

Washington FAMILY

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NOVEMBER 2020

*Make New
Thanksgiving Traditions*

**Getting
Kids
Excited
About
Giving Back**

Meet Corinne Cannon
of the Greater DC Diaper Bank



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY PAMMA ORIOLO

Learning through play is a key component of preschool. Pg. 24

NOVEMBER 2020



On the cover: Corinne Cannon
Cover photo: David Stuck

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

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YOUR
FEEDBACK

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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.

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Special Series



Calendar of Events



Family Matters
Family Fun



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**PJ Feinstein**

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Giving Back

A few winters ago, my friends and I met with our kids on a Saturday morning at our local supermarket. Each child received a \$10 bill and a shopping list of non-perishables, such as cereal, beans, tuna, peanut butter and crackers. They spent the next hour pushing their pint-sized carts through the aisles, racing to grab assorted boxes and cans and seeing who could come closest to spending exactly \$10.

After paying for the groceries, we drove as a group to a nearby food bank, where our kids were able to hand off their just-purchased donations and watch as a volunteer logged them in. The experience was incredibly meaningful to them and one that I hoped we could repeat with some regularity.

I'm embarrassed to admit we never did it again. Life just got too hectic. However, after reading Jennifer Marino Walters' story in this issue about ways to get kids excited about giving back, I feel inspired to engage in community service as a family. There are so many ways to volunteer right now, even during COVID-19.

Additionally, you'll find tips on how to make this year's Thanksgiving celebration not only festive and memorable, but also safe. While certain traditions may not be possible because of the coronavirus pandemic, now's a great time to create new ones with your kids. There's also a decorative turkey craft for your holiday table and recipes for tasty side dishes that might boost your immune system.

Plus, we're exploring the academic and social benefits of preschool and how to help a child with migraines. You'll also meet Corinne Cannon, who founded the Greater DC Diaper Bank to help make raising a child easier for DMV parents lacking the support that she felt fortunate to have as a new mom.

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, I want to thank you for being a *Washington FAMILY* reader. I appreciate you!

PJ Feinstein

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

By Elena Epstein, Director of the National Parenting Product Awards



HEALTHY ROOTS DOLLS

Meet Zoe, who has learned to love her hair and wants all kids to love their curls, too. Hers is specially designed with curl power that allows it to be washed and styled with real products. \$79.99, ages 6+ years, healthyrootsdolls.com



REAL-ACTION FIRE ENGINE

This toy vehicle features a ladder that extends to over 2 feet high and rotates a full 360 degrees, a retractable fire hose and more. The truck opens to reveal an exciting command center with all kinds of authentic details built right in—from a radio and a computer to tools and gear. \$49.99, ages 3+ years, lakeshorelearning.com

ELOISE THE ELEPHANT

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Prepare Two Immune-Boosting Side Dishes

Thanksgiving signals the beginning of the holidays and the celebratory foods associated with the season. This year, why not prepare and serve immune-boosting twists on some of your favorite standby side dishes? Nourish Culinary Co. in Washington, D.C., shares two easy and nutritious recipes to add to your Thanksgiving table. Follow them on Instagram at @nourishculinary or visit nourishculinary.com.

Dairy-Free Turmeric and Roasted Garlic Smashed Sweet Potatoes

Serves 4 to 6

Turmeric is loaded with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant compounds. The compounds in garlic enhance heart health and support a stronger immune system.

Ingredients

- 1 small head of garlic
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 4 sweet potatoes, washed well
- 2 teaspoons turmeric
- ½ cup unsweetened original almond milk
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Slice off the top ¼ inch from the head of garlic. Drizzle with 1 teaspoon of olive oil and wrap in foil. Bake the sweet potatoes and garlic on an aluminum foil-lined baking sheet for approximately 35 to 45 minutes or until the sweet potatoes give absolutely no resistance when poked with a toothpick.

2. Squeeze the garlic cloves from the garlic skins and scoop the soft flesh of the sweet potatoes into the bowl of a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Add the turmeric, remaining olive oil, almond milk, salt and pepper to the food processor.
3. Pulse mixture, breaking down sweet potatoes, until it reaches the desired consistency. Serve warm.

Spinach Salad with Almonds and Ginger Apple Cider Vinaigrette

Serves 4 to 6

This salad swaps lettuce for spinach to take advantage of the vitamin C and beta carotene it contains. Almonds are packed with healthy fats and vitamin E, and including a touch of ginger in this vinaigrette adds an anti-inflammatory element.

Ingredients

- 12 ounces fresh baby spinach
- 1 large Granny Smith apple, thinly sliced
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup sliced almonds, toasted
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- ¼ cup apple-cider vinegar
- 1 shallot, minced
- ¼ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- Pinch of sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Directions

1. Combine the spinach, apple, dried cranberries and almonds in a large salad bowl and set aside.
2. Combine the sugar, vinegar, shallot, Dijon mustard, ginger, salt and pepper in a bowl and whisk to combine. Slowly pour in the olive oil until the dressing begins to emulsify.
3. Drizzle dressing over the salad ingredients just before serving. ■





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How to Make Pear Turkeys for THANKSGIVING

Since we won't be visiting loved ones this Thanksgiving, I've been trying to come up with ways to help my family feel close this month despite the physical distance between us.

One fun way I'm planning to keep us connected is through virtual holiday craft gatherings. I'm sending our families little packages with identical craft supplies and some yummy treats. Then, we'll gather together around our various tables—connected by Zoom, of course—to make the same project as we chat and catch up.

This pear turkey is a perfect project for virtual crafting. Since foam pears weigh practically nothing, postage for this project won't break the bank—meaning you can slip a few extra snacks in the package to fuel everybody's creativity.

These turkeys make excellent accent pieces for your Thanksgiving tablescape or mantel. You could also write names on the front of each turkey to turn them into keepsake place cards.



By Lindsay Ponta

SUPPLIES

You can find all the supplies to make this project at your nearest craft store or Amazon.

