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NOVEMBER 2022

**How Your Kid Can
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**World Children's
Choir: A Heart for
Ukraine**

**A Unique Way
to Adopt**

***a Season
of Gratitude***

**LIFE ABROAD WITH
ARLINGTON'S SANTILLO FAMILY**

**Preschool
and Daycare
directories
Page 27**



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Shchedryk, Kyiv Children's Choir is one of many global voices singing in benefit concert. **Page 12**



Arlington's Santillo Family

PHOTO PROVIDED

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



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Craig Burke, Publisher

Jeni Mann Tough,
Associate Publisher



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 9200 Rumsey Road, Suite 215, Columbia, MD 21045

EDITORIAL

Lindsay VanAsdalan, Editor
 LVanAsdalan@midatlanticmedia.com

Staff Writers

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

Contributing Writers

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

ADVERTISING

Craig Burke, CEO/Publisher
 cburke@midatlanticmedia.com

Sales Consultants

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

MARKETING

Julia Olaguer
 Audience Development Coordinator

BUSINESS

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

Sarah Appelbaum
 Accounts Receivable Specialist
 sappelbaum@midatlanticmedia.com

CIRCULATION

410-902-2300, ext. 1

CREATIVE

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

MID-ATLANTIC MEDIA

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



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Music and Lyrics by **Toshi Reagon**

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It's not easy to take those first steps into a place where nobody really knows you yet...but somehow you do it. This world premiere commissioned musical is based on one of Kennedy Center Education Artist-in-Residence **Jacqueline Woodson's** most popular picture books.

Nov. 19-Dec. 18, 2022 | Family Theater

Saturday, December 10 at 11 a.m. is a sensory-friendly performance.



Lindsay VanAsdalan

Editor
LVanAsdalan@
midatlanticmedia.com

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The Reason for the Season

With November comes a traditional family holiday: Thanksgiving. As we prepare our tables for a feast, we reflect on the meaning of the season. First, it's a time of gratitude for family—whether by blood or chosen family. Celebrate those connections together through a DIY family tree craft (pg. 11).

In the spirit of gratitude, we think of needs beyond our own, as did Sondra Harnes, founder and artistic director of World Children's Choir. Staff writer Heather M. Ross shares her story of compassion and charity in gathering recorded performances from all over the world for a virtual Ukraine benefit concert by her DMV-based organization on Nov. 5. (pg. 12)

We also appreciate and give thanks for where we came from. November is Native American Heritage Month, which recognizes the Indigenous peoples who still call the United States their home. Arlington Public Libraries shares fun and educational reads about Indigenous culture that families can read to celebrate. (pg. 31).

In this issue, we are also highlighting our pre-K learners. Ross, with contributed reporting from Gianna

Gronowski, creates a fun, historic field trip idea for families of children in this age group. Using their imaginations, they can picture what it was like to attend the Kingsley Schoolhouse and other one-room schoolhouses in Montgomery County (pg. 23).

For National Adoption Month, contributing writer Gina Gallucci-White explores a non-traditional option you might not be aware of (pg. 15) and for Children's Grief Awareness Day on Nov. 17, contributing writer Emily Rose Barr highlights a local musician's use of song to help teens through trauma (pg. 21)—a difficult topic for parents to navigate.

Contributing writer Megan Conway broaches another difficult topic—conversations with children about abuse (pg. 18). Hard moments such as these can serve to remind us how grateful we are for what we have. This season, help lighten the load for others by spreading compassion and generosity.

In gratitude,

Lindsay C. VanAsdalan



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Upcoming Open House:

Wednesday, November 16 at 9:00 AM - In Person

Visit our Website to Register or Schedule a Tour



Preschool - Grade 8 Co-ed, Independent School in Falls Church • Contact us about our Infant and Toddler Program

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



BY ELENA EPSTEIN,
DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL
PARENTING PRODUCT AWARDS

For more product reviews, visit nappaawards.com

ANASTASIA GOLOSOVA/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS



Bunny Hopkins Swing Collection

A unique handmade wooden disc swing for indoor or outdoor play. Provides excellent sensory stimulation and is a great way to develop essential motor skills. Created with sustainable materials sourced from American Maple Wood. Vibrant natural and color stains create amazing underlying wood grain patterns. \$59-\$99, ages 2-8, bunnyhopkinstoys.com

GraviTrax Speed Set

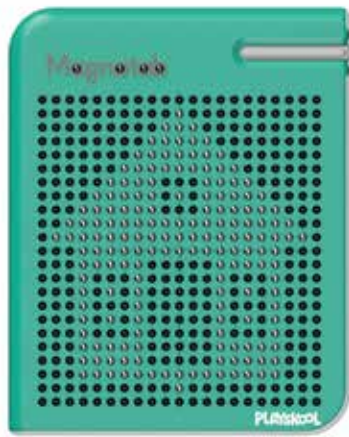
Create your own action-packed marble run obstacle course with this interactive construction toy. Includes height tiles, turns, tunnels, tracks and four different accessories for endless building activities. Fosters problem solving, creativity and experimentation. \$129.99, ages 8+, target.com



Bezgar Toy-Grade RC Car TB141

Get ready for speed. Features powerful built-in brushed motor and easy-to-use non-interference remote control with anti-jamming features. A great off-road monster truck for indoor and outdoor use. \$44.99, ages 6-14, amazon.com





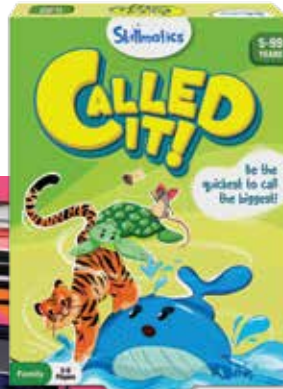
Magnatab Free Draw

Create a sensory-based creative play experience. Using the magnetic stylus, children pull the beads up to the surface to draw pictures, letters, numbers and shapes. The beads are magically “erased” when pushed down by the tip of a finger or the swipe of the side of the stylus. Great for the home or the classroom. \$19.99, ages 3+, playmonster.com



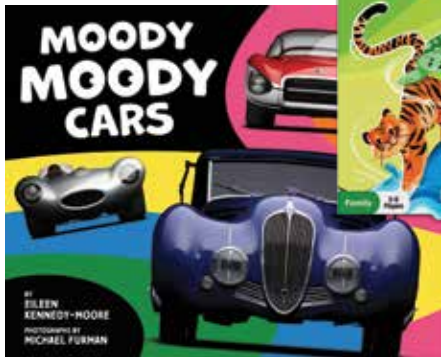
Explorer X

This balance bike goes above and beyond to be the aid your kid needs to transfer smoothly into riding a bike with safety features such as a frame pad, safe footrests and an adjustable seat that grows with your child. \$99.99, ages 4-6, mobocruiser.com



Called It!

An easy-to-learn game that is fast and fun for the whole family. Turn over your topmost card in the center at the same time as family members and be the first to call out the biggest animal. Uses quick thinking, focus and lightning reflexes. \$12.97, ages 5+, amazon.com



Moody Moody Cars

In this unique and charming picture book, classic cars express a range of feelings from excited to angry to help kids learn about emotions. Enjoy the photos of very cool cars or dive deeper into the engine of emotional understanding that helps drive us all toward personal well-being and healthy relationships. \$16.99, ages 4-8, eileenkennedymoore.com



BRIO My First Railway Light Up Rainbow Set

A 10-piece train set that introduces kids to colors, sounds and fine-tuned motor skills. It features a rainbow platform that lights up and makes sounds when the train passes through. \$74.99, ages 18 months +, brio.us

VTech Marble Rush Corkscrew Rush Set

Construct thrilling stunts and exciting challenges, and watch marbles go for a spin. This 112-piece color-coded building set includes a corkscrew tumbler that plays a musical light show, a see-saw track, a dizzying vortex and thrilling ramps and bases that all easily connect together. When construction is complete, dump the 10 marbles out of the barrel and into action.

\$44.99, ages 4+, vtechkids.com



T.A.P.E.S.

Approximate. Proportion. Estimation. Showdown. A wild new turn-based family party game where players guess the size of objects in the room using 16 wacky units of measurement ranging from honeybees and apples to playing cards and squirrels. The player closest to guessing the actual size wins. \$29.99, ages 6+, amazon.com

For more product reviews visit nappaawards.com



{TOP 10} Family Events for November

Warm up with these seasonal activities in the DMV

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

10

NOV. 4

MOVIE NIGHT AT PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S COTTAGE

Bring a picnic and blanket for a free family movie night at President Lincoln's Cottage museum in Washington, D.C.

The screening will begin at 7 p.m. and will feature either "Inside Out" or "Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure" depending on the results of an online community vote!

lincolncottage.org



LIGHTFIELD STUDIOS / ADOBESTOCK

9

NOV. 7

FAMILY STORY TIME

Encourage your child's lifelong love of learning by attending family story time at the Capitol View Neighborhood Library in D.C. This event is recommended for children from birth to 5 years of age. You and your family can enjoy 30-40 minutes of fun stories and activities for free from 10:30-11 a.m.

Free | dclibrary.org

NOV. 8

CHILDREN'S ARTS & CRAFTS

Join other families in embracing your child's creative spirit with an hour-long craft session from 3:30-4:30 p.m. at D.C.'s Francis A. Gregory Neighborhood Library designed to teach kids about colors, shapes and textures. This event is best suited for ages 5-12.

Free | dclibrary.org

8

ART AND PHOTOS COURTESY OF GETTY IMAGES

7

NOV. 16-30

NAKED MOLE RAT GETS DRESSED: THE ROCK EXPERIENCE ON IMAGINATION STAGE

See and hear what happens when a naked mole rat decides to get dressed and rock out to the rhythm of his electric guitar. This Bethesda performance, based on the book "Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed" by Mo Willems, is best for ages 4-10 and runs through Jan. 8; ASL-interpreted and sensory-friendly options in December.

Tickets: \$25-39 | imaginationstage.org

6

NOV. 18-30

GARDEN OF LIGHTS

Montgomery County's Brookside Gardens will become a magical winter wonderland for its annual Garden of Lights display. Explore glimmering lights in a half-mile display among the flowerbeds and 50-acre grounds in Wheaton, Md. Open through Jan. 1, 2023 (except for Nov. 21-24 and Dec. 24-25).

Tickets: \$10 per person, ages 4 and younger enter free | Montgomeryparks.org



5



NOV. 19

WASHINGTON GROVE CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Everyone is invited to celebrate friendship at Washington Grove United Methodist Church's Christmas Bazaar. Every item at the bazaar is handcrafted. Find unique and beautiful centerpieces, trees, decorations and gifts in Washington Grove. The bazaar opens at 9 a.m. and closes at 4 p.m.

Free | washgroveumc.org/christmas-bazaar

4



NOV. 24

AMERICA'S TROT FOR HUNGER AT FREEDOM PLAZA

Stay healthy and support So Others Might Eat, a non-profit working to provide services and help those dealing with poverty and homelessness in Washington D.C. Registration includes a festival with live entertainment, giveaways and rater incentives, custom event photos, a custom finisher medal and more. Children ages 10 and younger can complete the 1-mile Little Turkey Race.

Admission: \$25-65 | trotforhunger.org

3

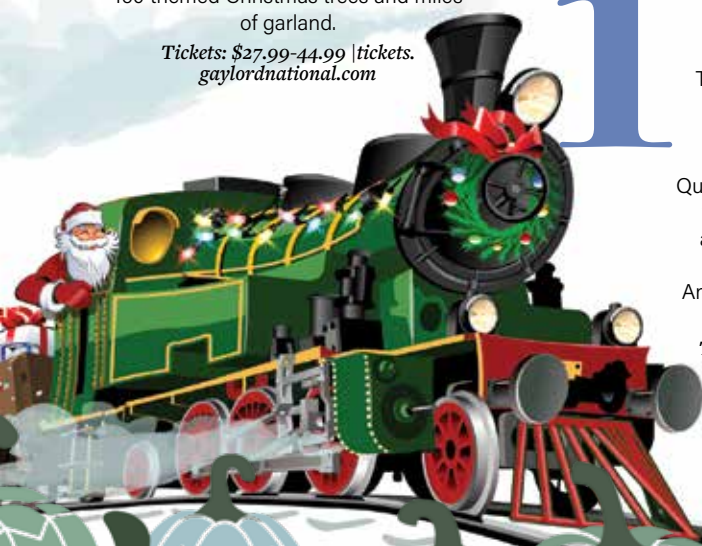
NOV. 25-30

ICE! AT GAYLORD NATIONAL RESORT

Experience the holiday classic, "A Christmas Story" as told through hand-carved ice sculptures through Dec. 31. This year's icy art will feature 10+ scenes from the iconic family tale, all from more than 6,000 massive ice blocks. The D.C.-area resort will be decorated with more than 2 million lights, 160 themed Christmas trees and miles of garland.

