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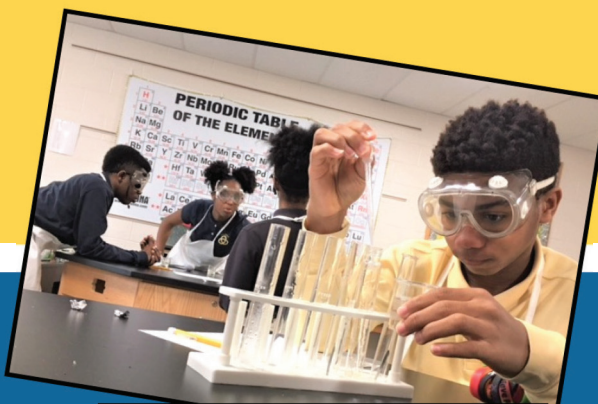
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## The One Halloween I Want to Forget – But Can't

Every October 1st, I get flooded with childhood memories of Halloween; especially of the cute and “questionable” costumes I donned over the years. My costumes ranged from the typical precious pumpkin or princess to the weird Crayola crayon.

But there's one costume I can't seem to forget.

I was 11 and it was the last year my friends and I would go trick-or-treating. It was also the first time we were having a chaperoned co-ed “pre-party.” My Mom purchased my little sister and me matching Halloween costumes. We were to be Raggedy Ann Dolls; complete with decked out curly wigs and rosy-red face paint. I'm not sure why I agreed, but I remember thinking it could be OK.

But then, my mother thought it would be cute to bring my 6-year-old Raggedy Ann Doll up sister with me to the party as an accessory and for some good photo-ops. This was mortifying to this almost 12-year-old. It gets worse. My friends had decided that because boys would be there, this was the year your costume had to be “cool.” While I rocked my curly wig and bright red cheeks, my friends were Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and Natalie, Dylan and Alex from the newly-released Charlie's Angels movie. I stood out. Painfully. And so did my sister.

Luckily, this didn't ruin my October-loving spirit. Since the “Raggedy Ann” incident, I enjoy decorating for Halloween, buying the best candy (yes, whole bars) for trick-or-treaters and always try and rock the

best costume — or come close. But a word of advice: Try not to force a costume on your pre-teen. They don't forget. Instead, check out our FAMILY calendar this month on pg. 50 to find some Halloween-inspired events. Or go to [washingtonFAMILY.com](http://washingtonFAMILY.com) to see the full list.

We did remember that October is more than the one day of Halloween. In this issue, we have a list of fun, local fall festivals on pg. 26 to get you in the autumn spirit. If you're searching for the right school for your child, check out our annual Private School Guide on pg. 33. Because it's that time of year for parent-teacher conferences, we have some helpful tips on pg.10. Have a child with ADHD who struggles with math? There's help offered on pg. 18. It's a jam-packed educational (and fun) issue.

I hope you and your families make lots of happy memories this October. And I'll try really hard to forget about Raggedy Ann.



*Britni*

Britni Petersen  
Managing Editor

Washington FAMILY Magazine  
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# PARENT-TEACHER CONFIDENCE

## 4 Cs FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE

BY MICHELLE BLANCHARD ARDILLO

**A**round the same time that the pumpkin-flavored coffee drinks appear in your local coffee shop, another annual event will take place that may send you reeling like a triple shot of espresso. Yes, it's almost that time of the year: parent-teacher conferences. Your child means the world to you, so meeting face to face with the person who spends as many or more waking hours of the day as you do with your child can be daunting.

Attending a parent-teacher conference does not need to be stressful or confrontational. With some basic tips, communicating with your child's teacher can be a fulfilling and beneficial means to a successful academic year for your child. Just remember the "4 Cs" for a successful conference.

**1. BE CIVIL:** If today's political climate in our country has taught us anything, it's that we need to step back and remember how to be civil, even in the face of our differences. Your child's teacher is a professional educator who wants the same thing as you — for your child to have a successful year. Work as a team towards that goal. Be kind. Be positive. Be professional. If necessary, request the school counselor or an administrator to sit in on the conference.

**2. ALWAYS COMMUNICATE:** While email is efficient and expedient, it's also faceless and easily open to misinterpretation. When writing an email to your child's teacher, be mindful that your words may be read by someone who taught all morning, had a five-minute lunch break before going out for recess duty, and then

taught again all afternoon. They're most likely ending their day with a screen full of emails to answer, papers to grade, lessons to plan and bulletin boards to decorate. Start and end your emails with pleasant comments, and ask for a phone call or a short meeting to discuss anything serious. Don't go over the teacher's head with issues unless you have discussed them together first.

**3. CARING IS SHARING:** Your child's teacher needs to know when things at home may interfere with performance in the classroom. Is there a new baby on the way or already at home taking more of Mom's attention? Have financial issues changed what after-school activities they can join? Did your child's best friend change schools and now there is no one to hang out with at recess? Are there social



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issues at school such as bullying or being left off of a party invitation list? Communicating this to teachers will help them be on the lookout for your child and ease some of the tensions they're facing. Teachers can be your best advocates.

**4. CARVE-OUT TIME:** It's important to be involved in your children's work. This does not mean doing their math homework or writing their English essay. But do spend a few minutes daily talking about their school day. Avoid yes/no questions. Ask instead, "Which problem was the most difficult on the math test?" or "What sport are you playing in PE this week?" Once a

week, go through their backpack and review returned graded work, look over their note-taking skills and read a chapter of a textbook together. You can discuss with your child's teacher other ways to be more involved at home.

Most public school systems address parent-teacher conferences on their websites, offering tips for parents to have more successful communications with the faculty. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), the largest public school district in Maryland, has a two-page flyer on its website about preparing for parent-teacher conferences, along with a list of questions to ask teachers. MCPS

advises, "When parents and teachers talk with each other, each person can share important information about the child's academic progress, talents and needs."

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), the largest public school district in Virginia, also devotes a page of its website to outlining various levels and methods of communication between parents and teachers. FCPS states, "The purpose of a parent-teacher conference is to develop a mutual understanding of various aspects of the student's progress and to encourage cooperative planning toward effective solutions of problems that may exist."



After your parent-teacher conference, don't just file away the student work shared by the teacher or the notes you took during the meeting. The National Education Association (NEA) website, in its tips for parents on parent-teacher conferences, says, "Start immediately on the action plan you and the teacher put together. Discuss the plan with your child and track his progress. Stay in touch with your child's teacher throughout the year with regularly scheduled 'report card' conferences that can keep the communication lines open." For more tips from the NEA on parent-teacher conferences, go to [nea.org](http://nea.org).

---

*Michelle Blanchard Ardillo is a freelance writer and middle school language arts teacher who enjoys getting to know her students and their families better through effective and positive parent-teacher conferences. Follow her @michardillo on Twitter or Goodreads, or at her website, [www.michelleardillo.com](http://www.michelleardillo.com).*

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- **D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS (DCPS):**  
SEARCH "PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE CHECKLIST" AT [DCPS.DC.GOV](http://DCPS.DC.GOV).
- **FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (FCPS):**  
SEARCH "COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS" AT [FCPS.EDU](http://FCPS.EDU).
- **LOUDOUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (LCPS):**  
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# Lifelong Links

Connecting girls and minorities to computer science

BY ALEX RYCHWALSKI

**I**n a computer lab at the University of Maryland, College Park, more than 20 middle school students donning Oculus virtual-reality headsets test out various games, killing robots and having a blast with their classmates.

