Optional: food coloring

FUN FACTS:

Snowflakes are actually ice crystals that are formed high up in the clouds when water freezes. They always have six sides, but every single one of them is unique.

Most sandy beaches are made up of billions of broken quartz crystals. Quartz is a common mineral found in rocks, soil and sand.



Science EXPERIMENTS



bluffing. It's a great way for kids to practice their addition skills while having fun and interacting with others. *10 minutes, ages 8+, two to five players*

Wits & Wagers Family is a multi-generational trivia game where

no one will know any of the answers. Players write estimates to a question, then bet on the estimate they think is closest to the right answer. Part of the game is about making good estimates, but a larger part is knowing which player to bet on depending on the category. This gives kids a fighting chance to beat their parents at a trivia game. *20 minutes, ages 8+, two to five players*

Telestrations is a party game that combines drawing and the classic "telephone" game. In round 1, each player gets a word to sketch in a notebook before passing the notebook to their left. In round 2, everyone looks at the sketch, flips the page, writes what they think the word is and passes the notebook to their left. In round 3, everyone looks at the new word, then flips the page and draws a sketch of the new word. Rounds continue like this until everyone has their original notebook. Then players go through the notebooks and laugh at all the funny changes that took place in a chain of sketches. *30 minutes, ages 8+, four to eight players*

Werewords is a mix between 20 questions and a secret identity game. The goal is to guess a secret word before time runs out by asking "yes" or "no" questions. But two of the players are shown the word before the round starts. One of these people, the werewolf, will deliberately try to steer the group in the wrong direction. They win if the word is not guessed correctly. The other player will try to get the group back on track without getting caught by the werewolf. *10 minutes, ages 10+, four to 10 players*

Ticket to Ride is a light strategy game about making train routes across the United States. It has engaging gameplay that strikes a balance between luck, strategy and risk-taking. Ticket to Ride has sold over 11 million copies since it was released in 2004. *45 to 60 minutes, ages 12+, two to five players* ■

— PJ Feinstein

Not only are STEM activities great fun for kids, they're also educational. And many of them, like this crystal-growing experiment from Mad Science of Washington, don't even require special supplies. In fact, you probably already have what you need in your kitchen cabinets. So grab a pretend lab coat and let's begin!

WHAT YOU DO:

STEP 1: Twist your pipe cleaner into a simple star shape using a cookie cutter as a guide to help you bend the pipe cleaner. Twist another pipe cleaner around it to make a handle.

STEP 2: Measure 1 cup of warm tap water and pour it into a bowl.

STEP 3: Add ½ cup of salt to the warm water and stir until it is almost dissolved; there will be some salt left at the bottom of the bowl. This should take about 3 to 5 minutes. You have just made a saturated salt solution.

STEP 4: Pour some of your solution onto your plate. It should just cover the bottom. If you add too much, it will just take longer for your crystals to appear.

STEP 5: Lay your star pipe cleaner shape in the salt solution on the plate. Sprinkle some salt over the ornament. By doing this, you are adding "seed crystals" that will help more crystals form.

STEP 6: Leave it to absorb the solution for 48 hours. You should see crystals starting to form on the pipe cleaner. The longer you

leave it, the more crystals will grow. Hang it to fully dry and enjoy your crystal star ornament!

NOW TRY THIS:

You can add a couple of drops of food coloring to your salt solution to make colored crystals.

WHAT'S GOING ON:

By adding salt to the warm water and stirring until no more salt dissolves, you have created a saturated salt solution.

This means that you have reached something called the maximum solubility point for salt in water. At the temperature and air pressure conditions where you are doing your experiment, you can't add any more salt to the solution.

By adding a few grains of salt or "seed crystals" to the pipe cleaner, you are providing the salt molecules in the solution with something to "grab onto." This action lets them form longer crystals as the water evaporates out of the solution that you made, resulting in some lovely crystals on your ornament. Ice crystals can be seeded and form in the same way as salt crystals—that's why they look similarly festive!

Find another kid-friendly science experiment courtesy of Mad Science of Washington at washingtonfamily.com. ■

— PJ Feinstein



Get Growing

By Kimberly Blaker

Indoor Gardening for Family Fun, Health & Sustainable Living

The move toward more sustainable living has gained traction in recent years with families who want to help the environment and their wallets. Gardening is a great hobby to support a more sustainable lifestyle; it's fun, saves money on groceries and helps you and your kids feel accomplished by eating something you grew. It also promotes healthy living, cooking at home and eating more nutritious foods. When you grow your own food, you know exactly what's in it and how it was produced.

Outdoor gardening can be difficult because there are so many variables, including climate changes, unpredictable weather and plants getting eaten by wildlife or pests. Indoor gardening allows you to grow veggies throughout the year in the comfort of your home, with a greater likelihood of success because you control the environment.

Growing plants indoors is good for your family's health in other ways, too. Plants remove carbon dioxide from the air and generate oxygen, making the air in your home cleaner. They also allow families with little or no outdoor space to incorporate nature into their daily lives. Exposure to nature and the accomplishment your family will feel from successfully starting a garden are also good for everyone's mental health.