Tickets: \$27.99-44.99 | tickets.gaylordnational.com

1



NOV. 26

CHARLIE BROWN THANKSGIVING FAMILY EVENT WITH LIVE JAZZ

Relax with your family and enjoy door prizes, Charlie Brown Christmas Tree prizes and softest Blanket awards. Families are encouraged to bring their own homemade decoration or present for the "Sharing Tree." This event by Music at Redeemer in Bethesda will feature food, drinks, prizes, a film and live jazz from 3-5:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$1-15 | musicatredeemer.org

NOV. 27

THE QUEEN'S CARTOONISTS HOLIDAY HURRAH

This show has something for everyone, with projected clips of holiday cartoons and films accompanied by live musical performances by The Queen's Cartoonists. From 4-6 p.m., listen to classic songs, jazz arrangements, and old-school animations including characters from the Golden Age of Animation at George Mason University's Center for the Arts in Fairfax, Va.

Tickets: \$19 | thequeenscartoonists.com

2





FAMILY FUN

WF

Santa Sightings in the DMV

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

Does your child have a wishlist ready yet?

SANTA CLAUS WILL START MAKING HIS ROUNDS TO FAVORITE FAMILY SPOTS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, WASHINGTON, D.C., NORTHERN VIRGINIA AND BEYOND AS EARLY AS NOVEMBER! FIND HIM AT THE LOCATIONS BELOW.

STORIES WITH SANTA CLAUS 🎁

Heartlove Photography, LLC, 8971 Fort Smallwood Road, #unit F, Pasadena, Md. 21122 |

By appointment starting Nov. 12

Stories with Santa creates an immersive experience with individual sessions with Santa. Sessions are booked by appointment and invitation only. Your child will read a story by the fire, chat about reindeer and the North Pole, tinker with antique toys, chart a flight path, see Santa's magic key and pocket watch and get a gift from Santa's bag and see their name on the "nice" list. Stories with Santa Claus aims to be sensory-friendly and can customize the experience based on the application questionnaire. Appointments are \$350 and include 3 digital images in full resolution. storieswithsantaclaus.com

ENCHANT WASHINGTON D.C. ❄️

1500 S. Capitol St. SE, Washington, D.C. 20003 |

Open Nov. 25 through Jan. 1

Enchant Washington D.C., home to the world's largest light maze and Christmas village, opens on Nov. 25 in Nationals Park. This magical winter world features ice skating, holiday treats, the village, a light maze and, of course, Santa. Learn more and purchase your Santa tickets at enchantchristmas.com.

A VISIT WITH SANTA AT SULLY HISTORIC SITE 🎅

3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly, Va. | 12 p.m. Nov. 26

Bring your camera and take a

picture with Santa in a beautiful historic outdoor setting at Sully Historic Site. Children will have a chance to tell Santa their wishes, make an ornament and enjoy refreshments. The event starts at noon. For more information, call 703-437-1794. To find this event online, search "Santa" at <https://fairfax.usdirect.com/FairfaxFCPAWeb/Activities/Search.aspx>

BETHESDA WINTER WONDERLAND 🎅

At the corner of Norfolk and St. Elmo Ave. |

1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 4

Head down to the Norfolk Avenue Streetery from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. to celebrate the holiday season with live ice sculpting, live music and photo opportunities (Santa included!). This event is presented by Bethesda Urban Partnership, an organization working to help downtown businesses and residents thrive. For more information and updates, visit bethesda.org/bethesda/winter-wonderland.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA BY ARP 🎅

See website for individual addresses | Starting at 8 a.m. Dec. 3 and continuing throughout the month

Enjoy a festive breakfast feast at Theismann's Restaurant, Mia's Italian Kitchen or at Ada's on the River. Breakfast starts at 8 a.m. at all three locations, and Santa will be on the scene.

Children will receive take-home treats, meet Santa and take a keepsake photo with him. The Alexandria Restaurant Partners (ARP) own and operate nine restaurants in Florida and Northern Virginia. alexandriarestaurantpartners.com ■



THANKSGIVING DIY: Family Trees

BY HEATHER M. ROSS



Fall is the time of year when we appreciate the hard work we've put in and the loved ones who support us. This family-friendly craft will bring personality and warmth to your kitchen table this Thanksgiving.

YOU'LL NEED

Two sheets of gold or brown cardstock paper

One sheet of yellow cardstock paper

One sheet of orange cardstock paper

One sheet of red cardstock paper

A black marker

A pencil

A pair of scissors

A ruler

Glue

STEP 1 Tracing:

To begin, place the brown cardstock paper on the table and draw the trunk of your tree with the pencil. Your tree pattern does not have to be symmetrical. Feel free to erase and re-draw as much as you like to get the shape you want. For extra stability, make sure to include some roots.

Tip: For a more natural look, make the sides of the trunk a bit bumpy. But if you're having trouble, use a ruler.

STEP 2 Cutting: Next, carefully cut along the pencil line with scissors. Place the scrap paper to the side. Then, using a ruler, make a faint pencil line directly in the middle of the trunk on the bottom half continuing up to the middle. Cut along that line.



Tip: If little ones are helping with this craft, make sure the points of their scissors are always facing away from their body.

STEP 3 Duplicate: Trace the trunk you already cut out onto the second piece of brown cardstock paper and repeat steps one and two, but instead of cutting along the bottom-middle, cut down to the middle from the top on the second trunk piece.

STEP 4 Leaves: Draw or trace leaves from outside onto the red, yellow and orange colored paper. They do not all need to be the same size and shape but be sure to have them big enough to write someone's name on them. Once you have at least 20 leaves, cut them out.

STEP 5 Names: Use the black marker to write the names of your family members, pets and friends you're thankful for on both sides of each leaf.

Tip: Don't press too hard with the marker or the ink could bleed through. A soft pressure is enough.

STEP 6 (Optional) Branches: You can use the leftover brown cardstock from steps two and three to draw and cut additional branches.

STEP 7 Leaves to Branches: Attach the leaves to the branches with a dot of glue at the stem or base of the leaf. Then, wait for the glue to dry.

Tip: Use some leaves of each color on each branch to give your tree a natural fall look.

Tip: Use glitter glue for a little bit of sparkle!

STEP 8 Assembly: Slide the first trunk piece down the middle of the second trunk piece so that the center slits meet.

Tip: For added stability, a little bit of clear tape can be used.

Finally, you can display your creation for the whole family to see! ■





'HEART SONGS AND LOVE NOTES FROM THE WORLD FOR THE CHILDREN OF UKRAINE'

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

L Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February of this year, stories of the ongoing conflict have impacted hearts and minds all over the world.

For Sondra Harnes, CEO and artistic director of the Arlington-based World Children's Choir, she was touched through music.

Harnes saw a Ukrainian American choir, Dumka of New York, singing "Prayer for Ukraine" on Saturday Night Live, shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine began.

She knew she wanted to do something to help and music was the solution. "It's just such a terrible situation. I go to singing, to my music to fill me up and to sing with others is the best thing I could possibly do," Harnes says.

Harnes organized a virtual benefit concert for the Voice of Children Foundation in Ukraine, inviting adults, children and teens from all over the world to add to the voices with the prayer and one other song, "Love Sings a Song for the World." The recordings will be streamed online on Nov. 5.

Before rehearsals started in August, singers from 17 countries had already signed up to participate. Six more countries have joined in on the free project.

Singers from Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, France, India, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, the U.S. and Wales, are among those who have contributed their voices to this project.

Learning to sing Ukrainian songs hasn't been easy, and Harnes acknowledged that for some it wasn't possible. However, those who could not learn the Ukrainian songs

were able to sing their own songs in support and they will be put up on the WCC website, worldchildrenschoir.org.

Katie Warner, who was with the choir for nearly 14 years and graduated from the choir in 2018 praised the choir for its multicultural education, teaching her said songs in Italian, Spanish, French, German, Czech and other languages.

"I think learning about the structures of other languages and the etymology is really cool. I think it's a really cool way to open yourself up to another part of the world, another people. It opens the world up to you in a way I think not many other things can," Warner says.

The Ukraine benefit will also feature Georgy Synzheriak, a 14-year-old Ukrainian refugee. In addition to supporting his homeland, the project also supports the teen's passions. "Georgy is 14 years old, he

dreams of becoming a professional vocalist," says his mother Natalya Synzheriak, in a news release.

Harnes is hoping to raise at least \$5,000 through the \$10 tickets. The Voices of Children Foundation's goal is to create conditions when every child will be heard and have their rights be protected. The foundation has several programs including art therapy, mobile psychologists, individual help and video storytelling.

WCC Beginnings

The WCC has always been closely connected to heartbeat of the world since its founding in 1990, after the Berlin Wall came down.

Harnes grew up during the Cold War and she recalled seeing the Red Army Chorus singing on T.V. after the Berlin Wall fell and the feeling has stayed with her all these years. "I would never have believed that we'd be where we were," Harnes says, remembering the historic moment.

Harnes' interest in music came much earlier. Her mother began teaching her to sing when she was only six months old. After receiving a Bachelor of Arts from Southeast Missouri State University and Master of Music from the Catholic University of America, her career in music had much success. She won many contests, performing on radio and T.V. and appearing with many symphony orchestras, oratorio societies, opera companies and in concerts at famous locations like the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the United Nations and Carnegie Hall.

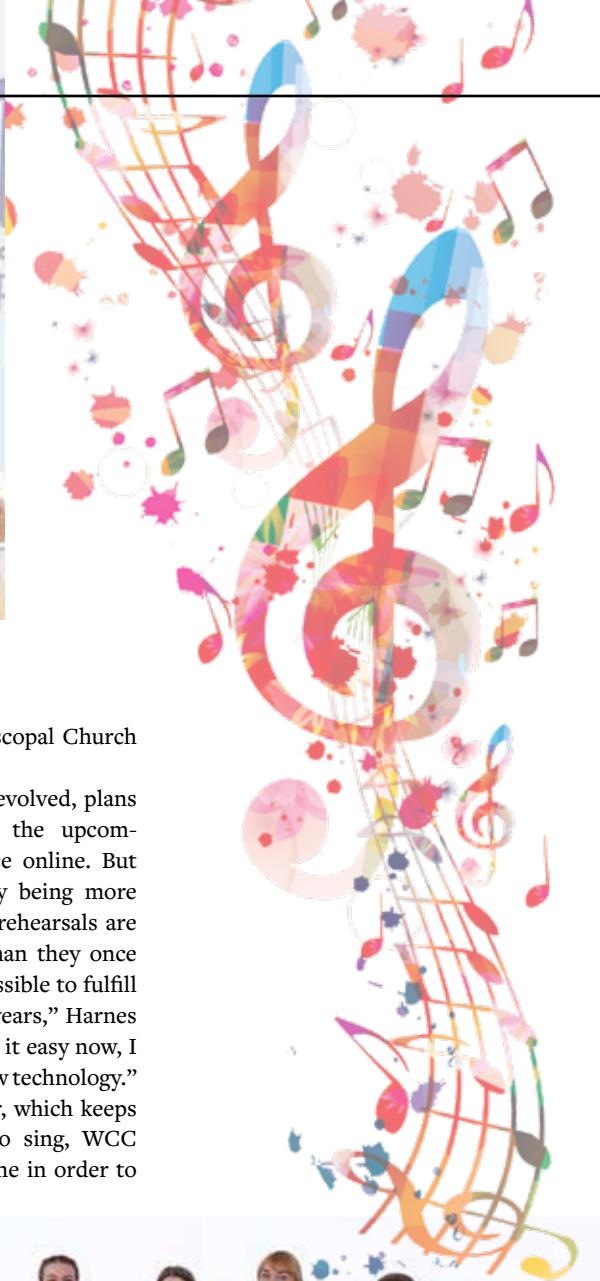
She continued on this track with the WCC, which has performed for former presidents including Barack Obama, George H.W. Bush,



THE VOICES
OF CHILDREN
FOUNDATION'S
GOAL IS TO CREATE
CONDITIONS WHEN
EVERY CHILD WILL BE
HEARD AND HAVE THEIR
RIGHTS BE PROTECTED.