By the end of this two-week camp session, they will have made their own virtual-reality games.

The students, girls and boys from groups underrepresented in computer science, are part of the Computer Science Connect program (CompSciConnect) hosted by the Maryland Center for Women in Computing at the university.

The primary goal of the program is to introduce computer science to students who wouldn't otherwise have that opportunity by showing them how computer science affects the world, says Jan Plane, the program's founder and director.

"One thing we see with women and minorities is they want computing that

fixes the world, not computing for the sake of computing," Plane says.

Only 12 percent of computer science degrees are completed by women nationally, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, but the disparity is even greater for racial minorities. African-American women comprise only 3 percent of the computing workforce, while Latinas make up just 1 percent. Plane pares down the discrepancy in diversity to three factors: the knowledge among underrepresented groups that they are indeed underrepresented; societal pressures steering children away from the field; and a misperception of what computer science really is.

*"It never gets a chance"*

CompSciConnect is a three-year program that meets for two weeks during the summer and monthly during the school year, but for students not in the program, the opportunity is one that is hard to come by due to their current curriculum.

"I don't think I would've gotten into computer science [without CompSciConnect]," says Anushka Ganoo, a Maryland student in her third year with the program. "In our schools, we aren't introduced to it as a subject in middle school."

Last November, Gov. Larry Hogan introduced the ACCESS initiative, allocating \$5 million to fund teacher training and professional development in computer science. Despite this step in the right direction, the program fails to address the biggest obstacle preventing girls like Anushka from getting into computing: Computer science courses are not required in public schools.

Plane says many girls are turned away from computer science because of the lack of exposure to the subject. "A lot of women don't go into [computer science] because they don't experience it. It never gets a chance.

"Because it's not required in schools, like biology is, there is a gap in exposure. If you look at the biological



sciences, there is gender parity because of where biology falls in the timeline of school and everyone is exposed to it."

Due to the lack of standardized computer science education, Plane says the greatest indicator for a student entering the field is knowing someone who's already in it. For groups that lack representation, they often don't view computer science as an option.

### *It's Not Like School*

CompSciConnect is separated into three groups based on the students' experience with computer science — Yellow, Red and Terp groups. Yellow, the introductory group, is mostly comprised of students entering sixth grade. The program introduces them to computing while teaching them things such as coding in Python and creating their own phone apps. In previous years, students worked heavily with robots, but the program has since been adapted to resonate better with students. Because most kids have a phone and are proficient at using apps, creating their own app as early as fifth grade has a greater impact on their interest in the discipline than programming robots.

Second-year students in the Red group tap into their creative sides by learning how to build their own websites using HTML and Javascript. They build anything from fashion blogs to shopping websites, although Plane adds they aren't allowed to sell anything on their sites. In the final year of the program, the Terp group uses a program called Unity to build its own virtual-reality games. The more laid-back and interactive classroom environment is part of what keeps students coming back year after year.

"It's not like school," says Sanika Devare, another Maryland resident who is part of the Terp group. "They make it more fun."

During the school year, students collaborate on projects to present at a winter showcase and then again during Maryland Day in the spring to recruit prospective students to the program. The curriculum is constantly evolving, so next year's students likely won't be learning the same things as this year's. Another interactive aspect of the program is the computer science-related field trips during the sessions. In the past, students have toured the International Spy Museum, the Aviation Museum, the National Cryptologic



Museum, the FBI and NASA, as well as other labs on campus. The trips are a way for Plane to show students real-world applications of computer science.

### *And Then, Robots*

After testing out several virtual-reality games and gathering information to build their own game, the Terp group gathers in the hallway and makes friendship bracelets to pass the time before heading outside for the final part of the day's session. The class heads just up the street to the Neutral Buoyancy Lab, where researchers use a 25-foot deep pool of water to simulate a zero-gravity environment and test how robots would hold up in space. Students gather around the top of the pool and fire off several questions about the function of nearby robotics and the use of computing in the lab.

There they meet Ranger, a series of robotics designed to study satellite servicing that was initially intended to be sent on a shuttle mission in the early 2000s before finding its home in the buoyancy lab, following the 2002 Space Shuttle Columbia accident. It never made it to space.

Nonetheless, operating Ranger, the tour guide emphasizes, would be impossible without computing.

It's a good way to end the day for the tour and perfectly defines what CompSciConnect is about. Computer science isn't just sitting behind a desk and coding, Plane says, it's about impacting the world.



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# 3 MATH STRUGGLES

for Kids with ADHD and Strategies to Help

BY CHRISTINE ROSENFELD

Getty Images/selimaksan

Remember the common “mad minute” exercise? It was a short quiz of about 20 multiplication problems that you had to try and complete in one minute. For most young minds, those 60 seconds were seriously stressful.

Now, imagine doing that exercise, but at the same time not being able to keep track of all these operations in your head, and constantly losing focus on the problem.

This is what most ADHD children face when they look at a math problem. ADHD and math don’t seem to be a “natural” fit, and there are various factors that go into why math is so difficult for kids with ADHD.

So here is a break down of some of the struggles ADHD kids face in math class, along with ways to help make sure your child’s math foundation is strong.

## ADHD and Math: The issue at hand

Students who are affected by ADHD often have a hard time with math because their memory is not very strong and blocking out external stimuli is a struggle.

Memory, which is where information is stored for later use, is one of the many executive functions. Executive functions

refer to skills such as reasoning, task switching and planning. Kids with ADHD do not have strong executive function skills, which significantly affects their performance in school. This brings us to the first struggle:

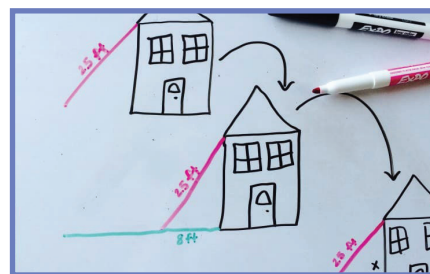
## Struggle 1: Word problems are overwhelming

Take this word problem, for example: A 25 foot ladder is leaning against a house and a hose is stretched from the base of the house to the garden and passes the ladder after 8 feet and you have to figure out the height of the house and the angle of the ladder to the house.

Wait, what just happened? If you read the problem above and got confused or zoned out, you’re like many people who dread word problems. For students with ADHD, the stumbling block with word problems lies in the combination of words and numbers that make it difficult to store the information in their memory as they progress through the problem. Even if the student is able to follow along with the problem, when it comes time to solve it, all of their energy and focus is already used up!

## Solution? Tackle it piece by piece

Have your student read the problem in small parts and draw a picture of the part he just read. This breaks the



word problem into chunks, allowing the student to place just a small piece of information into his head. Adding a tactile and visual dimension to his learning by drawing part of the problem at a time only strengthens his memory.

Check out the example image. It shows what the picture might look like as your child is reading. By the end of reading the word problem, he will have completed the drawing, in the bottom right.

Taking this piece-by-piece approach to reading and drawing might mean that your child might have to change the original drawing as he goes, but that’s OK. It’s important to get something on the page before he finishes reading the whole problem.

## Struggle 2: Confusion with Order of Operations

Remember “PEMDAS” (Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally)? It’s an acronym that stands for parentheses, exponents,



# Brain Exercises for Kids with ADHD

These easy, fun brain exercises provided by child psychologist, Dr. Robert Myers can help improve executive function in children with ADHD. Try them out during your child's focus breaks.