What types of vegetables and herbs can be grown indoors?

Herbs, leafy plants and microgreens are the most common edible plants for indoor growing. They generally do well with shallow soil because they're smaller and don't need as much space inside. They also don't need as much sun and are easier to grow if you're just starting out.

It's possible to grow fruits indoors, but they generally need a significant amount of sun plus exposure to pollinating insects or animals and wind, which are more difficult to replicate indoors.

Examples of vegetables and herbs that you can grow indoors include the following:

VEGETABLES

Leafy greens (such as spinach, kale, lettuce and arugula)
Carrots
Scallions
Potatoes
Mushrooms
Microgreens (vegetables such as beets, radishes and peas harvested as seedlings or sprouts)

HERBS

Mint varieties
Cilantro
Parsley
Basil
Rosemary
Thyme
Lavender
Oregano

Planning your garden

Before starting your indoor garden, consider your family's lifestyle. Plants need tending and care to grow successfully. If you're a

newbie to gardening, you may want to start small and simple, such as using an indoor grow system to simplify the process.

On a basic level, plants need at least water, nutrients and light—and, of course, you'll need the plant seeds or seedlings. Consider your space and what will grow best in that environment. Alternatively, if you have more flexibility, you can think about which plants your family wants to grow and how to adapt your environment to meet the plants' needs.

To give your plants the best chance of thriving, you'll want a specific place you can control. Decide if you'll use one room, spread them around the house, dedicate a windowsill or perhaps build a smaller controllable environment within your home. Also, be aware of your home's humidity, especially during dry winter months, since plants need a moister environment. Plants do best in stable, consistent temperatures in the 60s to 70s with good air circulation to prevent mold or fungus growth.

If you're planning to use mostly natural light from your windows, consider the amount of sunlight they permit and at what time of day they allow for more or less light. Generally, a south-facing window will give you the most sunlight. This position will likely change throughout the seasons, so be aware of how light exposure varies and affects plants.

Prepping your garden

The supplies you'll need depends on your budget and how involved you want to be. Some products do nearly all the work for you. You can also find those that offer simple setups but allow you to be more engaged with the process. If you have specific plants in mind, research what particular items

you'll need to support the best growing environment for your plants.

Containers should be big enough to accommodate how large the plants will grow, the depth needed for roots and how far seeds must be planted from each other. When growing plants indoors, you also need to consider drainage so that excess water doesn't build up and cause problems like root rot or bacterial growth. You don't need fancy, expensive containers. Depending on the individual plant, you can even repurpose old plastic containers.

The soil you use for growing indoors is different from ordinary garden soil. Use potting mix or soil made specifically for seedlings and the indoors. These soil varieties are made to drain better than garden soil and aren't likely to contain organisms such as fungus or bacteria.

If you're growing plants throughout the winter, you'll need a light source to make up for the lack of natural sunlight. Grow lamps are specifically designed to provide the right type of light to help plants grow. Common types of grow lamps are LED or fluorescent. Consider which plants will need more or less light exposure and place them at appropriate distances.

Since your plants won't get rain, you're in charge of making sure they have enough—but not too much—water. Always check how soil moisture levels before watering, ensure appropriate drainage and be aware of the plants' needs. Self-watering containers, drip systems and hydroponic kits can be helpful.

Caring for your garden

Edible plants generally take more effort than putting seeds in the soil and forgetting them, especially indoors where you have



Tips for Indoor Gardening With Kids

Gardening can be a fun and educational project for kids of all ages. It provides them the opportunity to learn about how plants grow as well as healthy eating and nutrition. It also helps them develop responsibility and other life skills.

Explore a few suggestions for growing an indoor garden with your child.

- 1 Use a chart to help keep your child on track. Include what the plants need and how often plus what your child should look for when tending to them.
- 2 Have your child create a journal about the experience. To make it more fun, your child can take photos or draw pictures of the plants as they grow.
- 3 When the plants are ready to harvest, work together so that your child experiences the reward for the efforts.
- 4 Involve your child in finding or choosing delicious, healthy recipes to make with the vegetables and herbs grown.
- 5 Work together to prepare the produce for storage.

to create the environment. Every plant is different: some may require pruning, adjustments to watering and soil and various harvesting or replanting times. Keep a journal, binder or some type of tracking system to remind you when to care for them and how to do so, and to track your successes or failures for next time.

You might decide to use an indoor growing system that does most of the work

for you. Consider how much time and effort you and your family want to invest. If you decide to use a growing kit, you still want to check and track your plants' progress to be involved in or aware of the process and make sure everything is working correctly. Be sure to always follow all directions for appropriate use.

In terms of harvesting, some plants need to be completely picked and then

replanted. Other plants, especially herbs and leafy greens, can be harvested as you need while the plant grows and regrows where it was cut.