Georgy Synzheriak, 14, and mother Natalya



William H. Clinton and George W. Bush. Its singers have also performed for the Supreme Court, Mikhail Gorbachev and other famous figures all over the world.

While the WCC has shared its voices in many significant arenas, the group does not perform competitively. “It’s about cooperation and being the best you can be,” Harnes says.

The Show Must Go On

Since the pandemic struck, the way Harnes runs the choir and its rehearsals has changed significantly. Initially, the choir planned to resume in-person rehearsals in

September at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in North Arlington.

However, as the pandemic evolved, plans changed and rehearsals for the upcoming benefit concert took place online. But thanks to modern technology being more popular and available, online rehearsals are a much more realistic idea than they once were. “Technology made it possible to fulfill a dream I’ve had for over 30 years,” Harnes said, “I’m 74, I could be taking it easy now, I had to learn how to use this new technology.”

Through Easy Virtual Choir, which keeps everyone perfectly in sync to sing, WCC has been able to practice online in order to



Shchedryk, Kyiv Children's Choir
Ukraine ; will perform in Carnegie Hall this December



protect those are most at risk from COVID-19. This also means that more people can safely contribute without overcrowding the physical location.

Students living within 500 miles of the Washington, D.C. area are able to attend virtual rehearsals over Zoom using JackTrip technology to control latency. Private

voice lessons are also available online through the WCC.

In addition to the Nov. 5 benefit, the WCC has three public seasonal concerts and virtual choir videos for special projects that support children from the international community who are in need. "There is no such thing as tone deaf, everyone can learn

to sing," Harnes says. "I want to encourage everyone to sing. Sing in the shower, in the car, it's healthy and it's healing."

Past concerts have helped build a school in Africa, and held fundraisers benefiting Bosnia and UNICEF, as well as Haiti after the infamous 2010 earthquake. "I like the children to know we aren't just singing for ourselves, we are singing for other people," Harnes says.

Watch the Ukrainian benefit concert on the CommonTime. Online platform on Nov. 5. Donations can be made through voices.org/ua/en. For more information, email info@voices.org.ua. Email Sondra.harnes@worldchildrenschoir.org to join the WCC if you are 4 to 18 years old. Weekly rehearsals are held on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings September through May. Rehearsals and workshops for advanced students are held on weekends. ■



Coristas de San Nicolás children's choir in Mexico

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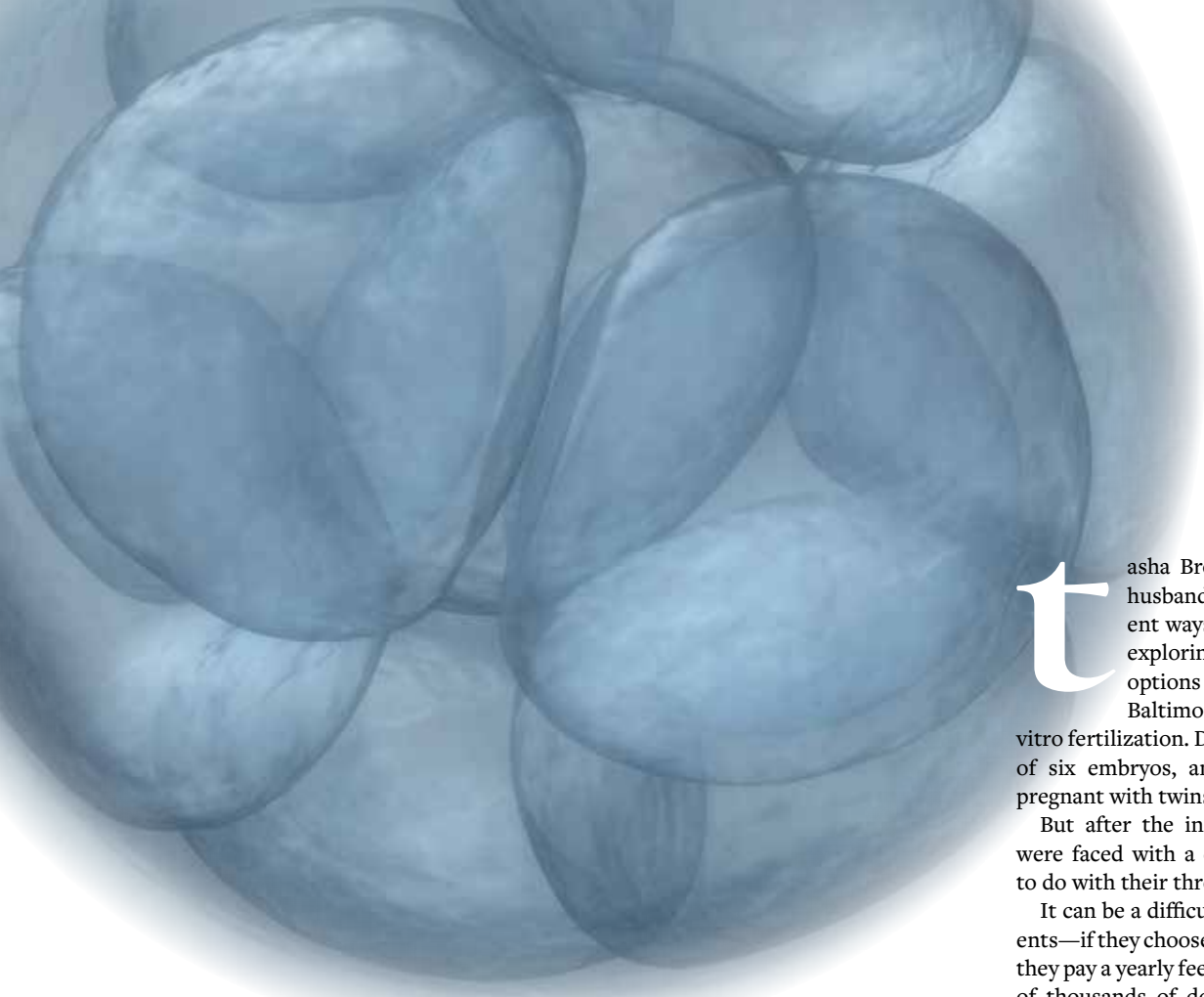
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EMBRYO
ADOPTION
PROVIDES NEW
ROUTE TO
PARENTHOOD

BY GINA GALLUCCI-WHITE

tasha Brodgins Coates and her husband tried many different ways to get pregnant. After exploring several different options at a fertility clinic, the Baltimore couple turned to in vitro fertilization. Doctors implanted three of six embryos, and the couple became pregnant with twins, now 5 years old.

But after the in vitro procedure, they were faced with a difficult decision: what to do with their three unused embryos?

It can be a difficult spot to be in for parents—if they choose to store their embryos, they pay a yearly fee which can be hundreds of thousands of dollars. The alternatives are thawing and discarding the embryos, donating to science or reproduction.

“At first, we didn’t think much about it,” says Lisa Alberta, a Mickelton, N.J. mother who was left in a similar situation with four embryos to spare. “We just paid for the storage, and year after year continued to pay. After a while it was like, ‘OK what are we going to do now?’”

The Brodgins Coates family did not want to add to their own family of four, and Alberta and her husband Michael discovered they couldn’t—Lisa would be at risk of passing Lyme Disease to the baby.

Both families were thrilled to discover there was another option: the Snowflakes Embryo Adoption Program.

A division of Nightlight Christian Adoptions founded in 1997, the faith-based operation gives families the opportunity to donate their frozen embryos to families seeking adoption.

Kimberly Tyson, vice president of Snowflakes, says it can be a great option for couples who did not have success with other fertility options. Less expensive than the regular adoption process—\$16,000 versus the \$30,000 to \$35,000 for a domestic infant adoption—it also allows prospective



THE CLEAVER
FAMILY



THE BRODGRINS COATES FAMILY



CARA VEST AND
HER CHILDREN

mothers the opportunity to become pregnant and carry a child, providing a more controlled prenatal environment.

Tasha Brodgrins Coates could sympathize with that maternal desire.

"I wanted to be a blessing to someone else through my life," she says. "I felt like that was something great to do — to bless someone else with the opportunity to have children through me."

A SECOND CHANCE

In August, Snowflakes had more adopting families apply than in any previous month of the program. The first Snowflake baby will turn 25 at the end of the year, and the program's 1,000th baby will be born in early winter.

"It is just really pleasing and exciting to see how these lives that were born—and would not have been born if somebody had not given them an opportunity to be born—are contributing to the world and having wonderful lives," Tyson says. "It is really cool."

Many donors are drawn to the idea of giving their embryos a second chance at life.

Kristy and George Cleaver had struggled with the decision to start IVF from the beginning. "Our belief is that life begins at conception, so it was really important to us that any embryo that we created would be used," Kristy says.

The couple recently moved from Frederick to Fairfield, Pa., got married at age 40 and 38, respectively, and, after having one baby naturally, Kristy's age began to make it difficult to have a second child. One IVF cycle resulted in their daughter being born when Kristy was 46 years old. But the Cleavers felt that Kristy did not have the time medically to carry the six embryos remaining from that process.

Cara Vest, a Hamilton, Va. mother

WHAT IS A snowflake baby?

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ADOPTION.

who adopted through Snowflakes, says she liked the program's hands-on approach and faith-based foundation.

As an older new mother, she was also drawn to the program's willingness to work with women who were in their late 30s and 40s to achieve their pregnancy dreams. "They make you feel welcome and warm throughout the entire process," she says.

HOW IT WORKS

Participants do not need to be Christian to be a part of the program, as the nonprofit works with all faiths. Couples are referred to Snowflakes through many different avenues, including word of mouth, referrals from fertility clinics and advertising.

Vest heard about the program on James Dobson's show "Focus on the Family" while driving to work one day, and she and her husband decided to give it a try. The Snowflake process took about a year and they met with a donor family who also had four children.

Snowflakes requires couples who wish to adopt be married for at least two years and the individual carrying the child must get a note from their physician stating they are healthy and can carry a pregnancy.

But that still does not mean every pregnancy will be viable. As with in vitro procedures, the expectation is that one or two of the multiple embryos implanted will take.

Of the embryos the Cleavers donated, one did not survive the thawing process, two others failed to implant and one resulted in the recent birth of a boy. There are two embryos remaining.

But the opportunity for any success was worth it to the couple. "It makes us feel so much better after the journey we went through to be able to help someone else."



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Another aspect of embryo adoption that sets it apart from other adoption routes is its propensity towards maintaining donor and adoptive family relationships.

Tyson advises couples to request open adoption because it encourages sibling relationships.

“We want those two families over time to develop a relationship with one another because those two families have children who are genetic siblings to one another, and we think that is in the best interest of the children,” she says.

The Cleavers have written contact with the family that adopted their embryos at least once a year. Lisa Alberta says she has open communication with her adoptive family, sending photos and texts back and forth. In October, the Albertas traveled to Virginia to meet them for the first time in person.

“We just had so much peace with the decision,” Lisa Alberta says of donating to Snowflakes. “We could tell everything leading up to this particular moment was part of God’s plan in helping this beautiful couple.”

Since donor families are able to choose



who adopts their embryos, there’s also a natural bond that forms during the process.

Tasha Brodgin Coates says she was drawn to one couple who discussed how they had tried for years to conceive unsuccessfully and also shared about themselves and their interests. “I feel like I got to know them as a couple,” she says.