Artificial foam pears

Sharp craft knife (optional)

Hot glue gun and glue sticks, or craft glue and foam brush

Artificial autumn leaves or handprints cut from cardstock

Orange and red cardstock, felt or craft foam sheets

Permanent marker

“Googly” eyes (optional)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Starting about two-thirds of the way down a foam pear, cut a small slice into the back of the pear at a 45-degree angle with your craft knife.
Note: If you don't want to use a sharp knife while crafting with kids, you can skip this step.
2. Apply a small amount of hot glue to the bottom of one of the leaves or handprints and quickly slide it into the slice at the back of the pear. You can use a craft stick to help tuck the leaf or handprint into the cut.
Note: If you skipped step 1, use a foam brush to apply craft glue to a leaf or handprint and adhere it directly to the back of the pear.
3. Continue adding leaves or handprints in various autumn shades until your pear has a full turkey tail. We used three large leaves for the pear in the picture.
4. Wipe away any excess glue. Rotate the pear so that the tail "feathers" are in the back.
5. Use cardstock, felt or craft foam to make the turkey wattle and beak. Draw a long, thin teardrop shape on the red material for

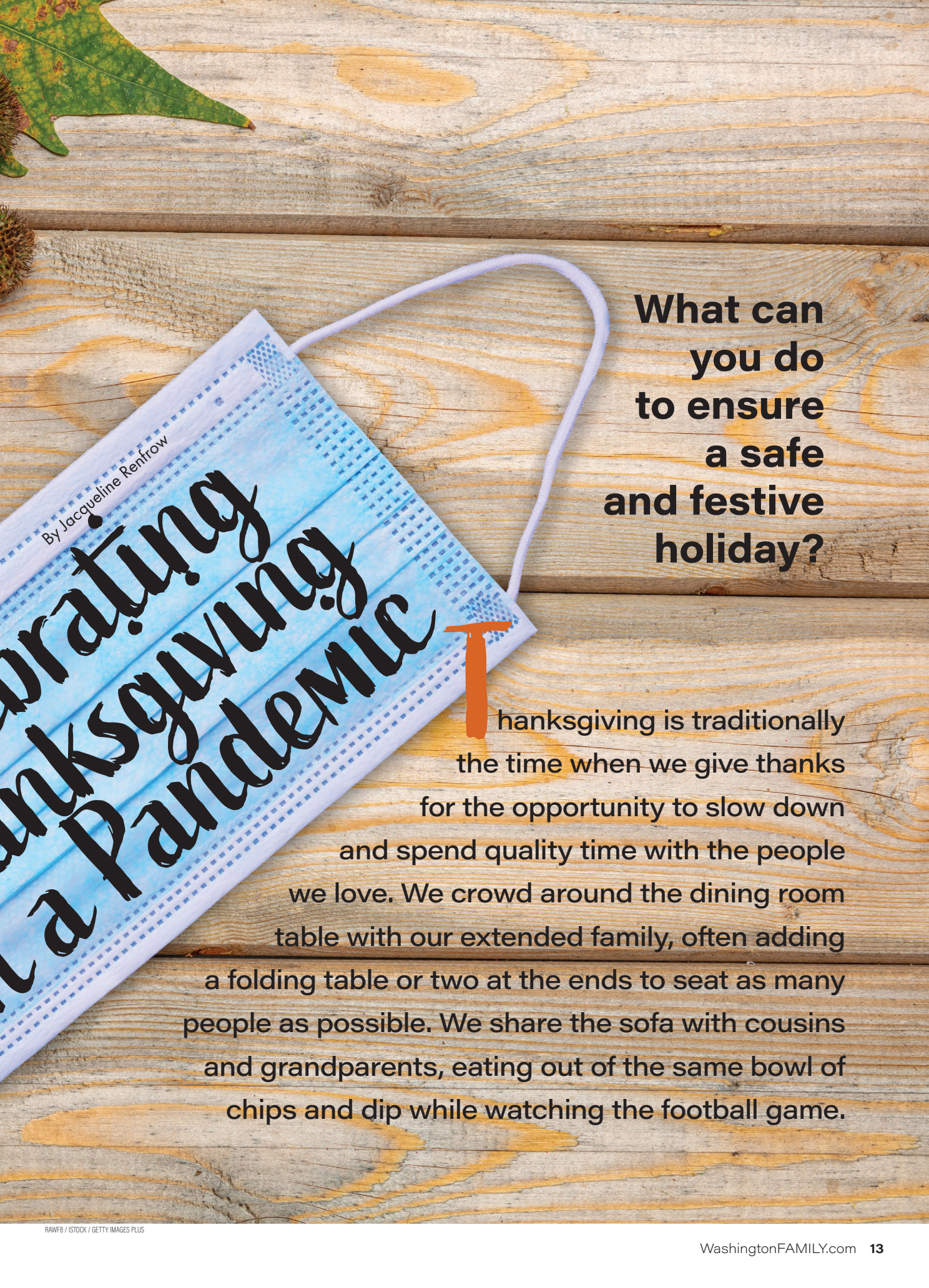
the wattle and a triangle on the orange material for the beak. Cut out the shapes. Glue the wattle on the front center of the pear and glue the beak over the top of the wattle.

6. Use a permanent marker to add a few tiny dots on the beak and larger dots directly onto the pear for eyes. To add more personality, glue "googly" eyes onto the pear instead of using the permanent marker.
7. If your pear is tail-heavy and is tipping over, cut off a small portion of the bottom of the pear, angling up very slightly from front to back to prevent the pear from leaning back too much.

We'd love it if you'd take a screenshot of everyone in your family holding up their little turkeys on Zoom and then tag us on Instagram (@WashingtonFamilyMag) to show off your handiwork. ■

Lindsay Ponta created the DIY and lifestyle website Shrimp Salad Circus in 2009 to inspire busy women to live perfectly imperfect creative lives. She lives in Silver Spring. Find easy DIYs and recipes at shrimpsaladcircus.com.





**What can
you do
to ensure
a safe
and festive
holiday?**

Thanksgiving is traditionally the time when we give thanks for the opportunity to slow down and spend quality time with the people we love. We crowd around the dining room table with our extended family, often adding a folding table or two at the ends to seat as many people as possible. We share the sofa with cousins and grandparents, eating out of the same bowl of chips and dip while watching the football game.



This year, though, COVID-19 may preclude long-distance traveling and large gatherings under one roof. As the public health crisis continues, many families are left wondering how to celebrate Thanksgiving in a pandemic.

With this difficult decision to make comes a great deal of stress, says Dr. Julie Bindeman, co-director of Integrative Therapy of Greater Washington in Rockville, Maryland. She notes that many adults are feeling the pressure to have a “normal” holiday in their currently abnormal lives.

“Parents [are] trying to understand what the potential risks actually are, as information disseminated can be confusing and contradictory,” Bindeman says. “People are concerned that when flu season is in its peak, with COVID continuing to be a threat, that this might be one of their last opportunities to see older family members [before winter].”

Communication is key

How you choose to spend your Thanksgiving will be based on your family’s comfort levels, so communication is key. Bindeman

recommends thinking about the following questions: What are your expectations from a potential trip or having visitors? What are people’s COVID boundaries? What is considered acceptable risk for each family group that might be coming together?

To help families start a discussion about COVID risks, Bindeman recommends the Quaranteam Calculator (absolutesh.com/calculator) online.

“Since everyone’s risk tolerance and approach are different, it’s best to discuss these protocols and rules of engagement

early on. Guests can decide for themselves whether they are OK with them or not,” says Vicky Choy, CEO of Event Accomplished, based in Arlington, Virginia. Perhaps everyone will agree to quarantine for two weeks prior to Thanksgiving or to take a COVID test before getting together.

If you decide to celebrate with extended family, Choy recommends keeping the guest count small and hosting outdoors when possible. In addition, think about how you can serve food and beverages to minimize touching the same utensils. Pre-plated options is a better idea than a buffet; individual servings, such as miniature pies, are a good option, too. Choy also recommends seating guests from the same household together and keeping the event short.