Finally, keep in mind your family can do everything right and still fail. It can be frustrating, but indoor gardening is a learning process. You can try new things next time for better results and a garden that contributes to a sustainable lifestyle. ■

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Camp During COVID-19

By Jennifer Marino Walters

How some summer camps operated in 2020 — and what they're hoping for in 2021

While many of us are still recovering from the holiday season, some families throughout the Washington, D.C. area are already starting to plan ahead for summer. For many families, those summer plans typically include camp. But due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the summer camp experience may look different than normal—or not happen at all—for a lot of kids across the region.

Families got a taste of those summer camp changes in 2020. While some camps closed entirely, many stayed open with COVID-19 safety measures in place. Some offered virtual camps, while others brought camps to families' homes. And some offered a combination of camp options to meet parents' concerns and comfort levels.

Take a look at what various summer camp programs did in 2020—and what they hope to provide in 2021.

Day Camps

Many area camps redesigned their programs so that they could operate in-person while still meeting state and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. Safety measures included daily temperature checks and COVID-19 screenings for campers and staff, frequent handwashing, enhanced cleaning, smaller group sizes and mask requirements for everyone age 5 and older.

Darla Eisemann of Springfield, Virginia, sent her two boys, then 9 and 7, to their usual summer camp at [Andrew Gause Martial Arts](#). The camp offered its regular activities with social distancing measures in place and even took field trips to a local pool before it opened to its members.

"We felt completely safe, and we have no concerns about sending the boys back in 2021," Eisemann says.

Vanessa Page, a mom of two from Fairfax, Virginia, typically sends her 9-year-old son to full-day summer camp at George Mason University. When that camp was canceled for 2020, she sent him to a half-day camp at [InCourage Martial Arts](#) in Burke, Virginia, instead.

"I felt that they took good precautions to keep kids and families safe while still providing a fun atmosphere," says Page. "They couldn't do the usual trips to splash parks and fun zones, but they did go to local parks and playgrounds twice a week and made use of the grassy area nearby to get active in a socially distanced way. It provided my son with safe socialization while my husband and I worked."

[Barrie Camp](#) in Silver Spring, Maryland, offered most of its usual activities such as swimming, sports, arts and crafts, dance and organized games. But the camp adapted its schedule to allow for longer transition times between areas, and it canceled activities that



Interested in any of the summer camps mentioned in the article?

Here's how to contact them:

ANDREW GAUSE MARTIAL ARTS
rvtkd.com/summer-camps

Baroody Camps
baroodycamps.com

Barrie Camp
barrie.org/barrie-camp

Congressional Camp
congcamp.org

INCOURAGE MARTIAL ARTS
incouragemartialarts.com/
summercamp

Kidcreate Studio
kidcreate.com

Overtime Athletics
otathletics.com

Play to Grow
playtogrowmd.com

Sidwell Summer
sidwellsummer.org

did not allow for social distancing, such as horseback riding, music, pizza days and travel programs.

"It went even better than we expected," says Dan Hayden, director of Barrie Camp. "The kids adapted very quickly to the new rules and to keeping their masks on."

Congressional Camp in Falls Church, Virginia, offered one six-week on-campus program, Zippy's Mini Camp, instead of its usual 11 weeks of summer camp. Rather than allowing families to pick and choose weeks as usual, campers had to enroll for all six weeks.

"We thought that it would be safer to have the same campers come for the entire session, rather than have different kids come in and out," explains Dan O'Neil, the camp's director. "And we redesigned our camp program so that the campers could participate in almost all of the same activities."

Those changes included moving many of the indoor activities to outdoor tents and limiting the capacity to 180 campers rather than the usual 700 or so each week.

Kidcreate Studio, a children's art studio in Alexandria, Virginia, rearranged its setup so that it could open its three-hour summer camps in June. The studio provided each camper with his or her own table and art supplies instead of having a communal tables with shared supplies. It also required every staffer and camper to wear a mask even before mask-wearing was mandatory in Virginia. Owner Diane Greenbaum found that almost all of the parents were appreciative of these safety measures.

"Ninety-nine percent of them said, 'Thank you for doing things the way you're doing them,'" Greenbaum recalls.

Neighborhood or Home Camps

Kristen Garman of Annandale, Virginia, typically sends her twin boys to full-day camp through Fairfax County nearly every week in the summer. Last year, due to the pandemic, she scaled it back to six weeks. The boys, then 8, spent two of those weeks at a neighborhood camp offered by **Baroody Camps**.

Baroody, which canceled all of its regular in-person camps at three locations in Alexandria and Arlington, instead offered both half-day and full-day camps for groups of five to nine kids at families' homes and neighborhood parks. Campers enjoyed art, science, cooking, building and various sports. COVID-19 safety measures included daily temperature checks, mask wearing and using hand sanitizer.

The Garmans teamed up with three other families the first week and two families the

second week in a neighbor's backyard.

"It helped the kids get some fresh air and exercise with their friends," Garman says. "Of course we were worried about the virus, but we felt the benefits of camp outweighed the risks for the boys."

Overtime Athletics, a sports-themed camp operating at various locations throughout the country (including Maryland and Virginia), also offered full-day and half-day camps at people's homes.