Vest says with hundreds of thousands of embryos still frozen, she hopes adopting at the embryo stage becomes a more well-known and understood way of starting a family.

“My kids are my kids, and I got to carry them,” she says. “I got to nurse them. I got to be a mom.” ■

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SNOWFLAKES, VISIT
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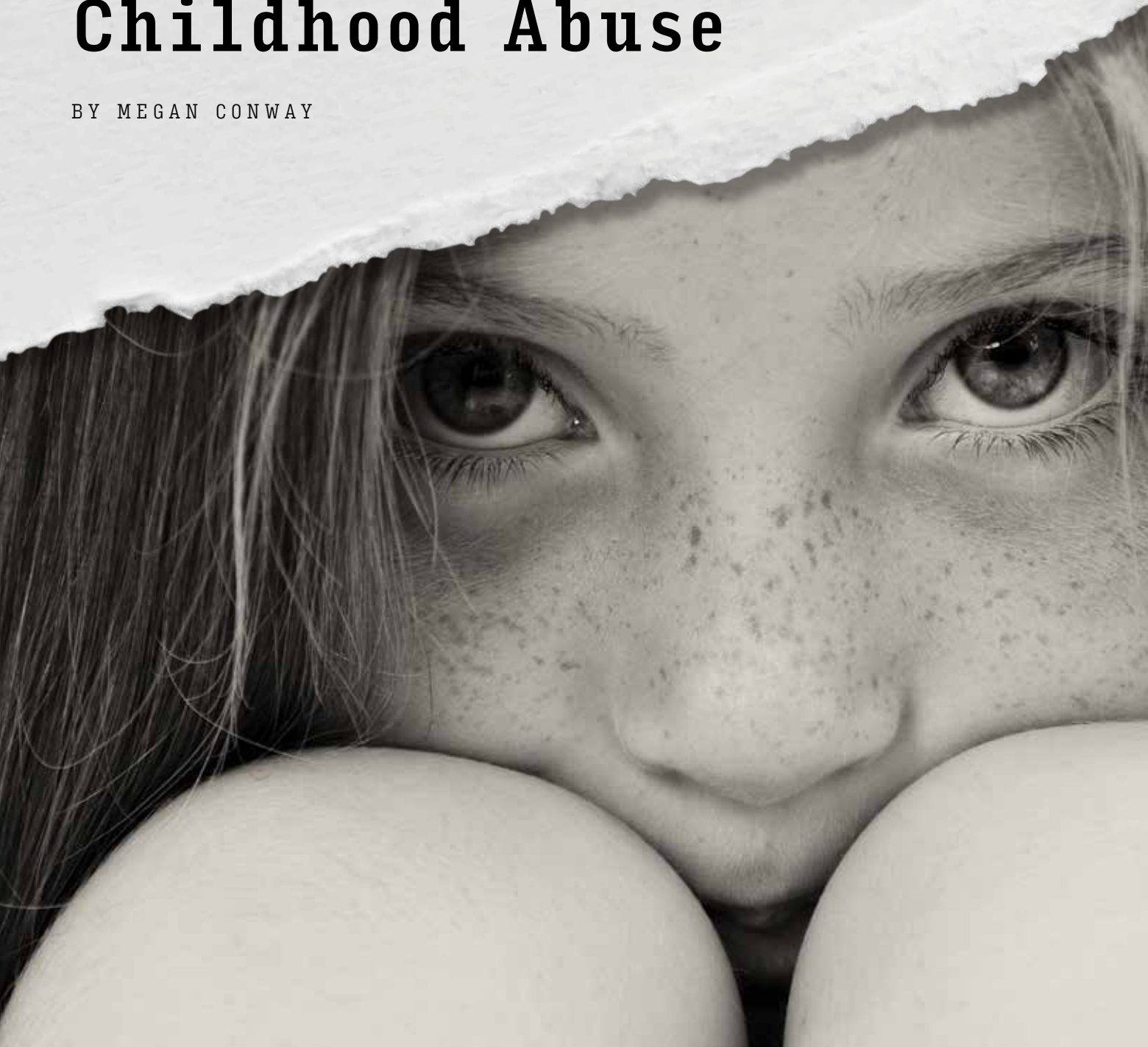
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WHEN THE WORST HAPPENS:

Navigating Conversations on Childhood Abuse

BY MEGAN CONWAY





TORN PAPER: NAI/AUSS/ADOBE STOCK; CHILD: STOCK_COLORS/E+/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

Childhood abuse is one of the world's most painful horrors. A discovery of abuse is a life-altering reckoning for parents and caregivers, creating a recovery process that is difficult and deeply personal.

When the worst happens, how do families carry on? It's an impossible, yet essential, topic to discuss to ensure survivors of childhood abuse receive the care they need and to prevent future crimes from occurring. Three regional experts share below how parents and caregivers can best navigate conversations with children who have experienced abuse, and how families can begin to rebuild trust after these experiences.

All incidents of inappropriate behavior or misconduct of an adult with a child (anyone younger than 18 years old) should be reported immediately to the appropriate person and/or state authorities (child protective services, law enforcement and/or the State's Attorney's Office) pursuant to state law. Reports may be made anonymously.

CREATE A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND CALM ENVIRONMENT WHEN A CHILD OPENS UP ABOUT ABUSE

"The first, and most critical, thing is to lead with believing and supporting," says Nuria Orsino, manager of victim services at the Philadelphia Children's Alliance the Philadelphia Children's Alliance. "Research shows that an important factor in a child's ability to heal from trauma is to have a supportive and believing caregiver."

"It's very rare for children to make up stories about being abused," assures Dr. Sherri Widen, developmental psychologist and research manager at Committee for Children, a global nonprofit working with families and educators to support the safety and wellbeing of children.

These conversations will be devastating, but, Alison D'Alessandro, community outreach and education manager at Baltimore's Center For Hope, LifeBridge Health, emphasizes, "Trust your child is telling you a story that needs to be told." Parents should do their best to remain calm, D'Alessandro adds, as

expressions of shock, fear, anger or disgust can scare children. What is needed at this time is careful listening—without interruption—and shows of support. "Reassure your child that he or she has done nothing wrong, and that what happened was not their fault."

"As difficult as it is, a caregiver should limit constantly asking or questioning the child about their experiences because in their own need or desire to want to know the details, it could inadvertently send the wrong message to the child that they aren't 'answering correctly' or giving the 'right' information," explains Orsino. Children may interpret this as their caregiver not believing them, which can cause them to recant or change their disclosure. Parents should remain as nonleading as possible. "Avoiding naming specific people as someone who may have harmed the child is important. You want the information to come from the child directly, and as uninfluenced by other people's...suggestions as much as possible," Orsino adds.

"Remember that you don't need to know the details about the abuse before getting help for your child," notes Widen. "Children—especially younger children—often don't have the words for what has happened or are fearful to disclose it. You can help your child to express their emotions and tell you what happened by explicitly saying, 'I believe you,' and 'You did the right thing.'"

CHILDREN MAY BE RELUCTANT TO SHARE INSTANCES OF ABUSE

It's important that caregivers inform the child that they will not "get in trouble" when disclosing abuse. "Many times, children have been threatened as part of their abuse and they may have fears of disclosing and speaking against the offender," explains Orsino.

"If you suspect abuse, you can open the topic during a private talk¹ between just you and your child by talking about safe vs. unsafe touching, explicitly stating that only parents and doctors should ever touch a child's private areas to keep the child clean and healthy and telling

IT IS NORMAL FOR CAREGIVERS TO GO THROUGH THEIR OWN HEALING JOURNEY ALONGSIDE THE CHILD.



TO REPORT INSTANCES OF CHILD ABUSE:

Maryland: Call 911 and your local department of social services' Child Protective Services Unit

Pennsylvania: 1-800-932-0313 (CPS hotline, operating 24/7)

Virginia: 1-800-552-7096 (CPS hotline, operating 24/7)

TO SPEAK WITH PROFESSIONAL CRISIS COUNSELORS who can give referrals for emergency services, social services and support resources, contact Childhelp, the 24/7 national child abuse hotline, at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (422-4453)

SOURCES:

1. Jensen, T. K., Gulbrandsen, W., Mossige, S., Reichelt, S., & Tjersland, O. A. (2005). Reporting possible sexual abuse: A qualitative study on children's perspectives and the context for disclosure. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 29, 1395-1413.
2. Alaggia, R. (2004). Many ways of telling: Expanding conceptualizations of child sexual abuse disclosure. *Child abuse & neglect*, 28(11), 1213-1227.

them that you are there to help and protect them," says Widen. Before a child fully opens up, they may ask hypothetical questions² or discuss what has happened to "another child": "If your child does this, they are testing the waters to learn how you'll respond and whether it's safe to tell you more," Widen adds.

Creating environments in which children feel safe to disclose things that have happened to them starts early. "Establishing with your child open communication about any subject is key. Specific to abuse, giving the child the proper vocabulary, including the proper names for their private body parts is of upmost importance," notes Orsino.

CAREGIVERS WILL NEED TO PROCESS THEIR OWN FEELINGS

While it is essential that parents create calm, supportive environments for their children, they will have extremely difficult emotions as well. "Many caregivers unfortunately also have their own history of victimization, and so learning of their

child's abuse can be extremely triggering for them," explains Orsino. It is normal for caregivers to go through their own healing journey alongside the child.

"Voicing their feelings of anger and betrayal, and all the different emotions that they will experience, is encouraged and healthy. The caregiver engaging in therapy for themselves, or in a caregiver support group, can be extremely beneficial so that they have a space to feel what they need to feel and process it in a healthy manner outside of the child's presence," Orsino adds. After all, children will feed off their caregiver's emotions—good or bad.

REBUILDING TRUST IN OTHERS WILL BE A JOURNEY FOR FAMILIES

"Children who have been abused should also receive support and healing from a professional therapist," reports D'Alessandro. "The effects of the trauma may continue to affect the child long after the incident(s) if they do not receive the appropriate help."

"[Encourage and teach] children to 'trust their gut' if something doesn't feel

good or right," adds Orsino. "Working with the child to identify for themselves who are their 'safe people' and who can they turn to if something happens to them, or they have something to talk about, also gives the child a level of control that was impacted during their abuse." Caregivers should help the child establish healthy boundaries for others based on what is comfortable. For example, a child who has been abused may not want to greet anyone with a hug but would be comfortable with a high-five.

"When a child suffers abuse, it can disrupt their faith that the world is a safe place and that they can trust other people," explains Widen. "To rebuild your child's trust in adults and the world around them, start by focusing on your relationship with them. By being there and assuring your child that they can trust you and that you will protect them, they can begin to explore the world again—in small steps—and gradually learn to trust others." ■

My Song is My Superpower

BY EMILY ROSE BARR

If you ask award-winning singer-songwriter Emma G how she creates a safe space for the students she works with, her answer may surprise you: through silence. “It’s really important for the way that I teach to make room for silence and let the kids be OK with that silence because that is where the creativity can start to evolve. I want to lovingly and embracingly give the opportunity for safe silence.”

Emma G works as a youth empowerment coach with the International School of Music in Potomac and Bethesda, and through Montgomery County nonprofit Story Tapestries.

Diagnosed as an infant with a neurological condition, she found these songs were an outlet to work through her own trauma, and now she helps teens ages 13-17 do the same. Through songwriting, they can explore trauma, grief or any other difficulties they may be going through.

“The mental health problems that youth are facing are more than most people can possibly imagine right now,” says Arianna Ross, chief executive officer of Story Tapestries, a nonprofit focused on leading arts programs to create safe and inclusive spaces for individuals to reach their highest potential.

With additional stressors from the pandemic, more than a third of high school students cited poor mental health in 2021, according to Centers for Disease Control. Coupled with loss of loved ones, teens could be experiencing grief, and Washington, D.C.-based Wendt Center for Loss and Healing notes adults can often feel ill-equipped to help.

“If they could find their creative superpower—be it singing, be it writing a story,



be it moving, be it playing guitar—I see it all the time with our kids and our teachers: when music comes in and they experience it at a level they hadn’t before, it changes them,” Ross says.