However, don’t be afraid to opt out of a family gathering all together. “That is a legitimate choice to make with the virus in the background,” says Bindeman.

Create new holiday traditions

Parents can still find many ways to ensure that a smaller-scale Thanksgiving is not only festive and memorable, but also safe.

“There are so many fun activities you can do with children,” says Zozzie Golden, senior



FUN THANKSGIVING DAY ACTIVITIES

Here are five more family-friendly Thanksgiving activities with the potential to become annual traditions, courtesy of Zozzie Golden of Innovative Party Planners:

PUMPKIN TOSS It’s cornhole, with a twist. See who can get their pumpkin closest to the target.

SWEET POTATO RACE Instead of egg on a spoon, create a relay race using Thanksgiving sweet potatoes.

BASTER CHALLENGE See who can get a feather to dance across the floor and over the finish line first by using only a turkey baster.

TREASURE HUNT Purchase some inexpensive Thanksgiving-themed objects and hide them around your home. Or conduct an outdoor photo scavenger hunt for fall treasures, such as acorns, leaves, squirrels and birds.

ARTS AND CRAFTS Draw or paint a turkey and decorate it with colorful feathers or other small items.



Turkey Trots

Go Virtual for Thanksgiving 2020



designer at Innovative Party Planners in Owings Mills, Maryland. Over the summer, when camp was canceled, Golden created a Color War competition for her grandchildren. Similarly, parents and kids could compete in Thanksgiving challenges or activities for prizes, such as chocolate turkeys, lollipops and holiday candies—or even trophies.

While parents are making Thanksgiving inventive, Heidi Hiller, owner of Innovative Party Planners, notes that the pandemic and travel bans could be especially stressful on older generations who are frustrated with their inability or inexperience to video chat. She recommends thinking about other ways to connect with these family members.

“This might mean having your kids draw pictures, write their relatives letters or send them family photos and share what everyone has been up to,” says Hiller. You may also want to mail homemade decorations in advance of Thanksgiving that loved ones can use as centerpieces on their holiday table.

Hiller and Golden are becoming experts in the art of celebrations in the time of COVID and are constantly seeking creative ways for clients to come together. For example, you could plan a series of short video visits throughout the holiday weekend or decide to watch the Thanksgiving parades in your pajamas with everyone on Zoom. You may also want to consider meeting virtually for Saturday game night, Sunday brunch or to shop online deals for the upcoming holiday season.

And remember: “Children like structure,” says Bindeman, “so letting them know in advance what the plan is can be very helpful.” Empower your kids by asking them what they find meaningful about Thanksgiving, and implementing some of their suggestions.

The pandemic may be forcing us to reassess how we celebrate traditional holidays such as Thanksgiving, but perhaps this reassessment isn’t a bad thing. “Distill it down to the why and think about how to retain the why in a different way,” says Choy. “Is it really about the turkey and leftovers or is it about coming together as a family?” ■

You may not be able to run alongside hundreds of people this Thanksgiving, but you and your family can still lace up your sneakers and participate in a local turkey trot. Because of COVID-19, many of these 5K, 10K and 1-mile fun runs and walks are happening virtually, with most taking place over the span of several days. Here are five virtual turkey trots you can join this month that benefit D.C.-area organizations.

Arlington Turkey Trot 15th Annual 5K Fun Run

Hit the pavement any time between Wednesday, Nov. 25, and Tuesday, Dec. 1, on the official Turkey Trot course or another certified 5K course of your choosing. The race might be virtual, but the official T-shirt and bib are available IRL with registration—\$40 for adults, \$20 for children ages 6-17. All net proceeds are donated to six local charities. arlingtonvaturkeytrot.org

19th Annual Thanksgiving Trot for Hunger 5K

You don’t need to be in D.C. to take part in this community event benefiting SOME (So Others Might Eat) and its work to provide much-needed food, housing, health care and more to thousands of District neighbors in need. Register as an individual (\$15-\$45), create a virtual team or join an existing team. support.some.org

Prince William Turkey Trot 5K and Mashed Potato Mile

Download your racing bib and run this annual race on a treadmill, in a park or around your neighborhood anytime through Nov. 29. When the event is over, each participant will receive an official Prince William Turkey Trot medal. Registration is \$28 for the 5K, 10K and half marathon, and \$12.50 for the Mashed Potato Mile. A portion of each registration will be donated to one of several community nonprofits. princewilliamturkeytrot.com

18th Annual Vienna Turkey Trot

Plot your own course for this year’s virtual Vienna Turkey Trot, benefiting the James Madison High School Band and the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department. The event is taking place Nov. 24-28, but if you sign up early, you’re guaranteed a special edition VTT knit beanie to wear on your walk or run. Registration for the 5K, 10K and 1-mile dog walk is \$25 per person. viennaturkeytrot.org

38th Annual Turkey Chase Charity Race

A Thanksgiving tradition since 1982, the Turkey Chase is the largest fundraiser for the YMCA Bethesda-Chevy Chase and the B-CC Rotary Club. Show your support for these community organizations by walking, running, biking or swimming any time between Nov. 16 and 30. Registration for each of the virtual events is \$48. turkeychase.com



In a year that has seemed to drag on endlessly—thanks, coronavirus!—the holidays have managed to sneak up on us once again. In the midst of all the decorating, shopping, wrapping presents and other holiday activities, many families may be thinking about ways to give back. While the idea is to help others, research has shown that community service offers an array of benefits for the young volunteers themselves.

“When kids start volunteering early, it can often lead to a lifelong passion for making the world a better place,” says Laura Plato, chief solutions officer of VolunteerMatch, an organization that connects people with volunteer opportunities. “It also instills a sense of empathy, interconnectedness and understanding that we are not alone out there.”

In fact, AmeriCorps, the federal agency that connects individuals with service opportunities, has found that children who volunteer are three times more likely to volunteer as adults. And young people who volunteer are also half as likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, smoke cigarettes or engage in destructive behavior.

Additionally, volunteering can help kids build critical skills that will benefit them later in the

workforce. “It helps to increase communication skills, teamwork and leadership skills,” says Genisha Metcalf, head of campaigns for Do Something, the largest nonprofit for youth looking to make a difference online and offline.

Experts say that volunteerism is even more important for children during the pandemic. “Volunteering can give kids a real sense of control and responsibility and help them feel empowered,” says Plato. “It’s active, and it’s something they can feel in charge of.”

If you’re worried about volunteering during COVID-19, you can find plenty of opportunities to do so safely. More and more nonprofits have developed virtual volunteering opportunities and have adapted their programs, such as offering drive-through donation drop-offs.

“Many organizations have done a great job of adhering to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) health guidelines,” says Plato. “They’re following mask-wearing and handwashing guidelines. They’re safely distancing inside their facilities.” Be sure to ask an organization about their safety measures before volunteering.