1. Story Based Games. To play these games, all you need is a good story and a good imagination. There are two versions of the game that you can try:

**Read a short story and give the child a "pop quiz" on the content.**

Start off by reading a paragraph or two from a story. Next, ask your child to come up with what he thinks might come next. Provide guidance to keep the content connected to the original story. Then, you can add your take on what happens after your child says what he thinks happens next. If possible, keep trading back and forth and see what happens.



**This helps with building working memory and concentration. It can also help in the development of logic and sense of humor.**

2. Mazes. You can find mazes appropriate for the age of your child for free online, such as [krazydad.com/mazes](http://krazydad.com/mazes). Start off with easy ones and move forward. Keep track of speed and errors. Of course, don't forget to praise improving scores!

**This is great for concentration, planning, sequencing, processing speed and visual-motor integration.**

3. Dancing Sequence Games. There are various versions to select from, depending on your child's age and what he or she likes. These games can be played on various video game platforms, including Xbox 360, Wii and Play Station 3. You will also need to purchase the dance mat that goes with your system.

These games can improve concentration, processing speed, planning, sequencing and motor integration. Added bonus: They can also be a good form of aerobic exercise.

multiplication, division, addition and subtraction. It is supposed to help with recalling the order of operations in complex math problems.

The struggle that students with ADHD have with math problems that require them to conjure up the correct order of operations has to do with their working memory and ability to maintain focus throughout the multiple problem solving procedures.

## **Solution? Make it visual**

Have your student highlight math signs and symbols. Make colored pens, markers and highlighters your kid's best friend by encouraging him or her to color or highlight the sign,  $-$ ,  $+$ ,  $=$ ,  $\times$ , and  $\div$  of each problem.

ADDitude Magazine recommends highlighting math signs because it is a visual reminder to the student of the

kind of math operation needed to solve the problem.

It may also be helpful in downtime to allow use of mobile math apps that work on the topic with which your child is struggling. These tend to be effective because of the very high level of visual engagement kids have with video games and screen time.

## **Struggle 3: Staying focused enough to finish the problem**

Aside from issues with working memory, issues with focus are why students with ADHD tend to struggle with math problems. Staying intently focused on a single task takes a ton of mental energy, which often conflicts with the desire that many kids with ADHD have for constantly changing stimulation.

This is why completing a mathematical proof, a complex word problem or a problem involving intricate problem solving procedures can seem out of reach for your child.

## **Solution? Focus breaks**

Have your child take a focus break. Focus breaks are 2-5 minute breaks when the student steps away from his homework, even if it's in the middle of a long mathematical problem, and does something unrelated to his work. This might be spending a few minutes on the phone, playing fetch with the dog or better yet, a brain exercise to improve your child's focus.

By using these strategies, children with ADHD can feel much more confident in their studies and strengthen their math foundation.

*For over nine years, Christine Rosenfeld tutored students from Pre-K to college at Educational Connections Tutoring. With offices in Fairfax, VA and Bethesda, MD, Educational Connections' tutors travel to students' homes to help improve their confidence and grades through 1-to-1 tutoring and organization/time management coaching.*

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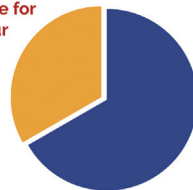


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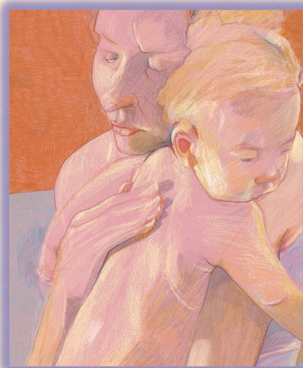
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# The Unhealthy Truth ABOUT WOMEN & TEENS

FROM CHRONIC DIETING TO SOCIAL MEDIA PRESSURE AND LOW SELF-WORTH

By: **RACHEL ORNSTEIN PACKER**

**A**s a health coach, you get to work with people every day to help guide and educate them on healthy emotional and physical behaviors. With this experience brings some eye-opening insight into the lifestyle similarities between certain individuals. So what is one of the most common observations in health coaching? It's the alarming, frequent connection between women and teens

in regards to nutrition and healthy living. For both groups, there seems to be many similar perceptions about food guilt, body image, calorie deficit and self-worth.

No doubt, many of our hang ups and harsh criticisms of ourselves appear to be deeply rooted in our past. So how do we change our adult perceptions, and is it too late to change teen perceptions so they don't grow up carrying the same baggage? In order to create a healthy body, we have to shift our thinking toward healthier pursuits. Often, we set ourselves up with false expectations and misinformation. Take a look below at five common misperceptions and beliefs women share with teenagers regarding nutrition and healthy living.

## 1. CHRONIC DIETING

Both groups fall into the social media trap of believing that there is a perfect diet for a perfect body, such as the "Whole 30" or "Keto" diets you see all over Instagram. But more often than not, these diets fail us miserably. This leads us to believe that it's our fault, or that we have no will power, when in fact, maybe the diet is at fault. Furthermore, warped expectations of what a "body of our dreams" should look like is a common thread.

## 2. OBSESSIVE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

Do you wake up critically examining your body? Does it continue throughout your day as you get dressed or pass a mirror? The obsessive nature we feel about our flaws truly inhibits us from living in our personal and best moments. Social media can make us weary with seemingly perfect bodies, not to mention transformation pictures that often times make us feel like we can't live up to expectations. Rather than be inspired by someone else's progress, we conversely feel deflated.

## 3. CALORIE RESTRICTION AND MEAL SKIPPING

Client food journals repeatedly reveal women eating less than 1,200 calories. Most are frustrated that they aren't losing weight, especially when they don't eat breakfast or they skip a meal during the day in order to decrease calorie consumption. Similarly, in the teen world, it's not uncommon to see them replacing a standard, balanced meal with a large, sugary 600-calorie drink from Starbucks to hold them over until dinnertime. Calorie restriction does not equal weight loss. In fact, it can only inhibit weight loss as the brain slows the metabolism to conserve energy, sending the body into starvation mode.







#### 4. BINGING-PENDULUM DIETING

A pendulum swings back and forth going from one extreme to the other. Pendulum dieting starts from a place of deep, dissatisfaction with one's body and becomes a negative, ongoing pattern. It begins with full resolve, along with a new dietary plan. And while the motivation is high at first, it usually goes awry toward the end of the first week, when the body and brain rebel. No longer can one keep to such restrictions because the body does not like to support cutting carbs or eating packaged food filled with chemicals, and thus a binge ensues. After the binge, we experience food guilt and even more disregard for ourselves, causing the pendulum process to repeat itself.

#### 5. FEELING LIKE A FAILURE

Working as a health coach, you see a lot of smart, creative, funny and successful women, yet all of these amazing qualities seem insignificant to them when they step on the scale. A three-pound gain or a zero-pound loss seems to dictate their entire self-worth. Similarly, smart, active, competitive and savvy teenagers feel like failures when they can't reach their beauty ideal either, especially when comparing themselves to other peers online.

### THE THREE-PRONG PROCESS

So, how do we incorporate change? Start by slowly adhering to the three-prong process, which includes the physical (nutrition and fitness), the emotional/spiritual and finally, the social — because true health and wellness require the sum of these three parts. Obsessing over one prong creates imbalance, setting us up for a lifetime of frustration. We aren't just made up of our bodies, but our spirit, thoughts, community and the people we hold dear. Teens and adults alike need to fortify themselves in these areas in order to truly live their best life. If you find yourself or your teen struggling with any of these issues, follow the exercises below, and try practicing them on a regular basis.