For Children’s Grief Awareness Day on Nov. 17, Washington FAMILY spoke with Emma G and Ross about their important work helping teens navigate emotions through song.

Personal Inspiration

Before moving to Washington, D.C. in 2015, Emma G grew up in New Zealand, making up songs as early as age 3 or 4. Her first songs were transcribed by her mother. “I can’t

remember many things from my childhood, but when you associate them with music...It’s wild,” she says.

She first put pen to paper at age 5 with “School is Cool,” and by age 17 had written 400 to 500 original compositions. She estimates that she’s now written between 650 and 700 songs, and she still has every one.

Writing songs for Emma G was a therapeutic practice. Diagnosed at 4 months old with hydrocephalus, a rare neurological disorder in which an accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) occurs within the brain, she recalls firsthand how music saved and shaped her. “The reason music and songwriting are so powerful is because of the way they affect the brain. They give you a security blanket to express those parts [that have been through trauma] in a way that feels safe,” she says.

At age 17, she got her teaching qualification and began sharing her practice with others. Utilizing culture as a foundation to learn from is a strong element of her pedagogy which stems from New Zealand’s close relationship to and reverence for its Indigenous culture. “Whether that’s ethnic culture, whether that’s geographical culture, religious culture, social culture—recognizing that everybody’s starting from a different place, and we all need to learn from that space,” she explains.

For many of the children and adolescents Emma G works with, that place is one of trauma. As she looks back over her catalogue of songs, she sees evidence of how music helped her in her own journey—glimpses of hope and glimpses of “I’m gonna get through this. It’s gonna get better” in her lyrics. “Every lyric that I’ve written I truly believe has been in some way my form of meditation

where the spirit has been like, ‘OK, we have a quick message for you.’”

Finding Their Stories

Emma G helps teens discover these messages through sharing their own stories—but unlocking those instincts can be a delicate balance. “The kids [I work with] know that I’m there with knowledge to impart, but quite often, they don’t recognize the knowledge that they have to impart,” she says. “And that’s why songwriting is so beautiful and so key to this journey that I take them on. It’s about helping them to recognize the power of their voice, the importance of their voice and the validity of what they have to share.”

Part of that involves collaborating with them as an equal, she says, “especially with teenagers and young people because... they’re trying to find how they fit in; they’re trying to figure out a space for themselves, and if they’re being told, ‘I’m the adult. I’m the boss. You listen to what I say,’ they’re going to fight back.”

“When you give those kids the space between those four walls—and it’s a safe



space—it’s OK to let your spirit self emerge at least for five seconds. You can build a song around some pretty quick visits,” she says with a laugh.

As a street performer before the pandemic, Emma G also found ways to leave a safe space for others, however briefly. “When

you’re a street performer, it’s very much about studying people: making sure you’re safe, making sure you’re connecting with people, making sure you speak to their pain points when you’ve got five seconds of interaction as they’re walking past you,” she says.

With lyrics like, “Open your mind won’t you dream a little bigger/ Open your eyes won’t you see a little bigger/ The chains that once caught you in their teeth can’t hold you down/ So open your mind won’t you dream a little bigger” from her hit song, “Be Brave,” it’s hard to imagine not feeling a spark of courage and joy in her presence.

For teens and children looking for inspiration, Emma G and Ross encourage them to find ways to use art as a tool. “We live in a world that’s constantly telling us who to be, how to act, and how to show up,” says Emma G. “But in a world that’s constantly telling you these ‘put you in a box’ messages, it’s important to recognize you hold the pen. Don’t let the world write your song.”

To learn more, visit emmamusic.com and storytapestries.org. ■

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What was it like learning in a one-room schoolhouse?

Experiential learning with early childhood in mind

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

The Kingsley Schoolhouse in Little Bennett Creek Valley was founded in 1893 to serve the rural farming community. Every year, about 20 children between the ages of 6 and 12 would wake up early and make their way to the one-room schoolhouse.

A wood-burning stove heated the classroom, which featured a slate chalkboard, simple wooden desks, a globe and, eventually, a Victrola record player. Each school day began and ended the same way, with the school bell ringing.

"I think it's important to remember the lessons of history and reflect," Ralph Buglass says.

Buglass, a Montgomery County native and an avid history buff who has taught at John Hopkins University, American University and Montgomery College, is all about preserving history.

He also co-authored "Images of America: Rockville," a pictorial history of the city's 250 years.

In looking at the history of the schoolhouse, which is now part of Little Bennett Regional Park and open for tours seasonally, there are lessons families can take by visiting with their little one.

As preschoolers and kindergartners prepare for the next chapter of their education journey, they can learn from those that

came before them. What would it have been like to study in a one-room schoolhouse? How was education different? What do we still use today?

Buglass paints a picture of a historic school day in the Clarksburg schoolhouse.

Recess was still king

School began at 9 a.m. with the bell ringing in the tower—something kids love to try themselves on modern tours of the school. The classroom would have anywhere from 15 to 25 kids in the one room, with the youngest children up front.

Just like today, recess was the highlight of the school day. Children would have

morning recess, after-lunch recess and afternoon recess.

Lunch was a bit different, because of the community the Kingsley Schoolhouse served. Farm kids would bring their lunch—sometimes potatoes, meats and other ingredients—and the teacher could combine them at the start of the day to make a soup that would be ready for everyone by lunchtime.

A connected community

In a one-room schoolhouse, everything had a dual purpose. The classroom was also the lunch room and the teacher was also the nurse. The teachers themselves were typically men or unmarried women.

Teachers would sometimes board with one of the families, as they were often young and not able to afford a house yet. Even the buildings themselves would frequently serve as community centers, and sometimes as a local chapel on Sundays or a place to host community meetings and activities.

According to Buglass, children of every age can find something of interest when touring the old schoolhouse.

“We have some wonderful artifacts. We have the potbelly stove. Typically it was in the middle of the room to keep it as heated

as possible,” Buglass says, noting that the stove is now in the back and not connected to anything.

Kingsley also has a map from 1928, showing what a small, tight-knit community it was. The schoolhouse is the last vestige of what the community was, outlasting both the general store and post office. There are also other classic relics to be seen on tour, such as an analog clock, fountain pens and slates.

As technology advanced and transportation became accessible, the Kingsley Schoolhouse was decommissioned, in 1935. In 2007, the building was re-opened for an annual event co-sponsored by the Clarksburg Historical Society and the Little Bennett Regional Park management.

Now, it’s a time capsule ready to share its lessons with all who come through its doors.

A mile in their shoes

The Kingsley Schoolhouse is an excellent piece of preserved history, with one of the few additions being shutters to protect the windows, which were replaced between 2007 and 2012 during an effort to rehabilitate the aging structure, according to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Kids and families visiting today can take the opportunity to stand in the shoes of eager learners from the 1800s and 1900s. For younger learners, a day trip to the schoolhouse could mean using their imaginations and pretending to be a student from that time period. Parents can ask, “Would you have rung the bell?” “What would have been your favorite part of the day?”

Or, the visit can be an opportunity to get kids to reflect about what they like in their current school: “They ate meat and potatoes, what do you like to eat for lunch?” or to consider how different life would be if some traditions remained: “How would you feel if your teacher lived with us?”

With every piece of local history, there’s a chance to bring lessons to life. Touring historic locations like Kingsley helps children build the foundations they need to understand how culture and technology have evolved with time.

To learn more about the schoolhouse and inquire about the next tour, call park management at 301-650-4373 or visit montgomeryparks.org. ■

Former staff writer Gianna Gronowski contributed reporting for this story.

MORE ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE ADVENTURES

Montgomery County is rich in history and options if you’re looking to tour another one-room schoolhouse with your child. These tours can make an excellent homeschool field trip or educational family outing.

The Seneca Schoolhouse in Poolesville, Md.

The Seneca Schoolhouse in Poolesville, Md. offers a carefully researched 19th-century school day program, taught by a trained and costumed teacher. This field trip is designed with fourth graders in mind but can be tailored to any age, including mixed-age groups.

The Seneca Gift Shop offers plenty of historic souvenirs to keep your junior scholar engaged, such as Victorian-era toys, books and games.

To schedule a visit with the Seneca Schoolhouse or to receive more information, parents can email info@historicmedley.org or call 301-407-0777. After scheduling, participants will receive an orientation packet with background materials including a historically accurate “identity” for each student.

Boyd’s Negro School

Showing children the past is an important part of understanding the present. This is especially true in the case of another local one-room schoolhouse, Boyd’s Negro School. This 22-foot by 30-foot wooden schoolhouse in Boyd’s, Md. once served as the only public school for African Americans in the area, from 1895 to 1936. Boyd’s is open for tours by appointment on the third Sunday of each month from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. To arrange a tour for you and your family, contact info@boydshistoy.org.



Resources:

Shefter Law, PA Blog:
shefterlaw.com/blog

US Department of Education:
 Individuals with Disabilities
 Education Act (IDEA):
sites.ed.gov/idea

The earlier
 a developmental
 delay is detected,
 the earlier services
 can begin.

Why Monitor Early Childhood Milestones?

Why They Matter for Children with Developmental Disabilities

BY FRANCES SCHEFTER, ESQ.

Being a new parent can be overwhelming and stressful. Am I doing this correctly? Should I listen to Opinion A or Opinion B, or should I ignore everyone else's opinion and trust my gut? As a parent, we ask ourselves these questions on a regular basis—regardless of how old our children are. But the most important question when our children are young is, “Is my child meeting his/her/their developmental milestones?”

Why are developmental milestones so important? Because the earlier a developmental delay is detected, the earlier services can begin. Early treatment for developmental disabilities can make a huge impact on your child's ability to learn new skills, according to information on milestones provided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC estimates that one out of six children have developmental delays—and half of these children are not identified before starting school.

Breathe. It's OK. This article will give you some pointers on what to look for and what to do if you think your child has a developmental delay.

Developmental milestones for preschoolers (3-5 years old)

The CDC cites the following milestones for early childhood education at cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html.

- ▶ 3-year-olds
 - Strings beads
 - Helps with putting on clothing
 - Uses a fork

- Talks so that others can understand
- ▶ 4-year-olds
 - Uses 4-or-more -word sentences
 - Names a few colors
 - Plays make believe (acts as a superhero or dancer)
 - Holds pencil between fingers and thumb
- ▶ 5-year-olds
 - Takes turns when playing
 - Answers questions about a story
 - Counts to 10
 - Hops on one foot

Concerned about your child's progress?

If your child is not meeting the recommended age-appropriate milestones, the first step is to call your county school system. Say that you are concerned that your child is not on track and that you want an evaluation. Give specifics, if asked. For example, “No one understands her” or “He is not counting or naming colors.” Once you complete the intake process, you will have to sign a consent to evaluate form. Ask the person doing the intake to send you the consent form immediately or ask where to email your written consent. Your written consent starts the clock, and from that point the school system has 60 days to evaluate your child and hold a meeting to review the results. (This means 60 calendar days, regardless of holidays or summer break.)

Note: Federal law sets the 60-day timeline. However, check your state laws because some states have shortened the timeline to 30 or 45

days. States cannot lengthen the timeline.

At the meeting, the team will review all assessments and discuss eligibility for special education services. If your child is found eligible, the school has 30 days to develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) plan. Additional tips on how to prepare for an IEP meeting can be found in the article, "How to Prepare for an IEP Meeting" in the August 2022 issues of on *Baltimore's Child*, *Washington FAMILY* and *MetroKids*, and in the August/September 2022 issue of *Frederick's Child*.

What to do if the school system says 'NO' to your evaluation request

If your child is denied an evaluation, there are a few steps you can take. First, ask for a Prior Written Notice (PWN). The PWN is a document that the school completes after all special education meetings. In the PWN, the school system must include why the

request for an evaluation was denied. This then goes in your child's file, and you get a copy for your record.