With so much taking kids’ attention—school, activities, friends and screens—how can parents get them excited and motivated to volunteer?

ing with Kids

**Give back safely
with your family
this holiday
season—and all
year long!**

Make it age appropriate

Although some organizations require children to be a specific age to volunteer—13 or older, for example—even the youngest of kids can give back. “Kids are never too young to start,” says Plato of VolunteerMatch. “The key is putting them into the right activity for their age.”

Very young kids can make cards to mail to troops or to nursing home residents. Older kids can rake leaves or shovel snow for seniors in their neighborhood. Teens can mentor younger children or help them with homework.

Model benevolent behavior

Kids love to copy their parents and older siblings. If they see you volunteering, they’ll be more likely to want to do so as well. According to AmeriCorps, a child whose family volunteers is nearly two times more likely to volunteer, so make volunteering a family affair. “Show your kids how excited you are to give back,” says Plato.

Pick a cause they care about

Talk to your kids about who or what they are most interested in helping. Then find opportunities that focus on these causes. Is your child concerned about the environment? Pick up trash at a local beach. Is your son or daughter an animal lover? Make dog biscuits or blankets for a local shelter. Kids will be more enthusiastic about giving back if they’re contributing to a cause they care about.

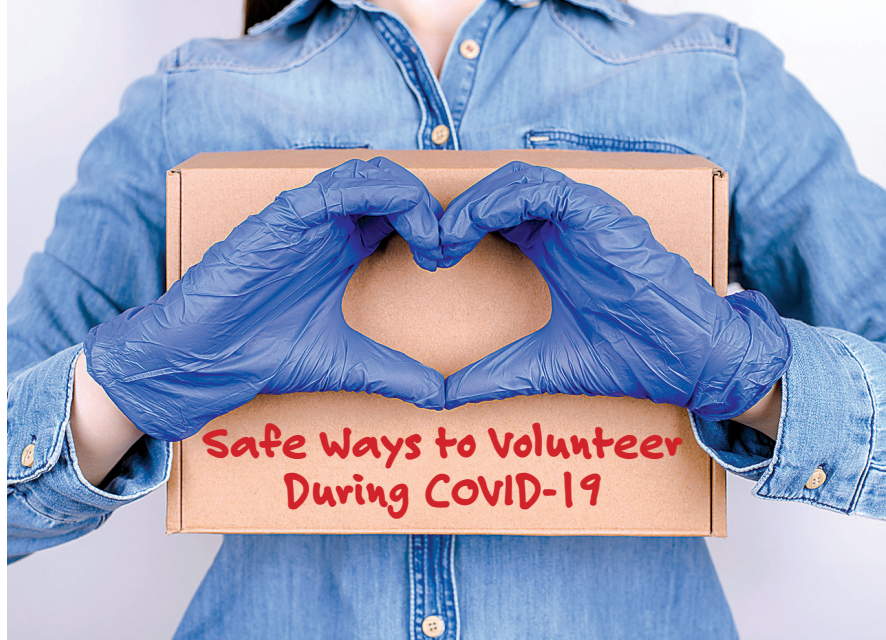
Incorporate giving back into your family’s routine

Figure out how much time your family can commit to volunteering, whether it’s once a week or every year on Thanksgiving. Then add it to your family’s calendar like you would other appointments. “Get your kids thinking about volunteerism as a part of their regular lives the same way they think about school, sports and other activities,” says Metcalf of Do Something.

If it seems impossible to fit volunteering into your family’s already packed schedule, Plato suggests working it in around activities that you’re already doing. If you and your child are at the grocery store, pick up some additional items for your local food pantry. If your child is using birthday money to buy a toy online, have your son or daughter pick an additional toy to donate to a needy child.

Reinvent the playdate

Volunteering together is a great way for kids to have fun with their friends while



Need more ideas on how your family can volunteer and stay safe during the pandemic? Try one of the following:

MAKE MASKS Making cloth face masks is a great way to volunteer safely from home and help stop the spread of coronavirus. The CDC provides instructions for making both sewn and no-sew masks at [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov). You can either donate the masks or sell them and donate the proceeds to charity.

CREATE CARDS Kids can write letters or make cards for troops through A Million Thanks (amillionthanks.org), for the elderly through Love for Our Elders (loveforoureldest.org) or for sick children through Cards for Hospitalized Kids (cardsforhospitalizedkids.com). You can also contact local hospitals and nursing homes to see if they’ll accept cards or have your kids send thank-you notes to firefighters, health-care workers or other community helpers.

HEAD OUTDOORS Search Keep America Beautiful (kab.org) to find a local community cleanup day, or you can head outside as a family to pick up trash. Start a garden to grow vegetables to donate to a local food pantry. Have your child write sidewalk chalk messages to offer encouragement to neighbors during the pandemic. Take part in a virtual walk or run—find one at roadracerunner.com—to raise money for charity.

GO VIRTUAL On Volunteer Match (volunteermatch.org), you can search specifically for virtual opportunities and filter the ones that are great for kids or teens. You can also contact your local chamber of commerce to find nearby organizations that need volunteers. Or simply contact an organization you’d like to support and ask how your family can help.

also keeping a safe distance. Meet up with a few other families at a local park to pick up trash, then let the kids run around afterward. Invite your kids’ friends over to help pack backpacks with school supply donations and order pizza as a reward. The kids will have so much fun that they’ll likely ask when they can do it again!

Let them see their impact

Activities that allow kids to see the difference they are making are always motivating. Through Dec. 7, you can sign up to adopt a military family for the

holidays at soldiersangels.org. Your child can help shop for and wrap presents for the family’s children and maybe meet them in person. Or, foster a pet at home for a few weeks or months. Contact your local animal shelter or pet rescue to see how you can sign up.

Whatever you decide to do, Plato says, the key is to make it fun. “Just like with anything you want to teach your kids to do, instilling fun, joy and play into it is a way to get them excited,” she says. “Don’t make it feel like work—none of us needs any more work to do!” ■

A photograph of three children running away from the camera down a brightly lit school hallway. The child on the left has long brown hair and is wearing a striped shirt and a brown backpack. The child in the middle has long blonde hair and is wearing a light blue shirt. The child on the right has curly hair and is wearing a yellow shirt and a colorful floral backpack. The hallway has large windows on the left and a tiled floor.

2020 OPEN HOUSE *Directory*

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

Our Open House Directory is filled with listings of educational opportunities for your children from classic to Montessori to a combination of Waldorf, Montessori and Reggio Emilia to STEM.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Aidan Montessori School

2700 27th Street, NW,
Washington, DC

202-387-2700

aidanschool.org

admissions@aidanschool.org

8:00 AM-4:00 PM

After School & Enrichment Activities

Open House Dates: November 6,

December 4 & 17, and January 8 - all

9:15-11:00 AM

Aidan Montessori School is a co-ed, independent private school for children ages 18 months through grade 6 located in Woodley Park, DC. Founded in 1961, Aidan prepares children to learn confidently, think independently, and succeed wherever they go.