**Nutrition/Fitness:** Start with whole foods that make you feel good. Don't worry about carb or calories, and don't eat anything you don't like just because it's deemed healthy. Enjoy the sensations of real food. Ditch anything that has too many ingredients in it you can't pronounce. As for fitness, don't kill yourself. Overexertion can lead to burnout, not to mention injuries and inflammation. For starters, find something you like. Just get out and move every day. Start by turning off your phone for 10 minutes and practice some kind of movement instead: run, walk, stretch, squat, jump — anything to get your heart rate up, which is important for your general health.

**Emotional/Spiritual:** Take 5-10 minutes in a quiet spot where you can hear your thoughts and just breathe. Try practicing gratitude for the small things which gives us a better perspective on our lives in general. Finally, create a "small happy." A small happy is something that brings joy to you every day and connects you to something other than your diet, like buying fresh flowers for your house or reading a few chapters from your favorite book.

**Social:** Assess who your real friends are, the ones who bring positivity into your life, and make a coffee, dinner or walking date with them. This kind of connection is integral, as good friends heighten our happiness and bolster our self-worth. If you are truly pressed for time, then schedule a time to talk with a friend on the phone, but don't text.

As teens and adults, we are works in progress, growing, stretching and developing all the time. While it is definitely difficult to banish the old voices and criticisms from our past, a whole new approach is well worth the effort. And it's a crucial and positive example to set for your teen. When taking this leap, it's important to be patient and kind to yourself in order for these small actions to take root, ultimately creating a healthier body and mind.

---

*Rachel Ornstein Packer is a health coach/writer and owner of MatzoBall Fitness. She can be reached at [MatzoBFit@gmail.com](mailto:MatzoBFit@gmail.com) or [matzoBallfitness@Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/matzoBallfitness).*





# 10

## Fall Festivals

### YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

Father's endeavors with wine. A variety of food, including fruit and cheese boxes, baguettes, gourmet sandwiches and sweets will be available on site from the Mount Vernon Inn Restaurant. 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon, VA; [mountvernon.org](http://mountvernon.org).

#### 2. Fall Pumpkin Harvest Festival at Great Country Farms

**Oct. 1-31 | 9 a.m.-6 p.m. | \$8-\$12**

Create the ultimate fall family experience at Great Country Farms! Take your little ones out on a wagon ride to the pumpkin patch to pick out their favorite pumpkins, visit with barn animals, watch an exciting pig race and zip through an exciting corn maze. Your kids will love feeding the farm's pumpkin munchin' dinosaur and taking pictures with the "Pumpkin Princess." Don't go home without trying some of the tasty festival treats, like hand-dipped pumpkin ice cream! 18780 Foggy Bottom Rd., Bluemont, VA; [greatcountryfarms.com](http://greatcountryfarms.com).

#### 3. Oktoberfest at Schifferstadt

**Oct. 20-21 | 10 a.m.-5 p.m. | Adults: \$3  
Kids (12 and under): Free Admission**

Celebrate fall on the grounds of a picturesque, historic German farmhouse. This traditional festival features juried arts, crafts, cultural activities, German sausage, beer, strudel, an oompah band and colonial history demonstrators. Schifferstadt Architectural Museum, 1110 Rosemont Ave., Frederick, MD; [visitfrederick.org](http://visitfrederick.org).

**F**rom pumpkin and apple picking out on the farm to late Saturday afternoons spent sipping on seasonal wines and brews with idyllic autumnal views, there's just so much to enjoy and explore in the fall. So what's at the top of our must-do list? Fall festivals! Check out 10 of our local favorites below.

#### 1. Mount Vernon's Fall Wine Festival and Sunset Tour

**Oct. 5-7 | 6-9 p.m. | \$38-\$48**

Celebrate the history of wine in Virginia with wine tastings on the lawn and an exclusive mansion and cellar tour. During the tour, find out where George Washington stored his wine and learn about the successes and failures of our Founding



#### 4. Cox Farms Fall Festival

**Sept. 22-Oct. 31 | 10 a.m.-6 p.m. | \$10-\$20**

The Cox Farms Fall Festival is one of the most beloved and largest fall festivals in the DMV! With over 90 acres of fun, the festival includes five giant slides, hayrides, rope swings, apples and cider, food and tons of entertainment. Let your kids roam around the Imaginature Trail, hang out in the Kiddie Zone, walk through the Tractor Museum or go on a cornfield adventure at the CORNundrum! For the older kids (and kids at heart) who like a good scare, check out the nighttime Fields of Fear attraction. 15621 Braddock Rd., Centreville, VA; [coxfarms.com](http://coxfarms.com).

#### 5. Snallygaster

**Oct. 13 | 1:30-7 p.m. | \$40-\$60**

Snallygaster makes its triumphant return to D.C. for its seventh year of craft beer appreciation and celebration. Attendees can expect an assortment of over 350 small batch brews available for tasting, while enjoying some live music and good eats from local food trucks. Proceeds from Snallygaster help fund Arcadia, a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a more equitable and sustainable local food system in the D.C. area. 6th Street & Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C.; [snallygasterdc.com](http://snallygasterdc.com).

#### 6. Fairfax Fall Festival

**Oct. 13 | 10 a.m.-8:30 p.m. | Free Admission**

For more than 40 years, the Fairfax Fall Festival has provided locals with a lively celebration of community talent and a fun-filled carnival with all the rides and delicious eats you'd expect. Guests can enjoy more than 400 arts and crafts displays, three stages of live music performances, an assortment of food vendors and plenty of activities for younger attendees. Old Town Fairfax, 3999 University Dr., Fairfax, VA; [fxva.com](http://fxva.com).

#### 7. The Pumpkin Festival at Butler's Orchard

**Oct. 6-8, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28 | 10 a.m.-5 p.m. | \$12**

With Butler's Orchard's extensive list of festival activities, your kids will never want to leave! Explore the straw maze, ride the giant slides, jump in the hayloft, visit barnyard buddies, hop in the inflatable farm train, ride the pumpkin coach, drive pedal tractors and more! Keep your energy levels up with tons of food options including hamburgers, hot dogs, pork sandwiches, caramel apples and apple cider donuts. 22222 Davis Mill Rd., Germantown, MD; [butlersorchard.com](http://butlersorchard.com).

#### 8. Flavors of Fall Festival

**Oct. 6 | Noon-11 p.m. | Free Admission**

Sample all of Reston's favorite autumn menus at the annual Flavors of Fall Festival! Enjoy fall beers, live music and dancing, a cornhole tournament and many other family-friendly activities. Friends, family, children and pets are all welcome! 11900 Market St., Reston, VA, [restonflavors.com](http://restonflavors.com).

#### 9. Oktoberfest at the Kentlands

**Oct. 14 | Noon-5 p.m. | Free Admission**

Experience the true glory of fall at the 27th annual Oktoberfest at the Kentlands.

Enjoy hearty German food, visit with artists and crafters and stop by the authentic Beer Garden for tastings from local microbreweries and Maryland wineries. Family-friendly activities include pumpkin carving and apple cider pressing, horse-drawn wagon rides, face painting and five stages of entertainment. Kentlands Market Square, 821 Center Point Way, Gaithersburg, MD; [gaithersburgmed.gov](http://gaithersburgmed.gov).