And **Play to Grow** in Gaithersburg, Maryland, shipped the camp experience—but not the counselors—straight to families' homes with Camp@Home crates. The crates contained art supplies and materials, along with instructions and videos to help campers complete 10 to 15 activities per week.

Virtual Camps

About 100 children attended one of Congressional Camp's virtual summer camps via Zoom in 2020. The virtual camps focused on activities such as arcade building, fashion design, engineering and more.

"Parents who weren't comfortable sending their kids to in-person camp, who didn't want to commit to a full six weeks, or who just needed to fill part of the day chose the virtual option," says O'Neil.

In addition to its neighborhood camps, Baroody Camps also offered both half-day and full-day virtual camps via Zoom. Camp activities included art, science, cooking, fitness, building, dance, theater and more.

And **Sidwell Friends School**, which has locations in Washington, D.C. and in Bethesda, Maryland, took their Sidwell Summer programs for grades K through 8 online. Sidwell offered three-hour camps with themes like LEGO, robotics and fashion.

Looking Ahead to 2021

As for the upcoming summer, camp directors say it's still too early to determine exactly what they'll be able to offer. It will all depend on where we are with the pandemic and what state and CDC guidelines will be.

"It's tough to say right now because so much can change so quickly," says Hayden of Barrie Camp. "But right now we're planning for a relatively normal summer program with social distancing in place."

O'Neil of Congressional Camp says he believes the camp will continue to run at a limited capacity, but not quite as limited as last summer. And Greenbaum of Kidcreate says she is planning for the same restrictions as last summer.

"I really hope things are fairly back to normal next summer," she says. "But like everything else, we'll have to wait and see. ■

I found my home out in the middle of nowhere

WISCONSIN



Herzl Camp in Webster, Wisconsin

By Isabella Lefkowitz-Rao

When my mother dropped me off for the first time at Herzl Camp in Webster, Wisconsin, I was 9 years old and 1,200 miles from home. What concerned me at that moment was if my cabin would be good and whether the food would be edible.

Within three days, not only did I have answers to those questions (yes and mostly yes), but I had already been asked dozens of times how I, a not-yet fourth-grader from Washington, D.C., had managed to make my way all the way up to Webster. Did I have family in the area? (No.) Did my parents go to camp? (No.) Was I lost? (I didn't think so.)

I explained that it had started the fall before, when my parents decided that we would move to Minneapolis for a semester, so my mother could teach at the University of Minnesota Law School. There, I attended the Amos and Celia Heilicher Minneapolis Jewish Day School, where a substantial percentage of the student body went to Herzl.

Even though I was only there for one semester, something stuck and six months later, my parents begrudgingly agreed to "ship" me off to Herzl. By the end of the fortnight at camp, not only had I perfected my explanation, but I knew I had found a second home.

I will be the first to admit that those first two weeks in a cabin far away from home were not the easiest. I was not infrequently homesick and, more importantly, missed my multi-temperature shower. But I stuck it out, and to the dismay of my parents, I arrived home happy for a home-cooked meal but wanting to go back for two more weeks.

Camp and the overall experience of going to camp have changed me for the better. While everybody changes a good deal from the ages of 9 to 17, I really believe that Herzl has shaped the direction in which

I've grown. For example, as a 9-year-old, being in charge of making my bed and keeping track of my clothes was impactful as it gave me a greater sense of responsibility."

As I grew up, it still tended to be the little things that made the difference. I started noticing that I was much more open to trying new things, whether participating in the "pop dance" during color war or trying the mystery hamburger hot dish.

I gradually started spending less time on my bed alone reading books or writing to my parents and more time meeting new people and learning new games. I came to accept and love the social media and screen detox and always wished it could continue on into the year.

I also learned larger lessons, such as the importance of community service, as we progressed from picking up trash around camp to doing service around the local county. These changes were visible outside of camp as well. I was much less shy in new situations and increasingly confident in being myself.

While I found my home out in the middle of nowhere Wisconsin, sleepaway camps in general provide the same basic benefit: the opportunity to live independently from your family and away from home while pursuing interests and making new friends.

For younger kids, being away from home forces them to start doing things for themselves and taking care of their own affairs. For older kids just getting away, especially from a crazy city like Washington, D.C. allows for a well-needed mental break and time to relax while picking up important life and leadership skills needed for college and beyond. ■

*Isabella Lefkowitz-Rao, 17,
plans to return for her eighth summer at Herzl Camp in 2021.*



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ismw.org

info@ismw.org

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camp@brooksfieldschool.org
703-356-5437 ext. 2; 1830 Kirby Rd.,
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msnv.org/page/programs/summer-camp
703-256-9577
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contact@BEaSheEO.com

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harmoniaschool.org
harmonia@harmoniaschool.org
703-938-7301; 204-F Mill St., N.E., Vienna, VA
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mgta.gmu.edu
mgta@gmu.edu
703-993-7101
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1J2, Manassas, VA
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RESTON MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Ages: 3-9
restonmontessori.com
office@restonmontessori.com
703-481-2922; 1928 Isaac Newton Sq. West,
Reston, VA
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roerszoofari.com
703-757-6222; 1228 Hunter Mill Rd., Vienna, VA
Educational Activities.