The Bethesda Montessori School

bethesdamontessori.com

admissions@bethesdamontessori.com

301-986-1260

7611 Clarendon Road,
Bethesda, Md.

Ages: 3-6

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

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., AML trained teachers, art, French & computer offered, and after school activities.

Brookfields School

brookfieldschool.org

sarah@brookfieldschool.org

703-356-5437

1830 Kirby Road

McLean, Va.

Ages Served: 3-10

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

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

Congressional School

congressionschool.org

gherbst@congressionschool.org

703-533-1064

3229 Sleepy Hollow Road,
Falls Church, Va.

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

A co-ed independent day school for infants to eighth graders in Falls Church, Va.

Congressional School prepares young learners for future success, inspiring them to question, collaborate, create, and lead.



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feynmanschool.org

admissions@feynmanschool.org

301-770-4211

11810 Falls Road, Potomac, Md.

Grades: Preschool-Grade 8

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

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Glenbrook Cooperative Nursery School

glenbrookschooll.org

membership@glenbrookschooll.org

301-365-3190; 10010 Fernwood Road

Bethesda, Md.

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

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

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Hunter Mill Montessori School

preschoolmontessori.com

info@huntermillmontessori.com

703-938-7755

2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, VA 22124

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DECEMBER 17 | JANUARY 8

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

2455 Gallows Road,
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Tours available by appointment

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info@cedarlanemontessori.com
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3035 Cedar Lane, Fairfax, Va.

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

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MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF MCLEAN

mcleanmontessori.org
703-790-1049
1711 Kirby Road, McLean, Va.
Ages: 2 ½-12

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

Preschool and elementary classes. Spanish, French, science, drama, music, P.E., computer, art, summer school, transportation available.

NYSMITH SCHOOL FOR THE GIFTED

nysmith.com; ebalberde@nysmith.com

703-713-3332

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pinecrestschool.org

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703-354-3446

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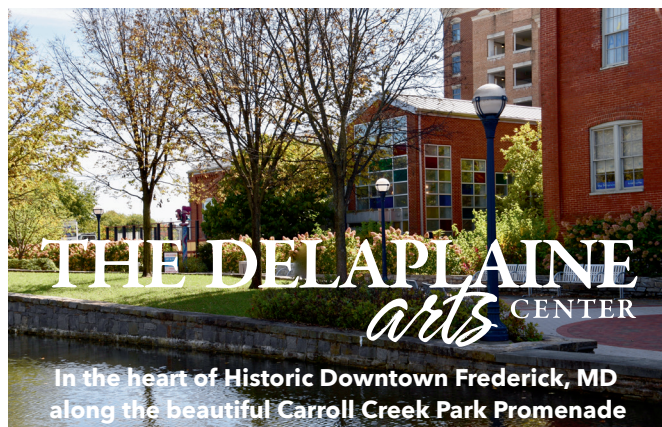
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PREPARING FOR KINDERGARTEN



By Michelle Blanchard Ardillo

In May, three-year-old Eva Oriolo saw her mother leaving for the grocery store and ran to her pleading, “Mommy, please I go with you? I wear my mask? I stay in the car, pppllleaaassee?”

Rana Oriolo, a mother of three, knows only too well what her preschooler was going through. As director of The Learning Center for Young Children (LCYC) in Kensington, Maryland, she has seen firsthand the effects of the pandemic on her students, including the longing to reconnect with

friends, family and the outside world.

After instituting new protocols to protect both staff and students, LCYC reopened in September, a move that Oriolo supports. “Mental health outweighs physical health now,” she says. “We all have to live with the virus.”

Oriolo says her students are happy to be back, noting their resilience. She explains that they are adapting quickly to new protocols, including wearing masks indoors and being socially distant outdoors.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY RANA ORIOLO

ARTEN DURING A PANDEMIC

How to help your preschooler develop socially, cognitively, emotionally and physically





At snack time, for example, they remove their masks and put them inside their disposable snack bags until they are finished eating, putting them back on to continue playing.

THE BENEFITS OF PLAY

While some say preschool is the new kindergarten, most preschool programs have developed strong curricula to ensure kindergarten readiness, not to replace it. The main objective of the preschool curriculum at the Archdiocese of Washington, the largest non-public school system in the area, is to introduce the child to the joy of learning in a “learn through play” approach. Pre-reading, math, science, art, music and movement experiences are combined with meaningful tasks and activities that encourage motor skill development, interpersonal relationships and self-help skills.

At the core of an outstanding preschool program is this idea of learning through play, explains Richard Peterson, chief academic officer of Kiddie Academy, which has over 30 locations in the Baltimore/D.C. metropolitan area. “This ‘play’ is intentional and is facilitated by skilled teachers,” he says.

To the untrained eye, something as simple as sorting small objects and transferring them to containers using little tongs just looks like fun. However, this pincer grasp exercise is designed to develop the motor skills and muscles needed for pre-writing skills such as holding a pencil.

“Children learn with their whole bodies, explore their surroundings freely, talk with peers and teachers about what they are learning, organize their thoughts through trial and error and discover how to relate to others,” says Peterson.

He also notes that each child has their own optimal method of learning. “Learning through play meets the needs of all types of learners—visual, auditory and kinesthetic,” he says. “It allows children to develop socially, cognitively, emotionally and physically.”

GETTING KINDERGARTEN-READY AT HOME

Parents who have decided to keep their preschoolers home this year can work on the academic skills necessary for kindergarten, such as



name recognition and name writing, recognition of letters and numbers and counting from one to 30, says Oriolo. However, they should also be teaching basic life lessons, such as playing cooperatively, walking in a line and problem-solving.

For example, parents can engage their preschoolers while preparing afternoon snack by having their child follow directions such as “first count the apple slices and grapes, and then put three of each in the bowl,” says former preschool teacher Sue Hayden of Rockville, Maryland, who is not teaching for the first time in 19 years due to concerns over the pandemic. This simple task accomplishes two things on the kindergarten-readiness checklist: sorting and classifying and following two-step directions.

Whether through an accredited program outside the home or at home with a parent, grandparent or care provider, preschool children will benefit—primarily through play and hands-on experiences—from learning how to communicate with others. Most experts agree that engaging with your child while using positive vocabulary and positive reinforcement to teach about the world around them is as important as academics at this age.

“Expressing feelings in words, taking turns, waiting and following group rules are just some of the many social and emotional skills that children need to learn [before kindergarten],” says Dr. Pat Scully, a member of Kiddie Academy’s curriculum advisory board.

“While much concern is expressed about children learning to read and write, it is equally, if not more important, for young children to develop friendships,” Scully says. “This is a lifelong skill that is based on learning empathy, give and take and suppressing one’s own needs for the good of another.” ■

Michelle Blanchard Ardillo is a freelance writer and educational tutor, having taught middle school language arts for thirteen years. Read more of her work at www.michelleardillo.com or follow her @michardillo on Twitter.



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Little Leaves is a center-based ABA program for young children with an Autism Spectrum

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Ain't Misbehavin'

Is stimming a behavior or sensory issue?