#### 10. Taste of DC

**Oct. 5-6 | 10 a.m.-6 p.m.**

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aidanschool.org  
admissions@aidanschool.org  
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Ages: 18 months-12  
202-387-2700

### **THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE OF WASHINGTON**

thechildrenshouseofwashington.com  
chowdirector@gmail.com  
3133 Dumbarton St., N.W.  
Washington, D.C.  
Toddler: Nearly 2-3; Primary: 3-6  
202-342-2551

### **WATERFRONT ACADEMY**

waterfrontacademy.org  
info@waterfrontacademy.org  
60 I St. S.W., Washington, D.C.  
Ages: Toddler-Early Adolescent  
202-484-0044

## MARYLAND

### **THE BETHESDA MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

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

### **BUTLER SCHOOL**

butlerschool.org; amy@butlerschool.org  
15951 Germantown Rd.  
Darnestown, MD  
Ages: 18 months-14  
301-977-6600

### **CHILDREN'S HOUSE AT HOLLY HILL MONTESSORI**

hollyhillmontessori.com  
hollyhillmontessori@gmail.com  
19137 Mateny Hill Rd.  
Germantown, MD  
Ages: 2-5  
202-246-0547

### **CRESTVIEW MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

crestviewmontessori.com  
info@crestviewmontessori.com  
4728 Western Ave., Bethesda, MD  
Ages: 3-6  
301-910-4728

### **THE JULIA BROWN SCHOOLS**

juliabrownschools.com  
9760 Owen Brown Rd., Columbia, MD  
9450 Madison Ave., Laurel, MD  
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1300 Milestone Dr., Silver Spring, MD  
Ages: 18 months-Grade 3  
301-447-5700; 301-622-7808

### **MONTGOMERY MONTESSORI INSTITUTE**

montessori-mmi.com  
pamela.montessori@hers.com  
10500 Darnestown Rd., Rockville, MD  
Montessori Teacher Education (Adult)  
301-279-2799

### **TOP HAT MONTESSORI**

tophatmontessori.com  
info@tophatmontessori.com  
18243-A Flower Hill Way  
Gaithersburg, MD  
Ages: 2 months-K

### **THE WOODS ACADEMY**

woodsacademy.org  
admissions@woodsacademy.org  
6801 Greentree Rd., Bethesda, MD  
Ages: 3-6  
301-365-3080

## VIRGINIA

### **BROOKSFIELD SCHOOL**

brooksfieldschool.org  
brksfield@aol.com  
1830 Kirby Rd., McLean, VA  
Ages: 2-6  
703-356-KIDS

### **CARDINAL MONTESSORI**

cardinalmontessori.com  
cardinalmontessori@gmail.com  
1424 G St., Woodbridge, VA  
Ages: 3-12  
703-491-3810

### **CHILDREN'S HOUSE MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

montessoriofarlington.com  
office@chms-arlington.com  
2425-A North Glebe Rd., Arlington, VA  
Ages: 2-6  
703-276-1360

### **THE CURIOUS MINDS MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

curiousminds.org  
info@curiousminds.org  
24963 Ashgarten Dr., Chantilly, VA  
Ages: 3 months-6  
703-722-2400

### **GREEN HEDGES**

greenhedges.org  
kvazquez@greenhedges.org  
415 Windover Ave., N.W., Vienna, VA  
Ages: 3-Grade 8  
703-938-8323

### **HA'PENNY MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

hapennyschool.com  
director@hapennyschool.com  
20854 Stubble Rd., Ashburn, VA  
Ages: 10 weeks-6  
703-729-5755

### **HOLLY BROOK MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

preschoolmontessori.com  
info@hollybrookmontessori.com  
2455 Gallows Rd., Dunn Loring, VA  
Ages: 3-5  
703-573-7800

### **HUNTER MILL MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

preschoolmontessori.com  
info@huntermillmontessori.com  
2709 Hunter Mill Rd., Oakton, VA  
Ages: 2 years 9 months-5  
703-938-7755

### **LITTLE OAKS MONTESSORI ACADEMY**

lomamontessori.com  
info@lomamontessori.com  
13525 Dulles Technology Dr.  
Ste. 103, Herndon, VA  
Ages: 8 months-6  
571-336-2559

### **MONARCH CHRISTIAN MONTESSORI**

kidslovemonarch.com  
kidslovemonarch@gmail.com  
15120 Enterprise Ct., Ste. 100,  
Chantilly, VA  
Ages: 18 months-6  
703-961-8281

### **MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA**

montessorischoolofalexandria.com  
montschoolalex@vacotmail.com  
6300 Florence Ln., Alexandria, VA  
Ages: 3-12  
703-960-3498

### **MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF CEDAR LANE**

preschoolmontessori.com  
info@cedarlanemontessori.com  
3035 Cedar Ln., Fairfax, VA  
Ages: 3-6  
703-560-4379

### **MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF FAIRFAX**

montessori-fairfax.com  
msofx@aol.com  
3411 Lees Corner Rd., Chantilly, VA  
Ages: 18 months-12  
571-323-0222

### **RESTON MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

restonmontessori.com  
office@restonmontessori.com  
1928 Isaac Newton Sq., Reston, VA  
Ages: 3 months-Grade 6  
703-481-2922

### **THE RIDGEMONT MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

ridgemontmontessori.com  
office@ridgemontmontessori.com  
6519 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA  
Ages: 18 months-6  
703-356-1970

### **SUNSET HILLS MONTESSORI**

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# Cultivating Strong Writing Skills for Success in College

BY OAKCREST SCHOOL



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Although a lot of fanfare has surrounded STEM subjects in recent years, a school's writing program is one of its most crucial assets. Developing outstanding writing skills early on will serve your child for the rest of her life. And being an excellent writer is the key to success in college, whether a student intends to major in biology, literature or anything in between.

Unfortunately, many students are woefully unprepared for the rigors of college writing. According to a survey by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 40 percent of students in the class of 2016 who took the ACT writing test were not able to pass a college-level English composition class. Many students won't get to try their hand at serious writing until college. However, good writing habits should be firmly in place before your child ever steps on a college campus. This requires years of steadily mastering the building blocks of the English language.

A school's writing program should pique students' imagination and creativity, while also training them to think clearly and present their

arguments in a logical manner. This begins in elementary and middle school, with a foundation of grammar, syntax, vocabulary and elements of style. Mastering writing fundamentals will not only boost students' grades in college, but also gives them the freedom to engage with material on a deeper level. When the time comes to wrangle with sophisticated topics, a prepared student will be able to dive headfirst into the subject matter and not have to spend much time struggling with basic writing pitfalls.

Regular writing assignments also form a crucial part of any writing curriculum. These should range from literary analyses to creative writing and descriptive essays. This routine writing is necessary to hone skills, giving students the ability to present original thoughts in a clear, clean prose. And it also prepares the student for the intense college academic schedule, which will include many written assignments over the course of each semester.

At Oakcrest School in Vienna, VA, the culmination of students' writing experiences is the senior thesis project, a chance to flex their "writing muscles" before heading off to college. The thesis is the capstone of each Oakcrest student's high school career, and gives her the opportunity to research, write and present on a chosen topic. Students have written on everything from narcissism in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels to bioethics, the influence of the Industrial Revolution on the drug industry, Broadway musicals and beyond. The skills they apply to the

thesis are taken from years of practice in the fundamental writing arts.

"After spending so much time with a subject, the students learn to ask the right questions, and they learn to think more deeply, seeing that the answers are more complex than they initially thought. It is important for them to enter into the conversation with scholars and see that they sometimes disagree or even contradict one another," says Oakcrest English department head, Lisa Kenna. By the time they write their thesis, students not only understand sentence structure and how to organize ideas, but they're able to make connections across disciplines and tie themes and concepts together into a cohesive whole.