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ctrbalarts@aol.com
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2021 EDUCATION Directory

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A woman with short brown hair, wearing a light green top and a grey cardigan, is leaning over a desk. She has a concerned expression, with her hand on her forehead. In front of her, a young girl with brown hair tied in a ponytail with a white scrunchie is sleeping at the desk. She is wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt. On the desk, there is a spiral notebook, an orange pencil, and a laptop. The background is a plain white wall.

BEAT THE SECOND-SEMESTER *Slump*

How to help your kids stay
motivated to learn during the long
winter ahead

By Orrin Konheim

In a normal school year, getting back into the swing of learning after winter break can be challenging for many students. During this pandemic year, when class takes place on a computer screen, it will require even more motivation.

“The back-to-school excitement of fall that didn’t quite happen is followed by the whimper of a return to virtual classes in January and what may surely look like a slump for some,” says Dr. Amy F. Parks, an educational psychologist and 20-year veteran of Fairfax County Public Schools. Parks owns The Wise Family, a psychology practice with three locations in Virginia.

Melina Robins, an Arlington Public Schools teacher for 19 years, can attest to the slump. “Sometimes the winter seems long, and both students and teachers get tired,” she says.

Parks offers parents the following tips to help keep their kids energized and engaged as the second half of the school year begins.

Revisit Rules and Routines

“Routines can help kids feel secure in times of uncertainty,” says Parks, “but shaking things up can also bring new energy and life to a dull lesson.”

She recommends planning a family meeting to reassess what’s working and what’s not.

“Sit down as a family and discuss what rules everyone wants to keep and what rules could change to make things flow better,” says Parks. Perhaps you decide to eat breakfast together at a scheduled time or to change the location where your child sits for virtual learning. “Be willing to stay flexible,” she adds.



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Read Every Day

Various studies over the years have shown a correlation between reading for pleasure and academic success, in addition to a host of other benefits.

To encourage children to pick up a book instead of an electronic device—“we are all spending ridiculous, crazy, over-the-top amounts of times in front of screens!” laments Parks—the psychologist recommends families create cozy reading nooks around the house and stock up on books on a variety of topics.

“Parents should also not be afraid to ask their children’s teachers for suggestions for reading programs or suggestions for books that are just right,” adds Robins, who teaches fifth grade.

Get Outside

Parks has a favorite saying: “There is no bad weather, only bad clothes.”

Even in winter, she recommends spending time outside, soaking in the sights and sounds. “Sunshine, the movement of the clouds and the gentle breeze are all nature’s rhythms, and these are all important ways to reset our own brain rhythms,” says Parks. “Our brains and bodies were not designed to function at the speed of the TV and the iPhone.”

In addition to elevating mood, stimulating creativity and energizing us, being outdoors also provides for healthy social playtime during the pandemic.

“We are fortunate to live on a block with seven other school-age kids and try to afford our boys opportunities for masked outdoor playtime with the neighbors,” says Samantha Hunter of Arlington. “Keeping an eye on our own mental health, getting outdoors when weather permits and planning regular family activities are a few of the ways we hope to keep spirits up this winter.”



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Give in to the Season

It’s natural during the cold, dark months to want to slow down. After all, winter is when animals hibernate and plants go dormant. “Take the time to be a bit more quiet, to be a bit more reflective,” says Parks.

Keep in mind, however, that if your child is experiencing persistent low energy and is showing diminished enthusiasm for whatever usually interests them, your child may be depressed. If the symptoms intensify, Parks recommends having the child talk to the school counselor, a child specialist or pediatrician.

Finally, remember that your encouragement can go a long way. “A fun first-day-back breakfast, notes saying you believe in your child, more frequent check-ins on engagement ... are helpful ways of ensuring that everyone is off to a good re-start,” says Parks. ■

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Wise parents create teachable moments throughout the day. They notice behaviors and give praise when good things happen.

All the Feels

Helping Children Identify and Manage Their Emotions

BY JAN PIERCE, M.ED.

We've all been there. Your 3-year-old has a meltdown in the middle of the grocery check-out line or you become beyond exasperated when your eldest clobbers your youngest for no apparent reason.

Feelings. They push us to our limits. They're big and, at times, seem to come out of nowhere. We have difficulty managing our own emotions, so

it's easy to understand when our children have the same problem.

Explore some strategies to help your children first identify their feelings and learn to manage them in acceptable ways.



Name the emotions

It can be hard for young children to understand what happens when they explode with emotions. They may not have the language to

identify a feeling; they only know it's big and has overcome them. It's helpful to clearly name feelings as they arise in daily life. You can say, "I see that it makes you angry when your brother knocks down your block tower."

Another strategy you can use is to find a simple feeling chart with visuals to help children when they are feeling happy, excited, sad or angry. (Take a look online to find a free printable chart.) Then you can periodically ask, "How are you feeling? Show me on the chart."