BY ERICA RIMLINGER

People with autism spectrum disorder, as defined by the National Institute of Mental Health, can have “difficulty with social communication and interaction, restricted interests, and repetitive behaviors.”

While repetitive, self-stimulatory behavior, or “stimming,” is a common trait in people with autism, it’s not commonly accepted. Oftentimes, parents, therapists and educators view stimming, such as flapping or rocking, as a behavior that needs resolving.

Educator and advocate Joy Johnson wants parents and others to rethink their stance on stimming because stimming is not always a behavior issue. Johnson, who is currently writing her dissertation on the social validity of stimming, says stimming plays an important role in emotional regulation for people with autism, helping those who are overwhelmed by sensory input to relieve stress and anxiety.

Since stimming can serve a neurological purpose in regulating or managing sensory input, should it be treated as a sensory issue? Should kids with autism be allowed to stim?

A sensory issue

Johnson says yes, provided the stimming is not harming anyone. Johnson has spent years working in clinical settings, nonprofits and schools with families impacted by autism. In her own work, Johnson uses therapies such as applied behavior analysis to help reduce problem behaviors. But if non-harmful stimming activities like flapping or rocking help people with neurological differences cope, she says, maybe the “problem” is not a problem at all but rather a bias toward neurotypical behavior.

Johnson recognizes the bias that rewards neurotypical behavior because she has had firsthand experience with stimming.

Johnson has autism and stims. Her oldest son, who has autism, stims. And her oldest grandson, who also has autism, stims.

In the past, therapies “focused on making a person with autism appear to be neurotypical,” she says. “What does that say to someone who is not neurotypical? You can’t be yourself and be acceptable.”

Working with parents whose kids have autism, Johnson sees pushback against stimming that stems from how it appears to people who are neurotypical. Sometimes she asks parents, “Is this behavior really impacting their quality of life? Does it interfere with their function of daily living?” And parents will say, “A normal child doesn’t do this, so I don’t want my child doing it.” Johnson teaches parents that sometimes stimming provides necessary sensory input, telling them, “If it’s not harming anybody, or it just bothers you because it looks odd to you, maybe we don’t target that.”

A behavior issue

But not all stimming is harmless, and not all stimming resolves a sensory issue. Some stimming, such as head banging or scratching, is harmful and requires appropriate intervention, Johnson says. And some stimming is attention-seeking behavior that needs to be redirected.

How can parents determine whether the behaviors they are observing provide beneficial sensory input or whether there are other purposes involved?

Johnson conducts formal functional behavior assessments but says parents can conduct their own behavior analysis at home. She advises clients to track “antecedent behavior consequence data,” which means recording stimming behavior, then examining what preceded it and what the consequences were. “Look for patterns,” Johnson says. If the stimming isn’t happening to get attention or receive a



benefit, it's serving a sensory purpose, she explains.

However, if a parent has determined the function of stimming is behavioral and not sensory, Johnson advises they find a replacement behavior that will give the child a more direct and effective path to the results they seek. Some of her nonverbal clients hold up cards to indicate when they need a parent's attention.

If the stimming is sensory-seeking but dangerous, find a replacement behavior that provides similar vestibular input. Trying to stop sensory-seeking behavior, Johnson says, won't work. But bouncing on a ball or swinging can replace harmful behaviors like head-banging to provide the needed stimulus.

A neuro-diverse lens

Looking at stimming through a neuro-diverse lens can help parents identify when stimming is a behavior that

"The less we target stimming, or hide it, the more people will see it and the more it becomes normal, which promotes neurodiversity."

needs to be corrected and when it is appropriate to advocate and promote acceptance for stimming.

To reduce social stigma around stimming, Johnson has written a children's book, "Happy Flappy and Me," which is about a little girl who flaps when she's happy. It's based on her own experience with stimming.

Johnson says she self-advocates and encourages her clients to do the same by learning about their autism and teaching neurotypicals about what it's like to experience the world with autism.

"The less we target stimming, or hide it, the more people will see it and the more it becomes normal, which promotes

neurodiversity," Johnson says. "Stimming is emotional regulation. This is something that we need. It's something that I use when I'm studying or reading. It helps to regulate me. It's not harmful or hurting anyone. It's not interfering with anyone."

Johnson says the more people who own and understand their autism, the more social validity behaviors like stimming will get.

"I'm very open," Johnson says. "Some people aren't as comfortable. But I think the more you disseminate that knowledge, the more people will understand. If somebody sees me stimming, I want them to think, 'That's just Joy. She likes to flap when she's happy. It's no big deal.'" ■



No Ordinary Headache

Migraines in children are more common than you think

BY COURTNEY MCGEE

As adults, we can recognize and understand the pains and triggers of our headaches and know how to distinguish and address them. Children who suffer from headaches, and migraines in particular, are more challenged in conveying the feelings and fears that severe headaches can stir up.

Migraines in children are more common than you might think. “Ten percent of school-age children suffer from them, and up to 28 percent of adolescents have them,” says Dr. Sommer Ebdlahad, a neurologist at the Virginia Spine Institute. Half of migraine patients will have their first attack by age 12, although they can occur as early as 18 months, he explains.

Headache or migraine?

How can kids (or their parents) tell a migraine from a regular headache? Ebdlahad says that migraine pain will feel more severe, throbbing and longer-lasting. Additional neurological symptoms include sensitivity to light, sound, odors and touch; blurred vision; nausea and vomiting; fatigue; and dizziness. Physical activity can exacerbate these symptoms.

Parents can also be on the lookout for complaints of abdominal pain and behavioral or mood changes. “Kids may complain of not being able to concentrate, not wanting to do homework or school activities, not feeling like they want to hang out with friends or do other fun activities,” says Ebdlahad. Fear and anxiety from anticipating repeated migraines is also very distressing.

At what point should doctors intervene? “Patients should see a doctor once the migraine becomes something that affects their quality of life,” says Ebdlahad. Even if it’s just one migraine a month—if it’s severe enough to cause limitation, it’s time to seek medical treatment.

Childhood interrupted

At her worst, 15-year-old Maddie Duke of Springfield, Virginia, was having almost 20 migraines a month. They began when she was 10 and intensified between the ages of 12 and 14.

“I was having to leave school, dance class and events with my friends because of them,” she recalls. “They would make me vomit, get nauseous and really dizzy. My mom says she could tell when it was happening because my skin also turned from pink to greenish grey.”

Duke’s migraines also made her so exhausted that she often had to sleep them away.

Migraine triggers

It took about five years for Duke to get a handle on her migraines, which her doctors said were being caused by a combination of genetic, hormonal, environmental and lifestyle factors.

Ebdlahad says the most common triggers of migraines in children are “stress, hormones in girls, skipping meals, being dehydrated, too much caffeine or withdrawal from it, an irregular sleep schedule and changes in weather.”