It's this ability to engage with and write about complex questions in a persuasive manner that will catapult your student to success in college. Whatever he or she decides to study, the need for clear, intelligent written communication remains. In a world where strong written communication is more rare than ever, a student with writing expertise will go far.

*Oakcrest School is an independent school for girls in grades 6-12, guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church. For over 40 years, the school has provided an exceptional liberal arts education to girls of all faiths while fulfilling its mission to grow, challenge and inspire its students to thrive in college and throughout their lives. Learn more at [Oakcrest.org](http://Oakcrest.org).*





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

[aidan@aidanschool.org](mailto:aidan@aidanschool.org)

202-387-2700

2700 27th St., NW, Washington, D.C.

Grades: 18 months-Grade 6 • Year Founded: 1961 • Coed

• Enrollment: 200 • % of Minorities: 38% • Montessori Progress Reports • Foreign Languages: Chinese (Mandarin), Spanish beginning at age 3 • Tuition Range: \$20,150-\$27,745 • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Extended Day • Summer Program • Programs for Families

Everything at Aidan revolves around how children learn best. Here, students have the ideal opportunities, environment, and community to realize their potential so they can grow into independent thinkers, confident learners, and responsible citizens.

##### Open House:

2018: Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7

2019: Jan. 11

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

[margaret.hartigan@cathedral.org](mailto:margaret.hartigan@cathedral.org)

202-537-6493

3500 Woodley Rd., NW, Washington, D.C.

Grades: PreK-3rd • Year Founded: 1933 • Religious:

Cathedral School • Coed • Enrollment: 390 • % of Minorities: 41% • Average Class Size: 21 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 6:1 • Foreign Language: Spanish beginning in PK • Tuition Range: \$36,655 • Enrichment Activities • Extended Day • Summer Program

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##### Open House:

2018: Oct. 18, Nov. 11

#### BRITISH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF WASHINGTON

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

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

202-829-3700

2001 Wisconsin Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C.

Grades PK2-12 • Year Founded: 1998 • Coed • Enrollment: 500 • Average Class Size: 14 • Uniforms • Foreign Languages: Spanish beginning in PK2, French for non-beginners • Tuition Range: \$13,000 - \$34,000 • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Transportation • Extended Day • IB World School  
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##### Open House:

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### Maryland

#### THE AUBURN SCHOOL

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

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

410 617 0418

Park Heights Ave., Baltimore, MD

301-588-8048

9545 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring, MD

Grades K-8th • Year Founded: 2010 (Silver Spring), 2011 (Lutherville) • Coed • Average Class Size: 8 • Student-



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## Open House:

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## BARRIE SCHOOL

*barrie.org*

*admission@barrie.org*

301-576-2800

13500 Layhill Rd., Silver Spring, MD

Grades: 18 months-Grade 12 • Year Founded: 1932 • Coed • Enrollment: 300 • % of Minorities: 60% • Average Class Size: 11 • Student-Teacher Ratio 10:1 • Grading System: Montessori: NA, Prep: A-F • Foreign Languages: Spanish, French, & Mandarin beginning at 3 years. • Tuition Range: \$17,500-\$32,100 • Montessori through Grade 5 • Project-Based Learning Grades 6-12 • AP Classes • Off Campus Learning • Athletics include Equestrian • Transportation and Extended Day Available • Summer Camp • Community Service • Extended Study Week

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## Open House:

2018: Oct. 13, Montessori ages 8 months-Grade 5; Oct. 21, College Prep ages Grade 6-12

## BETHESDA MONTESSORI SCHOOL

*bethesdamontessori.com*

*admissions@bethesdamontessori.com*

301-966-1260

7611 Clarendon Rd., Bethesda, MD

Ages 3-6 • Extended Day

Established in 1983, Bethesda Montessori School cooperates with the Washington Montessori Institute and is staffed by AMI trained teachers. Approved by the MD State Department of Education, and Montessori Schools of Maryland, and is a member of the Northern American Montessori Teachers Association and other educational organizations. It leases its facility from the Bethesda Presbyterian Church, but it has no religious affiliation with the church. It is centrally located in the heart of Bethesda business district on Wilson Lane near

the intersection of Old Georgetown and Arlington Roads, three blocks from the Bethesda Metro station.

## Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## FEYNMAN SCHOOL

*feynmanschool.org*

*admissions@feynmanschool.org*

301-770-4370

11810 Falls Rd., Potomac, MD

Grades: PS-8th • Year Founded: 2009 • Coed • Enrollment: 107 • Average Class Size: 14 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 7:1 • Entrance Exam • Foreign Language: Spanish beginning in PS • Tuition Range: \$12,910-\$28,565 • Number of Computers: 15 • Internet Access • Gifted/Talented Program • Enrichment Activities • Extended Day • Additional Programs: Music, Art, P.E., Drama, Robotics, Chess, Basketball, Chinese  
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## FRIENDS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

*friendscommunityschool.org*

*connie@friendscommunityschool.org*

301-441-2100

5901 Westchester Park Dr., College Park, MD

Grades: K-8 • Year Founded: 1986 • Religious • Coed • Enrollment: 240 • % of Minorities: 50% • Average Class Size: 14 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 8:1 • Grading System: Progress Reports Only • Foreign Languages: Spanish beginning in K • Tuition Range: \$19,420-\$21,530 • Computers • Internet Access • Gifted/Talented Program for all • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Carpools • Extended Day • Summer Program • Outstanding Instrumental Enrichment Program  
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- Grading System A-F • Uniforms • Foreign Languages: Spanish beginning in Kindergarten • Tuition Range \$9,515-\$13,195 • Number of Computers: 1:1 • Special Needs Program • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Extended Day • Summer Program • Drama • Art • Music • Technology

#### **Open House:**

2018: Oct. 14 (1-3 p.m.), Nov. 12 (9:30-11:30 a.m.)  
 2019: Jan. 11 (9:30-11:30 a.m.), Feb. 10 (1-3 p.m.), Apr. 26 (9:30-11:30 a.m.)

We offer a transformative education to bring out "The Best You." Our academic program is challenging and complemented with a variety of enrichment programs to educate the whole child. We are a private, independent school that serves preschool to grad.

### **SIDWELL FRIENDS SCHOOL**

*sidwell.edu*

*admissions@sidwell.edu*

202-537-8100

3825 Wisconsin Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C.

5100 Edgemoor Ln., Bethesda, MD

Grades PK-12 • Year Founded: 1883 • Coed

Come visit us on campus or at *sidwell.edu* to learn more about how a Quaker education prepares students to make a positive impact on the world.

#### **Open House:**

Call to schedule a tour.

### **THE SIENA SCHOOL**

*thesienaschool.org*

*info@thesienaschool.org*

301-244-3600

1300 Forest Glen Rd., Silver Spring, MD

Grades 4-12 • Year Founded: 2006 • Coed • Enrollment:

132 • % of Minorities: 43% • Average Class Size: 10 •

Student-Teacher Ratio: 10:1 • Grading System: A-F • Foreign

Language: Spanish beginning in 9th Grade • Tuition Range:

\$39,000 - \$41,000 • Number of Computers: 160 • Internet

Access • Gifted/Talented Program • Learning Disabled

Program • Special Needs Program • Enrichment Activities •

Sports • Extended Day • Summer Program

Proudly celebrating its 13th year, Siena was recently named as FAMILY Magazine's best special needs school three years in a row. Visit our website to schedule a Wednesday tour to come learn why!