Model expressing your feelings appropriately

Make it a habit to tell your children how you're feeling. Model appropriate ways to say you're upset or frustrated. You might say, "I'm feeling sad that it's time to go to school and you aren't ready yet." Or, "It makes me very happy when you eat all your breakfast."

When everyone has had a bad day, you can own your part in the problem: "Mommy got very frustrated today and became angry. I'm sorry I raised my voice to you. Let's have a better day tomorrow." Children will be quick to forgive when you're honest about your less-than-perfect day. They'll learn that managing our emotions is a human problem.

Replay a situation

Sometimes it helps to replay a situation that went wrong to untangle and name the emotions involved. For instance, "It was time to brush teeth, but you didn't come when I asked you to. Then we both lost our tempers." Or, "When Julie took your toy, you became angry and you hit her. In our house we don't hit, so what else could you have done?"

You can also take the opportunity to play back a situation you've observed when out in public. You might say, "Did you see what happened when that little boy cried



at the park today? He wanted a turn on the slide, but the bigger boy wouldn't let him. How do you think the little boy was feeling?" At that point you may have to

help your child identify feelings such as angry, frustrated or scared.

Then you can ask, "What could that little boy have done besides cry? Could he have asked a grown-up for help? Waited longer for a turn? Gone to play on another piece of equipment?"

Use simple cues

Some parents find that using simple cues such as "take a breath" or "slow down" help a child to self-manage strong emotions. This may take some role-playing to master before the child is able to actually apply the strategy in the midst of a tough situation.

Your child may learn to take a self-imposed time-out to gain composure and cope with a challenging situation. A soothing activity such as water play can help them to destress and become calm again.

Ultimately you want to understand what caused any given emotion. What is your child feeling and what does he need? Is she overtired and merely needs a nap or is there an ongoing frustration that needs to be addressed? "You're feeling like your older

brother gets all the fun activities. What can we plan especially for you?"

Be proactive

Wise parents create teachable moments throughout the day. They notice behaviors and give praise when good things happen. They verbalize their own feelings to help their children understand the wide range of feelings that we humans experience. They might say, "Wow, you really showed a lot of patience with Robby today when he said mean words." Or, "I'm so excited that you have your ball game after school. I can't wait to watch you play."

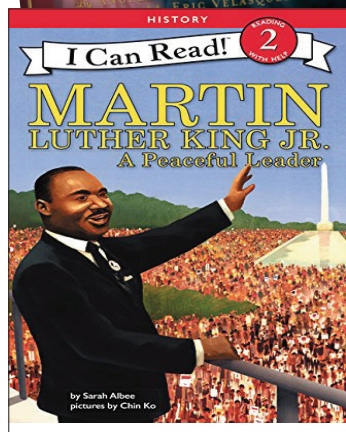
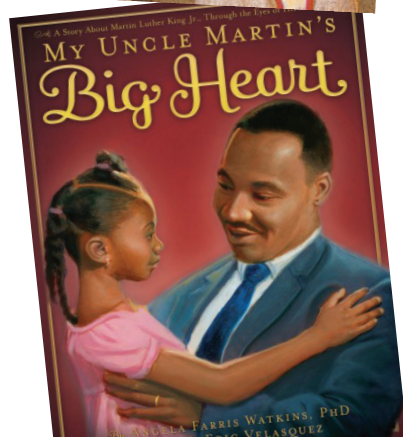
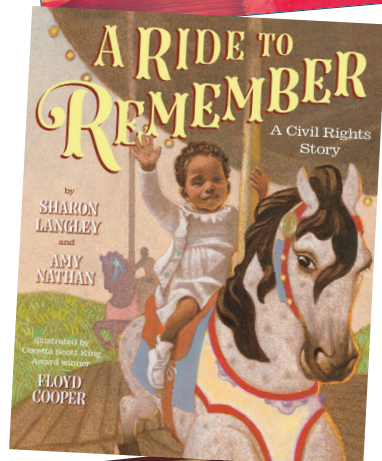
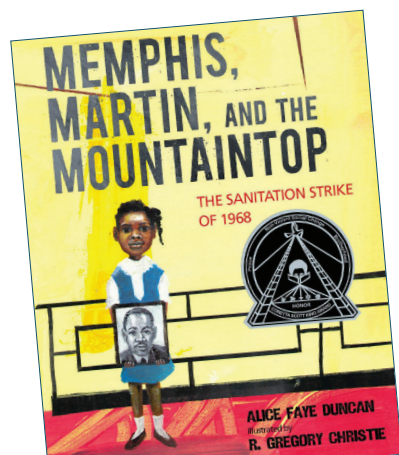
You can also use read-aloud times to notice the emotions shown by characters in your favorite books. "Hmm, I wonder how Cinderella was feeling when the step-sisters wouldn't let her go to the ball."

Make it a family practice to show kindness to others and to serve in practical ways. "Let's take some cookies over to Mrs. Adams. She gets lonely sometimes." Or model being grateful: "I am so thankful for our home. We have a nice place to live and be a family."