A child’s odds of getting migraines is greater if an immediate family member has them, but today’s lifestyle can also increase their occurrence. High stress leads to more migraines, explains Ebdlahad—“Seventy percent of migraine patients note stress as a trigger,” he says—as well as blue light from screens, artificial sweeteners, caffeine and other substances.

Management options

The best way to handle migraines in children, explains Ebdlahad, is trigger avoidance. Keep a migraine diary and identify the circumstances around the them—a poor night’s sleep, a stressful day,



a particular meal—and then work to avoid those triggers as much as possible.

Another option is medication. However, while some prescriptions can safely treat migraine pain and nausea in children older than 6, “lots of adult migraine medications are not FDA-approved for children and may have side effects,” says Ebdlahad. He recommends less harmful supplements like riboflavin and melatonin when medications are needed.

Duke says she’s had the most success with holistic measures, which often prove the best way to manage migraines in children, according to Ebdlahad. Per doctor’s orders, Duke now does 30 minutes of cardio three to five times a week, eats three full meals every day and follows a strict sleep schedule, getting eight to ten hours of shuteye every night. “I try very hard not to deviate more than two hours on that—even on weekends,” she says.

Staying hydrated has also been helpful. Duke drinks 60 ounces of water and 40 ounces of a liquid with electrolytes every day.

“I’m also doing cognitive behavioral therapy and that’s helping me understand and figure out the mind-body connection with my migraines,” she says.

Duke, who doesn’t take any specific migraine medicine, now gets them fewer than two to three times per month. Although they are around the same severity as before, she says she is more confident in knowing how to deal with them.

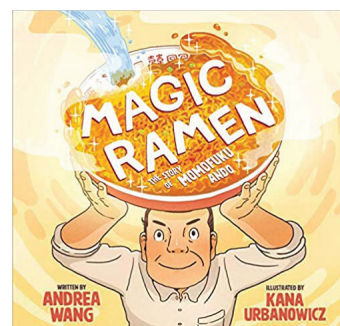
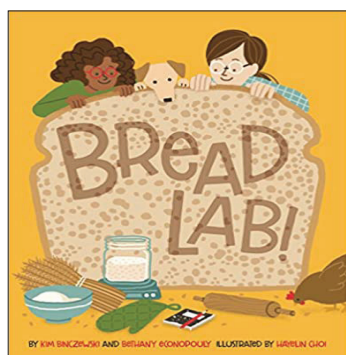
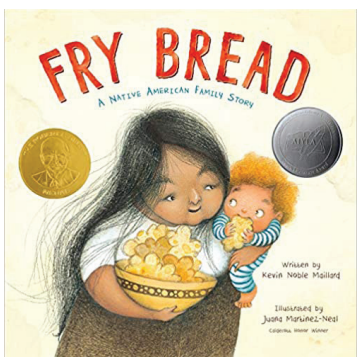
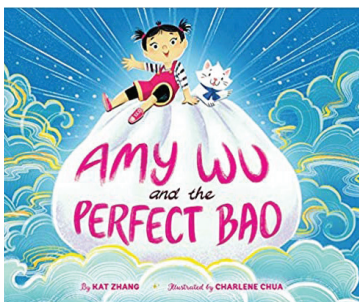
Working together with her parents and doctors helped Duke get on the road to relief. “It’s been amazing to see how some pretty simple lifestyle changes can make such a big difference in how I feel,” she says. “I really do have my life back now.” ■

The best way to handle migraines in children is trigger avoidance, explains Dr. Sommer Ebdlahad of the Virginia Spine Institute.

12 Food-Themed Children's Books

Let your kids sink their teeth into some delicious and satisfying stories. These books might make them hungry, but that's OK—most include recipes.

BY JENNIFER ROTHSCHILD, COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT LIBRARIAN,
ARLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



PICTURE BOOKS

'Our Little Kitchen'

Written and illustrated by Jillian Tamaki
Every week, neighbors get together to cook a meal for the neighborhood, making sure everyone's body is warm and their belly is full. They gather the food they've grown, food they have on hand and food from the food bank to create the meal. Bright, bold illustrations filled with speech balloons and sound effects (chop! splash! sizzzzzzzzle!) capture the energy of a crowded and busy kitchen in this delicious read.

'Amy Wu and the Perfect Bao'

Written by Kat Zhang, illustrated by Charlene Chua
Amy loves eating the bao (stuffed steamed buns) her family makes, but she struggles to make them herself. Her bao are always too big or too small, have too much or not enough filling or just plain fall apart. After a frazzled day full of unsuccessful attempts, Amy finally discovers a trick to help her finally make the perfect bao.

'Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story'

Written by Kevin Noble Maillard, illustrated by Juana Martinez-Neal
In short verses, Maillard pays tribute to fry bread—a culinary staple across many Native American tribes. Through words and illustrations fry bread is passed through generations and adapted to different times and places. The book touches on historical topics like colonization and the Trail of Tears, showcases modern Native life and highlights the diversity of tribes and tribal members.

EARLY ELEMENTARY

'Bread Lab'

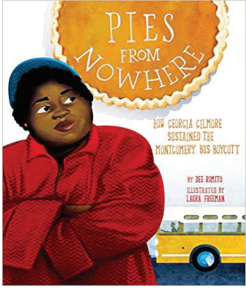
Written by Kim Binczewski and Bethany Econopouly, illustrated by Hayelin Choi
When Iris's plant-scientist Aunt Mary comes to visit, she brings a sourdough starter, and the two do hands-on science that results in a delicious loaf of bread. Written in partnership with The Bread Lab at the University of Washington and the Bread Bakers Guild of America, this book explains the science behind sourdough. Families who were unsuccessful in their sourdough attempts this spring may be inspired to try again.

'Magic Ramen: The Story of Momofuku Ando'

Written by Andrea Wang, illustrated by Kana Urbanowicz
Inventor Momofuku Ando believed "the world is peaceful only when everyone has enough to eat." Observing the long lines of hungry people waiting for food in Osaka immediately after World War II, Ando set to work to invent a food that was easy to make, filling and nutritious. For months, Ando experimented to make a bowl of soup to help these hungry people until finally his hard work and persistence paid off: the now ubiquitous instant ramen.

'Pies from Nowhere: How Georgia Gilmore Sustained the Montgomery Bus Boycott'

Written by Dee Romito, illustrated by Laura Freeman
Angry at how she was treated by bus drivers, Georgia Gilmore had been personally boycotting Montgomery buses for two months



before Rosa Parks was arrested. When the organized city-wide boycott began, she helped the best way she knew how—food. Gilmore was a cook with the National Lunch Company and organized other women to cook, bake and sell their food to help fund and sustain the boycott. An excellent look at an unsung hero and at how even small actions can make a huge difference.

MIDDLE GRADE

'Lights, Camera, Cook'

Written by Charise Mericle Harper, illustrated by Aurelie Blard-Quintard

The first book in the Next Best Junior Chef trilogy introduces four competitors in a children's cooking competition reality show. The first week of competition has the kids designing food trucks, cooking with surprise ingredients and navigating the dreaded partner challenge. At the end of the week, one will be sent home, but which one? Following the action on and off screen, each book in the series covers another week of the competition until the final winner is declared.