Watch this video on YouTube for more details: [youtube.com/watch?v=-txCO3Qhio4&t=14s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-txCO3Qhio4&t=14s)

Next, request an Independent Education Evaluation (IEE) at public expense. This means the parents choose the evaluator and the school system pays for the evaluation, with some limits. IDEA §300.502 states that parents can request an IEE if they disagree with a school's evaluation. The school has two options:

- 1) File a due process complaint stating that the evaluation is appropriate; or
- 2) Authorize an IEE

There are some limitations on the IEE, but the above are the two options parents or guardians can expect in response to making the request. If the school says no to an initial evaluation, there is no appropriate evaluation, meaning the child's parents would almost certainly win if the school files a due process complaint. Most

likely, the school will either agree to evaluate or authorize an IEE. If the school does not respond at all, parents can file for a due process hearing.

Advocate for your child

Parenting is hard. We all want what is best for our children and are their best advocates. Trust your gut. Reach out for help and do not take no for an answer. Whether your child has developmental delays or not, an evaluation will give you answers. These answers will guide your next steps in helping your child reach their highest potential. Remember, support is available, so you do not need to do it all alone. ■

Frances Shefter, Esq., is the CEO and Founder of Shefter Law, PA based in Rockville, Maryland. The firm's only area of practice is special education law, providing legal services in MD, DC and FL and advocacy services nationwide. To have a Stress-Free IEP™ experience, contact her at 301-605-7303 or visit shefterlaw.com to book a consultation.



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Preschool & Child Care Directory

BY WF STAFF

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Aidan Montessori School

2700 27th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-387-2700

aidanschool.org

Nicole Goodman

admissions@aidanschool.org

8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

After School & Enrichment Activities

Open House Dates: Nov. 5, Dec. 4, and Jan. 8, 2022: all from 9:15 to 11 a.m.

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

MARYLAND

(THE) BETHESDA MONTESSORI SCHOOL

7611 Clarendon Road, Bethesda, MD 20814
301-986-1260

bethesdamontessori.com

admissions@bethesdamontessori.com

Ages: 3-6

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

Feynman School

11810 Falls Road
Potomac, MD 20854

301-770-4370

feynmanschool.org

admissions@feynmanschool.org

Grades: Preschool-Grade 8

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

As the area's leader in educating academically gifted children, Feynman School features extraordinary programs in science, math and language arts.

Georgetown Hill Early School (North Potomac Campus)

14901 Dufief Mill Road
North Potomac, MD 20878

301-284-8144

georgetownhill.com

northpotomac@georgetownhill.com

With a "play, learning, arts, nurturing" approach to teaching, the Georgetown Hill Early School believes that children thrive in an educational environment at Georgetown Hill.

Little Leaves

Campuses in Germantown and Silver Spring, Maryland; and Alexandria, Ashburn and Reston, Virginia

202-420-8359

littleleaves.org

info@littleleaves.org

Little Leaves is a center-based ABA program for young children with an autism spectrum disorder within a preschool-like setting.

Oneness-Family Montessori School

Ages 2 through Grade 12

6701 Wisconsin Ave.

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

301-652-7751

High School: 9411 Connecticut Ave.

Kensington, MD 20895

301-652-7751

onenessfamily.org

For 33 years, Oneness-Family School's award-winning Montessori program has served families of students 2 years through grade 12. OFS features highly trained, supportive teachers and a diverse, engaged school community. We create a collaborative learning environment where all children have the chance to explore their own talents and interests. OFS fosters students who are prepared to lead and succeed in a changing, challenging world by balancing college prep academics with a focus on well-being and shared values such as empathy, inclusion and equity. High school program offerings include a leadership program, outdoor education, community internships and field studies in the D.C.-area.

Spring Bilingual Montessori Academy

3514 Pliers Mill Road

Kensington, MD 20895

301-962-7262

spring-bilingual.org

Ages: 2-6; Hours: 7:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

Founded in 1967, Spring Bilingual Montessori Academy has innovated and refined the concept of integrating a Montessori education with the acquisition of proficiency in a second language. The academy is open year-round for academic programs and summer camps.

VIRGINIA

A Child's Place

3100 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax, VA 22308

703-698-8050

achildsplaceinc.com

A Child's Place in Fairfax was established in 1981 and serves children 8 weeks to 5 years old.

BASIS Independent McLean

Robin Dayhoff

<http://mclean.basisindependent.com>

mclean-admissions@basisindependent.com

(703) 991-6075

8000 Jones Branch Dr.

McLean, Virginia 22102

Preschool Age 2 - Age 5

The early years at BASIS Independent McLean comprise Toddler, PreK, and Kindergarten programs that foster foundations in literacy, STEM, music, Mandarin, art, and more, led by nurturing teachers who support social-emotional growth in every student.

Brooksfield School

1830 Kirby Road, McLean, VA 22101

703-356-5437

brooksfieldschool.org

sarah@brooksfieldschool.org

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

Campagna Early Learning Center at St. James

5140 Fillmore Ave.

Alexandria, VA

703-356-5437

campagnacenter.org/programs/early-childhood

childhood

pshannon@campagnacenter.org

The Campagna Early Learning Center at St. James provides high-quality early childhood education to preschoolers ages 3-5. The Early Learning Center provides opportunities for each child to expand their talents and interests, build supportive relationships and receive educational experiences that promote school readiness so that each child can reach his or her fullest potential.

Congressional School

3229 Sleepy Hollow Road

Falls Church, VA 22042

703-533-9711

congressionschool.org

gherbst@congressionschool.org

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

(THE) GRIFFIN ACADEMY OF WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

3819 Gallows Road

Annandale, VA 22003

703-340-7268

westminsterschool.com

klee@westminsterschool.com

Ages: 3-4

The Griffin Academy of Westminster School provides a safe, creative and loving environment in which children ages 3 and 4 can thrive. The preschool day is structured to have an equal balance of play and structured learning.

Holly Brook Montessori School

2455 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring, VA 22027

703-573-7800

preschoolmontessori.com

info@hollybrookmontessori.com

Tours are available by appointment

Children learn in an intimate and unpretentious atmosphere, where they respect themselves and others and care for the environment around them. Holly Brook offers a complete educational and social environment and uses the discoveries and methods of Dr. Montessori to help children develop more fully the potential within them. The school provides a program specially suited to the needs of a child and offers individual attention to his or her whole development.

Guidepost Montessori

guidepostmontessori.com/northern-virginia

866-202-8593

24328 Marrwood Drive, Aldie, VA

42945 Waxpool Road, Ashburn, VA

4550 Walney Road, Chantilly, VA

13251 Woodland Park Road, Herndon, VA

Ages: Infant to elementary

Guidepost Montessori in Loudoun and Fairfax counties is among a growing, worldwide network of schools that offer language immersion for ages infant through elementary.

Hunter Mill Montessori School

2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, VA 22124

703-938-7755

preschoolmontessori.com

info@huntermillmontessori.com

Tours are available by appointment.

Hunter Mill Montessori School provides an intimate and nurturing environment for children ages 2 years 9 months to 6-year-olds

to develop their independence through the Montessori experience. Hunter Mill offers a complete educational and social environment and uses the discoveries and methods of Dr. Montessori to help children develop more fully the potential within them. The school provides a program specially suited to the needs of a child and offers individual attention to his or her whole development.

(THE) MONTESSORI SCHOOL AT GOOSE CREEK PRESERVE

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

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

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

develop more fully the potential within him or her.

MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF CEDAR LANE

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

preschoolmontessori.com
info@cedarlanemontessori.com

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

Montessori School of Cedar Lane has been providing over 40 years of Montessori tradition to Northern Virginia. We offer a complete educational and social environment and use the discoveries and methods of Dr. Montessori to help a child develop more fully the potential within him or her.

(THE) MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF MCLEAN

1711 Kirby Road
McLean, VA 22101

703-790-1049
mcleanmontessori.org

Ages: 2-12

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

Offering preschool and elementary classes,

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

NYSMITH SCHOOL FOR THE GIFTED

13625 EDS Drive

Herndon, VA 20171

703-713-3332

nysmith.com

ebalberde@nysmith.com

Ages Served: 3 years old to

eighth grade

Hours: 7 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

The award-winning Nysmith School for the Gifted is committed to making school fun. Staff nurture your student's love of learning and help your children learn to their potential. A 1-to-9 ratio allows Nysmith to differentiate the academic program up to four levels above a student's current grade.

PINECREST SCHOOL

7209 Quiet Cove

Alexandria, VA 22003

703-354-3446

pinecrestschool.org

admissions@pinecrestschool.org

Ages: 3-12

Hours: 7:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

Please email for more information.

Pinecrest School is a fully accredited progressive school offering small class sizes, hands-on curriculum, an individualized approach and a focus on a balance of academics and social and emotional well-being. Offers preschool through sixth grades, summer camp and before- and after-care services.

SUNSET HILLS MONTESSORI SCHOOL

11180 Ridge Heights Road

Reston, VA 20191

703-476-7477

sunsethillsmontessori.com

office@sunsethillsmontessori.com

At South Hills Montessori School, we are committed to recognizing and cultivating the uniqueness of each individual child. SHMS has a community of educators, and wonderful families, who have chosen the school because of a shared vision for early childhood and elementary education. ■



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www.feynmanschool.org

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301.986.1260

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Campuses in Silver Spring and Fairfax

Aidan Montessori School

aidanschool.org
admissions@aidanschool.org
202-387-2700
2700 27th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008
Open Houses: 9:15 a.m. Nov. 4; 7:30 p.m. Nov. 16 (virtual) and 9:15 a.m. Dec. 2.
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 Auburn School

Admissions Director, Frances Foreman
301-588-8048
frances.foreman@theauburnschool.org
theauburnschool.org
info@theauburnschool.org
9115 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-588-8048
Please register at theauburnschool.org/
admissions/silver-spring-campusadmissions/
Monday, November 14 - In person
Wednesday, January 19 - Zoom
3800 Concorde Parkway, #500
Chantilly, VA 20151
703-793-9353
Please register at theauburnschool.org/
admissions/fairfax-campus-admissions/

Tuesday, November 15 - In person

Tuesday, January 24 - Zoom

The Auburn School grows the social and academic potential of students with social and communication challenges, supporting academic skills, social competency and pragmatic language.

Basis Independent McLean

mclean.basisindependent.com
stephanie.cancienne@basisindependent.com (admissions)
571.789.2256 (admissions)
8000 Jones Branch Dr., McLean, VA 22102
Grades: Preschool (age 2) - Grade 12 • Year Founded: 2016 • Coed • Enrollment: 470 • Student-Teacher Ratio 8:1 • Entrance Exam • Foreign Languages: Mandarin, Latin, Spanish, and French beginning in PK1 • Tuition Range: \$25,500 - \$30,000 • AP Classes • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Transportation • Extended Day • Summer Program Students, age 2-grade 12, receive a well-rounded, liberal arts curriculum with a STEM focus.

(The) Bethesda Montessori School

bethesdamontessori.com
admissions@bethesdamontessori.com
301-986-1260
7611 Clarendon Road, Bethesda, MD 20814
Ages: 3-6
Open House: Tours by appointment; typically scheduled for 9:45am

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

Brookfield School

brookfieldschool.org
sarah@brookfieldschool.org
703-356-5437
1830 Kirby Road, McLean, VA 22101
Ages Served: 2-6
Open House: Call or submit a form online to schedule a tour.
Mindfulness, nutrition, Spanish, dance, music & art, outdoor adventure program, extracurricular activities and summer camp.

Chesterbrook Academy

chesterbrookacademy.com
866-267-5685
15 locations throughout the DMV
Spring Education Group
1615 West Chester Pike, Suite 200
West Chester, PA 19382
484-947-2000
Chesterbrook Academy preschools combine learning experiences and structured play in a fun, safe and nurturing environment - offering far more than just child care. Preschool is the first introduction to a lifetime of learning, a journey that should start off on the right foot. We help children discover, explore and learn to

their fullest potential.

Celebree School of Germantown

Montgomery County
20409 Seneca Meadows Prkwy
Germantown, MD 20876
301-540-4600
Celebree.com/Germantown-md/
Ages/Grades: 6 weeks to 12 years
Transportation: Gibbs, Snowden Farm, Germantown Elementary, Lake Seneca, Waters Landing, Ronald Menare

Congressional School

congressionalschool.org
gherbst@congressionalschool.org
703-533-1064
3229 Sleepy Hollow Road
Falls Church, VA 22042
Ages 6 weeks - 3 years
Open House: 9 a.m. Nov. 16; submit a form for an early childhood tour online and contact rdouglass@congressionalschool.org to schedule a tour for pre-K to grade 8.
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.