#### **Open House:**

Wednesday Tours 9:30-11:00 a.m.

### **SPRING BILINGUAL MONTESSORI ACADEMY**

*spring-bilingual.org*

*info@spring-bilingual.org*

301-962-7262

3514 Plyers Mill Rd., Kensington, MD

Ages: 2-6

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

Since 1967, Spring Bilingual Montessori Academy (SBMA) has protected and encouraged children, and at the same time challenged and stretched them to the limits of their intellect and imaginations. Children arrive at SBMA as two year olds, barely out of diapers, and leave after kindergarten at the age of six: confident, assured and well-educated, possessing qualities of mind and character which serve them well as they continue to learn and achieve. Within the walls of our school children become literate and numerate. They develop pride in their own accomplishments and respect for the talents of their classmates. This is, above all, where children learn how it feels to do one's best work, and to have the effort as well as the product recognized and celebrated.

#### **Open House:**

2018: Nov. 3, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

2019: Jan. 5, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

### **WASHINGTON WALDORF SCHOOL**

*washingtonwaldorf.org*

*llawson@washingtonwaldorf.org*

301-229-6108

4800 Sangamore Rd., Bethesda, MD

Grades: PreK-12 • Year Founded: 1969 • Coed • Enrollment:

300 • % of Minorities: 30%, 33 nationalities, 19 languages

spoken • Average Class Size: 18 • Student-Teacher Ratio:

7:1 • Grading System: A-F • Foreign Language: Spanish

beginning in 1st Grade • Tuition Range: \$6,300-\$29,700 •

Number of Computers: 20 • Enrichment Activities • Sports •

Extended Day • Summer Program • Drama Club • Diversity

Circle • Student Council • Afterschool Kayaking • Student

Exchange Program • Community Service • Service Learning

• Newspaper

Our integrative curriculum & innovative instructional methods provide a developmentally appropriate education. Encouraging clear thinking, balanced feeling, and initiative, WWS offers great preparation for college & for life.

#### **Open House:**

All school morning tours 8-10:30 a.m.

2018: Oct. 9, Oct. 18, Nov. 8, Nov. 13, Dec. 6, Dec. 11

2019: Jan. 15, Jan. 24, Feb. 5, Mar. 7, Apr. 2, May 7

Preschool/Kindergarten Open Houses 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

2018: Nov. 3

2019: Jan. 12 (Snow Date Jan. 26)

High School Open House & Alumni Brunch Oct. 13, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

High School Open Mornings

2018: Oct. 16, Nov. 15, Nov. 29

2019: Jan. 16, Feb. 7

## **Virginia**

### **ACADEMY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

*myschoolace.com*

703-471-2132

10800 Parkridge Blvd., Ste. 150, Reston, VA



# PRIVATE SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Grades: Toddler-Grade 6 • Year Founded: 1996 • Religious • Coed • Enrollment: 170 • % of Minorities: 90% • Average Class Size: 12-13 • Elementary Assessment • Grading System A-F • Uniforms • Foreign Languages: Spanish beginning in Sr. Kindergarten • Tuition: \$20,000 • Number of Computers: 80 • Internet Access • Enrichment Activities • Extended Day • Summer Program • Mommy & Me Classes

The Academy of Christian Education provides a unique learning experience for Toddlers through Elementary aged students by combining a high-quality, academically accelerated program with a Biblical foundation.

## Open House:

2018: Oct. 12, Nov. 9, Dec. 14

2019: Jan. 11, Feb. 8, Mar. 8, Apr. 12, May 10

## THE AUBURN SCHOOL

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

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

703-793-9353

3800 Concorde Parkway, Chantilly, VA

Grades K-8th • Year Founded: 2010 (Silver Spring), 2011 (Lutherville) • Coed • Average Class Size: 8 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 8:2 • Grading System: A-F • Foreign Languages (Silver Spring): Spanish, Mandarin • Internet Access • Learning Disabled Program • Enrichment Activities • Summer Program

The Auburn School grows the social and academic potential of bright students with social and communication challenges, supporting the development of academic skills, social competency and pragmatic language in an engaging educational environment.

## Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## BASIS INDEPENDENT MCLEAN

[mclean.basisindependent.com](http://mclean.basisindependent.com)

[mclean\\_admissions@basisIndependent.com](mailto:mclean_admissions@basisIndependent.com)

703-854-1253

8000 Jones Branch Dr., McLean, VA

Grades: Twos Program-Grade 12 • Year Founded: 2016 • Coed • Enrollment: 430 • Student-Teacher Ratio 8:1 • Entrance Exam • Foreign Languages: Mandarin, Latin, Spanish, and French beginning in PK1 • Tuition Range: \$22,000-\$29,000 • 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. Part of the world-renowned network of BASIS Curriculum Schools, we prepare each child with a top-ranked education and spark a true love of learning.

## Open House:

2018: Nov. 3,

2019: Jan. 12, Mar. 23

## BEANTREE ASHBURN CAMPUS

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

571-223-3110

43629 Greenway Corporate Dr., Ashburn, VA

Grades: Infant-K • Year Founded: 2007 • Coed • Average Class Size: 14 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 14:1 • Uniforms • Foreign Language: Spanish beginning in PS • Internet Access • Enrichment Activities • Extended Day • Summer Program  
BeanTree Learning in Ashburn provides unparalleled care and nurturing for infants through PreK. Led by a team of experienced and caring educators, BeanTree provides children with a safe and stimulating environment for academic success and provides parents with peace of mind. Year-round enrollment for full and part-time academic and specialty programs.

## Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## BEANTREE WESTFIELDS CAMPUS

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

703-961-8222

5003 Westfields Blvd., Chantilly, VA

Grades: Infant-K • Year Founded: 2007 • Coed • Average Class Size: 14 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 14:1 • Uniforms • Foreign Language: Spanish beginning in PS • Internet Access • Enrichment Activities • Extended Day • Summer Program  
Fully accredited, discover the BeanTree Difference at our Westfields/Chantilly Campus! Offering unprecedented educational offerings for your child in every stage of academic development, BeanTree offers Infant care through Full Day Private Kindergarten, Before/After School, and Summer Camp. Year-round enrollment for full- and part-time academic and specialty programs.

## Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## BROOKSFIELD SCHOOL

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

[brksfield@aol.com](mailto:brksfield@aol.com)

703-356-5437

1830 Kirby Rd., McLean, VA

Grades: Toddler-Kindergarten • Year Founded: 1987 • Coed • Enrollment: 100 • Average Class Size: 20 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 5:1 (Toddlers) 10:1 (Primary) • Foreign Language: Spanish beginning as Toddler • Tuition Range: \$14,220-\$23,907 • Number of Computers: 6 • Internet Access • Enrichment Activities • Transportation (for before/after FCPS care program) • Extended Day • Summer Program • Junior Achievement • Robotics • Organic Gardening • Outdoor Adventure Program

A unique Eco-Friendly, Montessori School idyllically situated on 5 secluded acres in McLean, VA.

## Open House:

Daily, 9:30 or 10:30 a.m.