'Pie in the Sky'

Written and illustrated by Remy Lai

The plan had been for Jingwen's family to immigrate to Australia and open a bakery, but after his father dies, the plan changes. Jingwen struggles in his new country and school and is annoyed at his brother, who seems to be learning English and finding his place more quickly. Jingwen's only solace is making all the cakes his father planned to sell at the bakery, even though his mother has forbidden him to use the oven when she's not home. A beautiful and touching graphic novel/chapter book hybrid.

'Maker Comics: Bake Like a Pro'

Written and illustrated by Falynn Koch

Wizard-in-training Sage is disappointed to find her magical internship is in a bakery, but as she learns the (very real) science behind baking, she becomes convinced it might be its own form of magic.

This graphic novel takes readers through eight baking projects, explaining the science behind each step and why ingredients and certain baking tips work the way they do. Using the skills learned, readers can use their own magic to bake cookies, cheddar biscuits and more.

YOUNG ADULT

'A Banquet for Hungry Ghosts: A Collection of Deliciously Frightening Tales'

Written by Ying Chang Compestine, illustrated by Coleman Polhemus

With each gruesome story standing in for a dish, cookbook author Compestine offers up a traditional Chinese banquet of fright. Each spooky tale centers around the spirit of someone who died prematurely or unfairly (usually murder victims exacting their revenge) and spans much of Chinese history from the building of the Great Wall to modern day. Food plays a prominent role in each tale and historical notes are included.

'Sweet Revenge: Passive-Aggressive Desserts for Your Exes and Enemies'

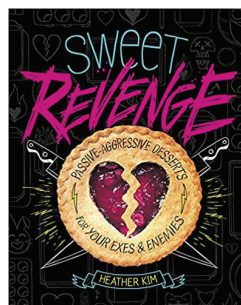
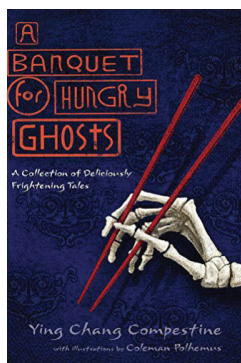
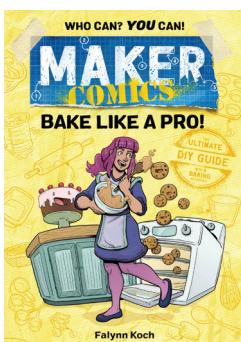
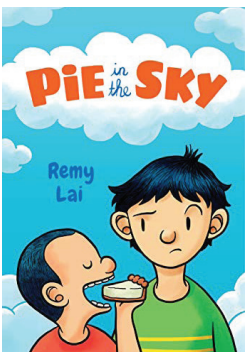
Written by Heather Kim

In the vein of turning lemons into lemonade, Kim urges teens to take their bittersweet feelings, mix in some flour and sugar and turn them into something incredibly tasty. Desserts such as "I Don't Give a Fig About You" and "You're a Devil Cake" are also sprinkled with advice and wisdom for when life isn't nearly as sweet as a batch of "Donut Call me Again."

'Tweet Cute'

Written by Emma Lord

Classmates Pepper and Jack are unknowingly engaged in an all-out Twitter war as they run the social media accounts of their families' dueling restaurants. At the same time, they're also starting to fall for each other on an anonymous chat app. Told in alternating chapters that switch between Pepper and Jack's points of view, readers will be unable to wait for the delicious moment when the two realize they've been talking to each other the entire time. ■



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Washington FAMILY

Corinne Cannon



DAVID STUCK

OCCUPATION: Founder and executive director of the Greater DC Diaper Bank, a nonprofit organization that provides a reliable source for basic baby needs and personal hygiene products to economically vulnerable families

LIVES: Washington, DC

WORKS: Washington, DC & Silver Spring, MD—and across the DMV

FAMILY: Husband, Jay Williams; children, Jack (10), Callie (7) and Finn (4)

You founded the Greater DC Diaper Bank (GDCDB) in 2010, the day before your son Jack's birthday. What was your motivation for starting a nonprofit, and how were you able to make it happen?

The Diaper Bank started one night when Jack was about five or six month old and had been crying for hours. After trying all the things I knew to do to make him stop, I suddenly had an overwhelming urge to hit him—and it startled me.

I remember putting him down very gently in his crib and going to get my husband. As I lay in bed and cried, I started to think about other women and other mothers. If I was struggling and had everything going for me ... what was happening to the mom who had no one to go wake up or no idea how she was going to feed her baby next week?

After that night I started doing a lot of research and making calls—I must have sounded crazy to people. I had a baby fussing in the background and I'm asking how I can help other moms!

In terms of making it happen, it was a lot of incredibly hard work and long hours. I called the Diaper Bank my "8 p.m. to midnight" job for years.

The GDCDB just celebrated its 10 year anniversary in October. How has your role at GDCDB changed over the years, and what do you love most about your job?

For the first five years I was the sole employee and worked pro-bono for four of them. I was running the diaper drive, the fundraising and the programs.

Today I'm a lot more focused on creating the policies and the structure for this work to expand and help even more folks—doesn't sound sexy, but putting real time and energy into HR policy and budgets is where I can have the most impact now.

What I love is that people understand the need right away. I love that it opens up empathy windows in people's hearts to think about the reality of parenting in poverty. I love our team and the volunteers and ambassadors we attract. We have an army of amazing people who are working diaper

by diaper and period product by period product to build the community we all want to live in.

How have you been able to juggle virtual schooling with your work at the GDCDB?

Oh, there is no juggle! There is a lot of scrambling, falling, getting up again, crying, laughing because you want to cry and letting go. It's hard in a way that reminds me very much of the newborn phase of parenting: too many people want too many things you cannot give at the same time, and you're always tired and hungry.

There's an added layer of difficulty in being alone in all of this. I derive so much of my energy from being with others—socially distancing takes a different kind of toll on extreme extroverts like me. My husband and I are surviving, I think (!!), by doubling down on communications, dividing and conquering and being OK with things being not OK. Every night we triage the next day—who has what meeting, who needs to be where, who needs an hour of uninterrupted think time or the consequences will be dire—and we figure it out. At the end of each day we're always amazed we did it!

Many families are thinking about gratitude and generosity this time of year. What are some ways parents can get their kids excited about giving back to the community?

Kids are far more excited by the idea of giving back and helping if they are the instigators. Ask your kids what they think needs to change in the world. What problems do they see that they want to fix? What change do they want to create and how do you best go about it? Do your research into these issues together.

So many organizations are being challenged with coming up with creative ways to volunteer or give back—so find an organization and have your children get involved, virtually. There are lots of needs right now and whatever skill or ideas or dollars you have to give are going to be appreciated. ■

This interview has been lightly edited for clarity and length. Read our extended Q&A with Corinne Cannon on washingtontfamily.com.

A close-up 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.

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