Feynman School

feynmanschool.org

Westminster School

PreK - 8th Grade | Established 1962

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Winter Open House Dates

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French | Latin | Daily PE | Field Trips

www.WestminsterSchool.com
3819 Gallows Road Annandale, Va. 22003
(703) 256-3620

Scan Here to
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Schedule
Your Tour
Today!

admissions@feynmanschool.org
(301) 770-4370 (ask for admissions)
11810 Falls Road, Potomac, MD 20854
Grades: Preschool-Grade 8

Open House: October 13, November 16
The area's leader in educating academically-gifted children, Feynman School features extraordinary programs in science, math, language arts, theater and music designed to maximize your child's potential.

GLENBROOK COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL

glenbrookschool.org
membership@glenbrookschool.org
301-365-3190

10010 Fernwood Road, Bethesda, MD 20817
Hours: 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Open House: Call or email to schedule a tour.

At Glenbrook, we nurture our children in the early, formative years so they can define themselves as individuals. We strive for this through spontaneous play in a controlled and time structured environment. We believe that children can feel secure only when they understand and trust a set of limits. Their imagination, curiosity and interests need time to wander, expand and develop within these limits. Cooperative nursery schools are administered and maintained by the parents, allowing everyone to grow and learn together. The special nature of Glenbrook is the close working relationship between parents and teachers. Our approach builds a sense of community and togetherness for parents and children.

GUIDEPOST MONTESSORI
guidepostmontessori.com/northern-virginia
866-202-8593

24328 Marrwood Drive, Aldie, VA
42945 Waxpool Road, Ashburn, VA
4550 Walney Road, Chantilly, VA
13251 Woodland Park Road, Herndon, VA
Ages: Infant to elementary

Guidepost Montessori in Loudoun and Fairfax counties is among a growing, worldwide network of schools that offer language immersion for ages infant through elementary.

HOLLY BROOK MONTESSORI SCHOOL

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

2455 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring, VA 22027
Tours available by appointment

Children learn in an intimate and unpretentious atmosphere, where they respect themselves and others and care for the environment around them. We offer a complete educational and social environment and utilize the discoveries and methods of Dr. Montessori to help the child develop more fully the potential within him. The school provides a program specially suited to the needs of the child and offers individual attention to his whole development.

(THE) LANGLEY SCHOOL

langleyschool.org
admission@langleyschool.org
703-356-1920

1411 Balls Hill Rd. McLean, VA 22101

Hours: 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Preschool through Grade 8

We offer a carefully designed preschool through grade 8 program that deeply respects your child's earliest years as a time of profound, complex, joyful, and critical learning. Information Sessions: 9 a.m. Nov. 9 (On Campus), 9 a.m. Dec. 6 (On Campus)

HUNTER MILL MONTESSORI SCHOOL

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

2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, VA 22124

Tours available by appointment

Hunter Mill Montessori School provides an intimate and nurturing environment for 2.75 - 6 year olds to develop their independence through the Montessori experience. We offer a complete educational and social environment and utilize the discoveries and methods of Dr. Montessori to help the child develop more fully the potential within him. The school provides a program specially suited to the needs of the child and offers individual attention to his whole development.

(THE) MANOR MONTESSORI SCHOOL

10500 Oaklyn Drive, Potomac, MD 20854
5450 Massachusetts Ave.

Bethesda, MD 20816

11200 Old Georgetown Road

Rockville, MD 20852

301-299-7400

manormontessori.com

Ages: 2-9

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

(THE) MONTESSORI SCHOOL AT GOOSE CREEK PRESERVE

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

42470 Rosalind Street, Ashburn, VA 20148

Tours available by appointment

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

MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF CEDAR LANE

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

3035 Cedar Lane, Fairfax, VA 22031

Tours available by appointment

Montessori School of Cedar Lane has been providing over 40 years of Montessori tradition to Northern Virginia. We offer a complete educational and social environment and utilize

the discoveries and methods of Dr. Montessori to help the child develop more fully the potential within him.

MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF MCLEAN

mcleanmontessori.org

703-790-1049

1711 Kirby Road, McLean, VA 22101

Ages: 2-12

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

nysmith.com; ebalberde@nysmith.com

703-713-3332

13625 EDS Drive, Herndon, VA 20171

Ages Served: 3 yrs.-8th Grade

Hours: 7 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

Virtual live tour/info session 10 a.m. daily; Contact Kmeadows@nysmith.com to schedule an in-person tour.

The award winning Nysmith School is committed to making school fun. We nurture your student's love of learning and help your child learn to their potential. Our 1:9 ratio allows us to differentiate the academic program up to 4 grade levels above grade.

OLDFIELDS SCHOOL

oldfieldsschool.org

admission@oldfieldsschool.org

410-472-4800

1500 Glencoe Road, Sparks, Glencoe, MD 21152

Grade Range: 8-12; Type: Girls

Average Class Size: 7

Teacher-Student Ratio: 1 to 5

Before-School Care: Yes

After-School Care: Yes

Open House: Saturday, October 15.

Personal information sessions and tours offered weekly by contacting admissions office

ONENESS-FAMILY MONTESSORI HIGH SCHOOL

onenessfamily.org/

admissions@onenessfamily.org

240-426-2614

9411 Connecticut Ave.

Kensington, MD 20895

9:00 AM - 5:30 PM; Serving students from 2 years through grade 12

Virtual Tours for high school on Thursdays at 11:00 AM

For 30 years, Oneness-Family School's award winning Montessori program has served families of students 2 years - grade 12. OFS features highly trained, supportive teachers and a diverse, engaged parent community. We create a collaborative learning environment where everyone feels successful. We foster students who are prepared to lead and succeed in a changing, challenging world by balancing college prep academics with a focus on well-being and shared values such as empathy, inclusion and equity.

ONENESS-FAMILY MONTESSORI SCHOOL

onenessfamily.org

admissions@onenessfamily.org

6701 Wisconsin Ave., Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Admissions: 301-652-7751

Ages 2 - Grade 8

Virtual tours for Lower School on Tuesdays and Fridays at 9:30 AM

For 30 years, Oneness-Family School has served families who value student-centered learning and personal growth alongside a rigorous and award-winning Montessori curriculum.

(THE) SIENA SCHOOL

thesienaschool.org

info@thesienaschool.org

Silver Spring Campus

1300 Forest Glen Road

Silver Spring, MD 20901

301-244-3600

Oakton Campus

2705 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, VA 22124

703-745-5900

Virtual tours of Oakton at 9:30 a.m.

Tuesdays and of Silver Spring at 9:30 a.m. Wednesdays.

The Siena School provides highly individualized, research-based, multisensory instruction and curriculum-related field trips. Students develop critical thinking skills and acquire the tools and strategies needed to become successful and independent learners who are prepared for college.

SPRING BILINGUAL MONTESSORI ACADEMY

spring-bilingual.org

admissions@spring-bilingual.org

301-962-7262

3514 Payers Mill Road

Kensington, MD 20895

Ages: 2-6; Hours: 7:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

Open House: Dates every November

and January; Submit an online form and

admissions will contact you in the fall.

Montessori preschool with Foreign Language programs.

SPRINGWELL SCHOOL

springwell.school

info@springwell.school

(301) 338-8273

9525 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901

Grades: K-4

A progressive school offering a unique blend of Waldorf, Montessori, and Reggio Emilia.

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

westminsterschool.com

admissions@westminsterschool.com

703-256-3620

Preschool (3 and 4-year-olds) - Grade 8

3819 Gallows Road, Annandale, VA 22003

Open House: Virtual 4 p.m. Dec. 6 and

in-person at 8:30 a.m. Jan. 24. Schedule

a tour by emailing admissions or calling

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Celebrate Native American Heritage Month with Reading

8 Books for Cultural Learning

BY JENNIFER ROTHCHILD, YOUTH SERVICES LIBRARIAN FOR ARLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Celebrate Native American Heritage Month with these books by and about Native Americans and First Nations Canadians. From historical fiction to lunch room drama, history to epic fantasy, water protests to kid detectives, these titles help showcase a vast range of experiences and lives of Indigenous peoples, past and present.

PICTURE BOOKS

"Forever Cousins"

by Laurel Goodluck, illustrated by Jonathan Nelson

Kara and Amanda are cousins and best friends – they love dancing together at the powwow and think chokeberry jam is the best. When Kara's family moves from the city back to the Rez, will video chats and postcards be enough to keep their friendship going until they can see each other again next summer at the family reunion? A reassuring story full of cultural details about the power of family and friendship, despite the distance.

"Kiss by Kiss / Ocêhtowina: A Counting Book for Families"

by Richard Van Camp, translated by Mary Cardinal Collins

Written in English and Plains Cree, this adorable rhyming board book counts kisses between babies and their caregivers. Full color photographs illustrate different loving moments featuring a wide range of families, making a great book to share while snuggling with little ones.

EARLY READERS

"Red Bird Sings: The Story of Zitkála-Šá, Native American

Author, Musician, and Activist"

by Gina Capaldi and QL Pearce

Born in 1876, Zitkála-Šá left her reservation in South Dakota at the age of 8 for an Indiana Boarding School. After school, she moved east to be a teacher in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. In the 1920s, she came to D.C. to fight for Native American and women's rights. When in D.C., the renowned musician, playwright and activist lived in Arlington—there is now a park named after her that you can visit!

"We are Water Protectors"

by Carole Lindstrom, illustrated by Michaela Goade

Inspired by the many Indigenous-led movements, notably Standing Rock, to protest oil pipelines and other threats to water sources, this gorgeous picture book starts by explaining the importance of water. A lush river flows through the pages before being threatened by a black snake, where a young girl leads many community members to stand up and protect the river that has so often protected them.

MIDDLE GRADE

"The Birchbark House"

by Louise Erdrich

In 1847, Omakayas lives with her family on an island in Lake Superior. As the year progresses, they move to the birchbark house, the fishing camps, the rice camps, the winter cabin and back. She helps her mother with the chores and struggles with an occasionally mean older sister and an almost always annoying little brother. But when smallpox visits the island, no one is safe and Omakayas' life will be changed forever. The first in a series about Ojibwe life as white settlers moved further and further into their lands.

"The Case of Windy Lake"

by Michael Hutchinson

On the Windy Lake First Nations Reserve

in Canada, four cousins are so inseparable they're known as the Mighty Muskrats. When an archeologist hired by a nearby mining company disappears, the four decide to investigate on their own, using overheard gossip and their knowledge of the reservation and surrounding land. From worried elders to an environmental protest, the four investigate every lead as they work to find the missing man. The first in a fun mystery series.

TEEN READERS

"Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Life in Native America"

by David Treuer, adapted for young readers by Sheila Keenan

This history of Native American life starts pre-contact and goes up through today. Along the way, it deconstructs common falsehoods about native culture and history. It especially focuses on the many ways Native Americans have continued to preserve their history and culture since the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee. Based on Treuer's award-winning book for adults, this edition offers more background information and context for younger readers.

"If I Ever Get Out of Here"

by Eric Gansworth

Lewis Blake feels like he lives in two different worlds. There's his home on the Tuscarora Reservation in upstate New York, and there's his life at school where he's one of the few American Indian students, something that makes him an outcast. George Haddonfield has grown up all over the world, thanks to his Air Force father. As a new student, he ignores the racial divides with the reservation kids and the two slowly become friends. But when the bullies start to target Lewis, he's unsure if the friendship can survive. ■

Youth Opioid Risks

What parents need to know

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

Your child finds your prescription in the medicine cabinet, or maybe a doctor prescribes them some pain pills after a sports or dental surgery. Even a friend might unknowingly offer your child their own pills for short-term relief, not knowing it will birth a habit.

Many kids start using opioids in the same ways, and some are more at risk than others.