Managing our emotions is a big task and isn't learned in a day. It takes practice to identify the feelings that are inside and lots of opportunities to make good decisions as we express them.

Parents, you have the chance to make your home and family life a training-ground for raising kind, compassionate children who care about others and who can own their feelings in positive ways. You can help your kids with "all the feels." ■





12 Children's Books About Martin Luther King Jr.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library in D.C. is celebrating its first Martin Luther King Jr. Day this month in its recently renovated building. To mark the occasion, DC Public Library is sharing its favorite children's books inspired by the life and legacy of one of our nation's most prominent civil rights activists.

BY CRAIG RANALLO, LIBRARIAN,
DC PUBLIC LIBRARY

PICTURE BOOKS

"Memphis, Martin, and the Mountaintop: The Sanitation Strike of 1968"

By Alice Faye Duncan, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie

Prompted by the death of two of their own due to faulty equipment, Memphis sanitation workers led a city-wide strike in February 1968. This strike would become Dr. King's last fight for justice, chronicled in this picture book for older readers through poetry and prose.

"A Ride to Remember: A Civil Rights Story"

By Sharon Langley and Amy Nathan, illustrated by Floyd Cooper

On the same day Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his famous "I Have a Dream Speech" at the Lincoln Memorial, the Gwynn Oak Amusement Park in Maryland became desegregated. Sharon Langley was the first African American child to ride the merry-go-round, which now resides on the National Mall. This rich, tender picture book chronicles the significance of that moment complete with author notes and photos of Sharon on the carousel.

"My Uncle Martin's Big Heart"

By Angela Farris Watkins, illustrated by Eric Velasquez

Told from the perspective of MLK Jr.'s young

niece, this picture book offers personal insight into one of the 20th century's most influential activists and a rare glimpse into Dr. King's home life.

EASY READERS

"Martin Luther King Jr.: A Peaceful Leader"

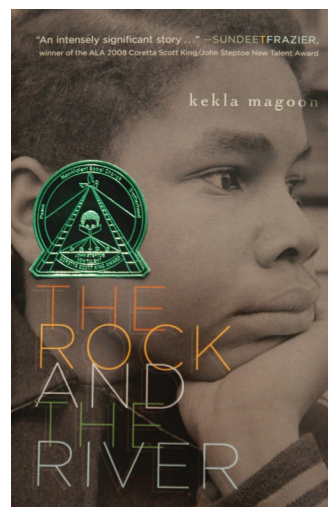
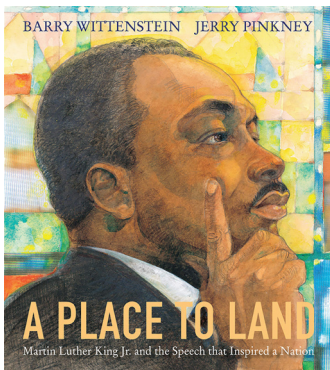
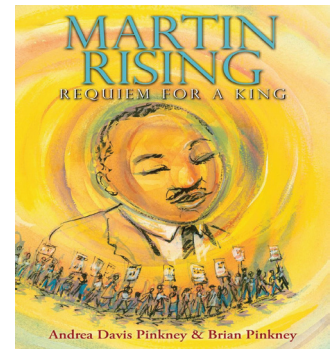
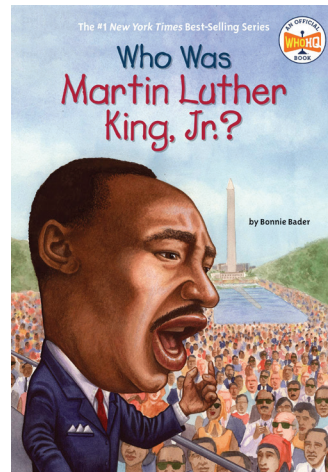
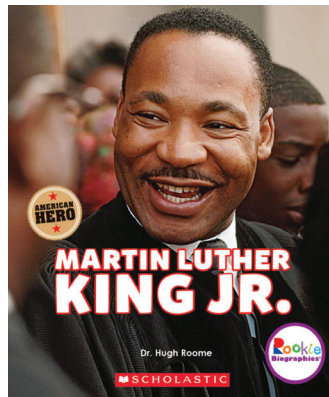
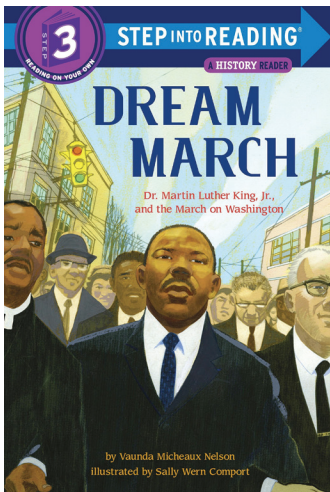
By Sarah Albee, illustrated by Chin Ko
Journey through the milestones of Dr. King's life, from his time as a pastor to his fight for equal rights to his legacy. This book is perfect for young ones beginning to read on their own but who still need a little help. It includes a timeline, illustrations, interesting facts and historical photographs.

"Dream March: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the March on Washington"

By Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, illustrated by Sally Wern Comport
This moving and easily digestible story recounts the 1963 March on Washington and the visionary man behind the mission for racial equality in America.

"Martin Luther King Jr.: Civil Rights Leader and American Hero"

By Hugh Roome
This Rookie Read-About Biography introduces the life and career of the noted civil rights



leader for the youngest of readers. Colorful photos and age-appropriate text make the book accessible for those just starting to read on their own or with a caregiver.

MIDDLE GRADE

"Who Was Martin Luther King, Jr.?"

By Bonnie Bader

With short chapters written in clear, succinct text and complemented by black-and-white illustrations throughout, this entry in the popular "Who Was?" series explains the historical context of Dr. King's life and legacy in an accessible way for upper elementary and middle school students.

"Martin Rising: Requiem for a King"

By Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Brian Pinkney

This beautiful tapestry of poetry, musicality and spirituality explores the final months of one of the most influential men in U.S. American history.

"A Place to Land: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Speech That Inspired a Nation"

By Barry Wittenstein, illustrated by Jerry Pinkney

Explore this true story behind one of the most celebrated and legendary speeches of all time. This book shows how Dr. King spent the night before the historic March on Washington figuring out what to say and how to say it.

YOUNG ADULT

The March Trilogy

By John Lewis and Andrew Aydin, illustrated by Nate Powell

Long before he was a member of Congress, John Lewis was a key leader in the Civil Rights movement alongside his friend, Martin Luther King Jr. This graphic novel trilogy, told from his own perspective, follows Lewis's childhood in rural Alabama to his first meeting with Dr. King to the Nashville sit-in campaign, the March on

Washington and the showdown in Selma to end voter suppression.

"The Rock and the River"

By Kekla Magoon

In 1960s Chicago, 14-year-old Sam is caught in a conflict between his father's nonviolent approach to seeking civil rights for African Americans, inspired by the work of Dr. King, and his older brother, who has just joined the Black Panthers.

"Dear Martin"

By Nic Stone

Top of his class and bound for the Ivy League, Justyce McAllister begins writing a journal to Martin Luther King Jr. in an attempt to make sense of his recent experience with systemic racism. Through his writing, Justyce explores if Dr. King's teachings hold up today and how to make sense of a world that doesn't seem to trust him. ■

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GOODBYE, *Khaki Walls* HELLO, *Happiness*

It happened one day this summer. I couldn't stare anymore at the putrid color of my living room walls—Relaxed Khaki. I wasn't much for home renovations, and I had done very little to my house since purchasing it three years ago, but something had to be done about the walls.

I started to wonder whether I could do some of the painting myself. I'd start small and do one wall to see if I was cut out for the monotony of taping, rolling and brushing for several hours at a time.

After checking out some DIY websites, ordering my supplies and mulling over paint colors for a few weeks, I was finally ready to begin. It's hard to explain the calm that came over me as my drab-colored walls began to disappear. That night, for the first time in months, I slept hard, real hard. My body was aching and tired. My right thumb was blistering, and yet I melted into a relaxed and peaceful slumber without any worries.

I couldn't wait to start painting again the next day. Surprisingly, what I thought would take a day or two became a weekly occurrence. Because of my responsibilities, I did a lot of painting in the evenings,

often working until midnight. I'd never been a night person, but there was something about the adrenaline rush of just me, alone in a room, with the smell of paint and the sounds of '90s rock music playing on my phone that kept me going.

Rather unexpectedly, what started as a chore quickly turned into a new hobby. As a mom of three, I haven't had much free time in the past 10 years to devote to hobbies that fulfilled me. I used to be a part of a weekly fiction writing class where I could work on short stories or that elusive novel that we writers all have. And, for a stretch of time, I loved going to the Alliance Francaise in Washington, D.C., to keep up my French language skills or go on long bike rides through Rock Creek Park to spend a few hours on the Alexandria waterfront. Now those activities seem like they were part of someone else's past.

Painting the walls became my obsession. There was a hypnotic feeling of peace when each patch of khaki became a bright, uplifting yellow. I loved being covered in paint from my hair to my bare feet at the end of the night. When I finished a room and opened the windows, letting in the hot summer air and the sound of cicadas, I was able to look around and admire what I had accomplished, all by myself. There was no unsolicited advice from friends and family. There was no one there to critique my work. I was wholly present for the activity and completely satisfied with the fruits of my labor.

I will continue to paint rooms until there is no more pandemic or until there are no more rooms left to paint (although there is always a friend's garage that needs sprucing up). Sometimes, as I have learned, it's the simple accomplishments that can make us feel the most fulfilled. I recommend you find your space—then paint it. ■

Jacqueline Renfrow lives in Rockville with her husband and three rambunctious elementary-aged kids. As the pandemic rages on, she has now risen to the challenge of wallpaper stripping.

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

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