Dr. Paul Christo, director of the Multidisciplinary Pain Fellowship Program at Johns Hopkins Hospital, is well acquainted with the national opioid epidemic, a growing problem since the mid-1990s when prescriptions of opioids for pain management were a lot more common, and exacerbated by a rise of addiction disorders during the pandemic.

According to Centers for Disease Control, over the years the epidemic progressed in three phases, first with deaths from prescription opioids, then with an increase in heroin and finally with synthetic opioids and fentanyl—a more potent and dangerous compound more likely to lead to an overdose.

Though adolescents did not make up a high percentage of users in 2015, there were a significant number of them that overdosed. Youth.gov reports that in that year, more than 4,200 youth ages 15 to 24 died from a drug-related overdose and more than half of these deaths were because of opioid misuse.

It's important to be proactive in fighting the opioid problem by targeting youth, who are most at risk of becoming addicted later if they start early in life, Christo says.



He shares with *Washington FAMILY* what parents need to know about opioids.

What is an opioid and how does it affect kids?

Opioids, also known as narcotics, include powerful prescription pain relievers like oxycodone or fentanyl. Heroin is also an opioid.

Adolescents who progress to buying opioids as a street drug might not realize the prescription drugs they were used to are laced with fentanyl—a far more dangerous

substance that leaves users more prone to overdose.

“Fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, is 80 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Because it is that much more potent, it can more easily lead to death,” Christo says.

Opioids are often prescribed after surgery to reduce pain, or to ease pain from certain health conditions. The National Institute on Drug Abuse notes that using opioids early in life can adversely affect judgement in kids and teens. They might receive poor grades or have bad relationships with friends and family. They are also in danger of risky behavior such as having unprotected sex or driving under the influence.

Who is at risk for addiction?

The risk of developing a substance abuse disorder is higher for people who begin using drugs before adulthood, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), headquartered in Rockville.

According to Christo, there are several contributing factors that put some children more at risk than others for developing an

addiction.

“Consider family history of addiction, personal history of addiction, history of pre-adolescent sexual abuse, certain psychological conditions like untreated anxiety, depression, ADHD and schizophrenia,” he says.

Other known risk factors include poverty, history of criminal activity, contact with high-risk people and environments or stressful circumstances.

Keep an eye out for signs of opioid misuse in adolescents, which include drowsiness, constipation, nausea, dizziness, vomiting, dry mouth, headaches, sweating, mood changes, loss of appetite and weakness, according to youth.gov.

But regardless of your child's risk factors, it's important to remember that anyone can become addicted to opioids. Talking to your children about opioids before they have the chance to be exposed to them can help keep them safe.

How should parents talk to their children about the risk?

"Be honest and straightforward," Christo says. "Describe the opioids. Be very frank about that. It can easily lead to death. Let kids know what's on the streets now and that these are the dangers. You may not have a second chance."

Parents who have experience with addiction and substance abuse do not need to shy away from having a conversation about it dangers, explains the National Institute on

Drug Abuse.

"Whether or not you tell your child about your past drug use is a personal decision. But experience can better equip us to teach others by drawing on the value of past mistakes," the institute notes.

Youth.gov lists some helpful tips in talking to your teen:

- Make sure they were not using opioids right before the conversation.
- Express concerns, but do not make accusations.
- Be specific in what you have observed.
- Prepare for strong reactions and stay calm.
- Reinforce your opinions on drug use and how much you care.

Where can parents find help?

After talking to your kids or teens, it's important to seek help from professionals such as a school counselor or family doctor, or find an available treatment program. SAMHSA has a tool on its website, samhsa.gov, which allows you to search opioid

treatment programs by state.

Christo says schools can help, too, by providing education on drug use that is more frequent and comprehensive.

"If it were three to four times a year that would be helpful—if it were more specific in talking about opioids and their dangers," he says.

Another way parents can help is to encourage children to participate in after-school programs and activities. Youth programs such as Teens Run DC—which combines distance running, mentoring and social emotional learning—provide teens with feelings of belonging and support while encouraging healthy habits.

Children may avoid talking to parents if they feel stressed about another issue, are embarrassed or striving to feel more self-reliant. Because of this, having another adult in your child's life can go a long way in encouraging healthy habits and decreasing risk. ■

Listen. Learn.

FLIP THE SCRIPT

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Chris and Holly Santillo

BY GIANNA GRONOWSKI



Not your average authors, Chris and Holly Santillo have embarked on an adventure with their three sons around the globe that embodies the message in their book, “Resilience Parenting: Raising Resilient Children in an Era of Detachment and Dependence.”

Chris is an alumnus of Harvey Mudd College and Georgetown University, receiving a bachelor’s degree in computer science and a master’s degree in business administration. Holly received her degree in anthropology from Williamette University. The parent duo maintain strong backgrounds in martial arts and run Potomac Kempo in Arlington, where they teach skills such as “breathing through breathless times.” Together, they embody the phrase “a healthy mind in a healthy body.”

The Santillos believe broadening children’s worldviews and supporting an open mind lead to resilient adults. At home in Virginia with friends and family, they love to spend time in Old Towne, where their roots are. Their family can now be

found traversing the globe and living out a nomadic lifestyle, from the vast dune sea of Mongolia’s Gobi Desert, to the snowy landscape aboard the Trans-Siberian Railway. The family’s newfound favorite activity is hiking, citing it as an escape from all other distractions.

You believe in “a healthy mind in a healthy body.” How does this influence your parenting?

As parents, we all spend a lot of energy making sure our children learn what they need to learn—and rightly so. But nurturing a healthy mind isn’t that simple. Our physical state has a tremendous effect on our mental, as well as emotional, states. So, as we work

to raise children who are mentally and emotionally happy, healthy and resilient, we will only succeed if we make sure that they are also physically happy, healthy and resilient.

How do the principles of martial arts translate to parenting?

The martial arts—when properly taught—are a methodology for life. How to positively interact with others, how to overcome challenges, when to yield, and when to stand firm... thus it shouldn’t surprise us that parallel principles will come to light in life, as well as parenting. We personally can’t begin to count how many times we have used martial arts training as a metaphor to illustrate and clarify challenging concepts or situations that confront our family.

Did the ideas of opening minds and broadening horizons to develop strong, resilient adults lead you to travel with your boys?

Absolutely. We traveled full-time with our children for almost three years. We were on a

quest to explore the world inside and outside of ourselves to learn to live more thoughtfully. Horizons definitely broadened, and resilience definitely developed in ourselves as well as our children! But, we think it is fair to say that practicing the martial arts helped get us started—it took a certain amount of breadth and resilience just to walk out the door. But as we traveled, we all gained access to more of what the world has to offer us. Resilience is like a muscle. Use it, and it will grow. Ignore it, and it will atrophy.

It can be difficult to balance work with family life. Does having your children with you on the road make it easier?

Yes and no. While traveling, we spent an inordinate amount of time together—sometimes in a cramped bus, or five of us sharing a hotel room meant for four, or... you get the idea. We also ate every meal together and held hands to speak our family credo, which recalls gratitude and joy. If anything, the experience really brought into focus something all of us know: relationships are not built out of the hours we spend together but by the quality of the experience. Time spent in the same room staring at screens is not the same as time spent walking and talking. ■

FAMILY FAVORITES

Favorite destination throughout your travels

We've been to thirty-two countries in the last couple of years, and every one has been amazing in its own way. What really matters is the experience that you have, and far more important than political boundaries are connecting with the people within them.

Favorite martial arts skill

Breathing through breathless times.

Favorite way to spend the weekend together

Definitely hiking. For our family, there is no better way for us to escape all of the other distractions of life and just be present with each other, ourselves, and the beautiful world around us.

Favorite international meal

Mongolian Khorkhog, a dish of goat, potatoes, onions, and carrots cooked with stones in a pot buried in the ground.

Favorite local spot in Alexandria

We've always liked Old Towne, having lived there before the kids were born, but since we aren't back in the area much anymore, all of our focus is on spending time with the people that make Alexandria great.



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On Heroes and Superheroes

Heroes aren't losers when they fail;
they are winners because they try.

BY PATRICIA VELKOFF, PHD.

Superheroes in movies have come a long way from the days of daredevil martial arts and aerial tricks. Today's superheroes dazzle us with their impenetrable shields, indestructible skin, retractable claws, web shooters and mentally-controlled chains. Oh, and let's not forget about telekinesis and telepathy. Very cool, indeed.

After the thrill, I am left with a few questions. What do our children learn about heroism from these superheroes? Will they come away believing that courage comes from having magical powers? How will they figure out that true bravery is someone making the decision to do what is right when it's hard, or painful, or awkward or risky?

When I talk with children about superheroes, they describe mystical skills, fantastic powers and all kinds of amazing feats. Even with more questioning, most don't mention what these superheroes are trying to accomplish, like saving the world from evil, defending the defenseless or fighting for justice.

Most children aren't absorbing lessons about how to walk through daily life as everyday heroes, choosing to do what is challenging but just, difficult but right. I'm not sure they see that real-life heroes are actually ordinary humans who simply act with independence and bravery when they see others who are heartless or hurtful, unkind or unfair, callous or cruel. With no special powers or skills, heroes show us what every one of us can be, at our best.

Heroes aren't losers when they fail; they are winners because they try. The story of the hero's journey has endured precisely because it speaks to unpretentious human possibility. The suffrage work of Susan B.



Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton took place at a time when many found these efforts both rash and contemptible. Ditto the civil rights efforts of Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, Elie Wiesel, Harvey Milk, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Malala Yousafzai. None of these figures accomplished everything they wanted, and they certainly did not have the benefit of cinematic tricks. Their heroism was in the attempt, in the willingness to take great risks for the sake of principles and beliefs.

It's important to recognize that heroes also act despite their personal flaws and limitations. Abraham Lincoln led the U.S. through a significant military conflict, as well as a constitutional and moral crisis. He kept the country from splitting in two, despite having fierce enemies, and while suffering from severe bouts of depression. Like so many other heroes, Lincoln exceeded his

flaws and exceeded the predictions of many of his contemporaries. He was heroic, in part because of those flaws, not in spite of them.

Don't get me wrong. I am in awe of the skill it takes to create all manner of superhero special effects. But our children need models of ordinary humans who try to do the right thing even when it's hard, even when no one else is doing it, even when they are not sure how it will turn out. Superheroes don't quite fill that role.

I challenge parents to model heroism and to point out the heroic acts they see in the most commonplace situations. If we are paying attention, we will notice small brave moments all around us: admitting to an embarrassing mistake and offering to fix it; stating an unpopular opinion or belief; speaking up when a classist or racist statement is made; asking people to listen to each other with respect; not chiming in when others are gossiping. Then we can talk with our children about what made these moments heroic. It's that simple. No cool tricks or impressive theatrics. Just ordinary heroes taking real everyday risks, unsure of the outcome but sure of what is right, honorable and just.

For inspiration, stories of child heroes can be found at www.awesomelibrary.org/Classroom/Social_Studies/World_Peace/Heroes_and_Heroism/Child_Heroes.html

Social psychologist Philip Zimbardo shows people of all ages how to be everyday heroes. His work can be found at: [heroicimagination.org](https://www.heroicimagination.org).

Dr. Velkoff is a clinical psychologist in Vienna, Virginia who works with children, adolescents, couples, and families.

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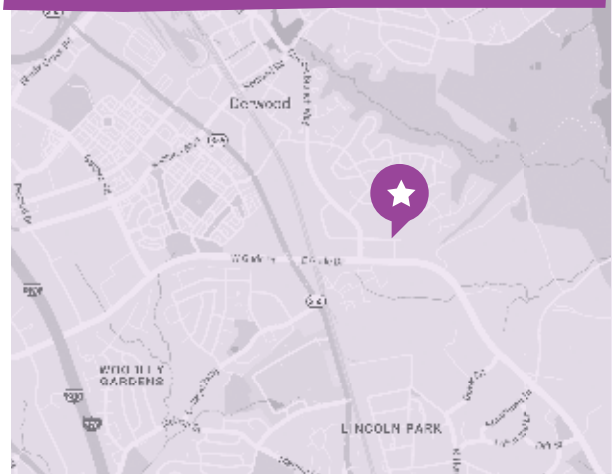
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