## BURGUNDY FARM COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

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

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

703-960-3431

3700 Burgundy Rd., Alexandria, VA

Grades: JK-8th • Year Founded: 1946 • Coed • Enrollment: 286 • % of Minorities: 35% • Average Class Size: 15 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 7:1 • Entrance Exam • Foreign Languages: French, Spanish beginning in JK • Tuition Range: \$23,592-\$26,998 • Number of Computers: 150 • Internet Access • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Transportation • Extended Day • Summer Program

Burgundy provides an inclusive, creative, nurturing environment that engages the whole child. Our innovative, hands-on approach cultivates independent thinking, promotes academic excellence, instills respect for diversity, and teaches responsibility.

### Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## CONGRESSIONAL SCHOOL

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

[admission@congressionalschool.org](mailto:admission@congressionalschool.org)

703-533-1064

3229 Sleepy Hollow Rd., Falls Church, VA

Grades: Infants-Grade 8 • Year Founded: 1939 • Coed • Enrollment: 345 • Average Class Size: 13 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 6:1 • Grading System A-F • Uniforms • Foreign Languages: French, Spanish, Latin beginning in Preschool • Tuition Range: \$24,650-\$29,300 • Number of Computers: 1:1 • Internet Access • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Transportation • Extended Day • Summer Program • Equestrian Program • Robotics Program  
A co-ed, independent, day school in Falls Church, VA, Congressional School develops great thinkers and leaders by encouraging students to explore, embrace challenge, and grow through an innovative academic program. With over 30 after school activities, extended hours, and 15 middle school athletic teams, a Congressional education extends well beyond the school day. Fully prepared for excellent secondary schools, Congressional School graduates have confidence, a sense of ethics, and the desire to continually and respectfully question, collaborate, create, and lead.

### Open House:

2018: Oct. 10, Nov. 8

2019: Jan. 15

## EDLINS SCHOOL

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

703-438-3990

10742 Sunset Hills Rd., Reston, VA

Grades: K4, K5-8

### Open House:

Oct. 20, Nov. 10, Dec. 15

## FAIRFAX CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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

[admissions@studyfcs.com](mailto:admissions@studyfcs.com)

703-759-5100

22870 Pacific Blvd., Dulles, VA

Grades: K-12 • Year Founded: 1961 • Religious • Coed • Enrollment: 400 • % of Minorities: 50 • Average Class Size: 10 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 7:1 • Grading System: A-F • Foreign Language: French, German, Spanish & Chinese beginning in K • Tuition Range: \$27,350 - \$40,225 • Number of Computers: 100+ • Internet Access • Advanced Placement Program • College Dual Enrollment • Honors Program • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Transportation • Extended Day • Summer Program • ESL Program

The Fairfax Christian School is an award-winning, independent, university-preparatory school serving K-12th grade.

### Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## KENWOOD SCHOOL

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

[alison@kenwoodschool.com](mailto:alison@kenwoodschool.com)

703-256-4711

4955 Sunset Ln., Annandale, VA

Grades: K-6th • Year Founded: 1957 • Coed • Enrollment: 75 • % of Minorities: 50% • Average Class Size: 8 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 8:1 • Grading System: A-F • Foreign Language: Spanish beginning in K • Tuition Range: \$775 per month • Number of Computers: 20 • Internet Access • Enrichment Activities • Extended Day • Summer Program • Gymnastics • Taekwondo • Soccer

Kenwood is a charming environment to learn in. The classes are small (average of 10, maximum of 15), which offers more one-on-one time with the teacher than your average school. The students receive an individualized experience, which helps them grow and learn more than is possible in a large classroom setting. We pride ourselves on our home-like atmosphere and loving faculty.

### Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## LOUDON SCHOOL FOR THE GIFTED (LSG)

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

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

703-956-5020

44675 Cape Ct., Ste. 105, Ashburn, VA

Grades: 6-12 • Year Founded: 2008 • Coed • Enrollment: 60 • % of Minorities: 43% • Average Class Size: 7 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 4:1 • Grading System: Number • Foreign Language: Chinese, French, Latin, Spanish beginning in 6th • Tuition: \$25,300 (Middle School), \$27,600 (High School) • Internet Access • AP Classes • Gifted/Talented Program • Enrichment Activities • Transportation

LSG is the private school designed to inspire and challenge advanced students in grades 6-12. We are opening new



# PRIVATE SCHOOL DIRECTORY

campus in early 2019 that will allow the student body to increase from its current enrollment of 60 to as much as 125.

## Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF CEDAR LANE

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

3035 Cedar Ln., Fairfax, VA

Grades: PreK-K • Year Founded: 1971 • Coed • Enrollment: 100 • Average Class Size: 25 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 12:1 • Foreign Language: Spanish • Tuition Range: \$9,312-\$17,405 • Internet Access • Sports • Half and Full-Day Program • Summer Program • Music

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.

## Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF MCLEAN

*mcleanmontessori.org*  
703-790-1049  
1711 Kirby Rd., McLean, VA  
Ages 2 ½-12

Preschool and Elementary classes • Foreign Languages: Spanish and French • Science & Technology • Drama • Music • P.E. • Computer • Art • Transportation • Summer Program

## Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

*msnv.org*  
*info@msnv.org*  
703-256-9577

Hillbrook Campus: 6820 Pacific Ln., Annandale, VA  
Valleybrook Campus: 3433 Rose Ln., Falls Church, VA  
Ages: 2-12

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

Yoga • Gymnastics • Drama • Drumming • Arts • Maker Club • Dance

MSNV is a leading independent school in the Washington Metropolitan area providing authentic Montessori education for children ages 2 through 12. Our mission is to inspire and guide children to love learning, to love one another and to love the world around them.

## Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## NYSMITH SCHOOL FOR THE GIFTED

*nysmith.com*  
*ebalberde@nysmith.com*  
703-713-3332

13625 Eds Dr., Herndon, VA

Grades: 3-years-old -Grade 8 • Year Founded: 1983 • Coed • Enrollment: 551 • Average Class Size: 18 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 9:1 • Entrance Exam • Grading System: O/S lower, A-F upper • Foreign Languages: French, Spanish, Latin beginning at age 3 • Tuition Range: \$23,000-33,880 • Number of Computers: 501 • Internet Access • Gifted/Talented Program • Special Needs Program • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Transportation • Extended Day • Summer Program  
The Nysmith School is committed to nurturing your student's love of learning and provides rich opportunities so students develop their potential.

## Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## OAKCREST SCHOOL

*oakcrest.org*  
*admissions@oakcrest.org*  
703-790-5450

1619 Cromwell Rd., Vienna, VA

Grades: 6-12 • Year Founded: 1976 • Girls Only • Enrollment: 223 • % of Minorities: 32% • Student-Teacher Ratio: 7:1 • Entrance Exam • Grading System: A-F • Foreign Languages: Spanish, Latin beginning in Grade 6 • Tuition Range: \$24,350-\$25,540 • AP Classes • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Transportation

Oakcrest, an independent school, educates the whole person. Inspired by the teachings of the Catholic Church and the spirituality of Opus Dei, we weave together a rich liberal arts curriculum, character development, one-on-one mentoring and service to create a vibrant environment that graduates confident young women--young women who will make a difference in all they choose to do.

## Open House:

2018: Oct. 20, 2-5 p.m.

## THE PAVILION AT BEANTREE

*beantreelearning.com*  
571-223-3113  
43635 Greenway Corporate Dr., Ashburn, VA

The Pavilion at BeanTree in Ashburn caters to ages 5 to 14 offering an advanced accredited curriculum. Offering full day private Kindergarten, half day Kindergarten enrichment, Before/After School Programs in addition to multiple summer camp offerings for school age children, The Pavilion at BeanTree provides an unparalleled environment for academic excellence.

## Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## PINECREST SCHOOL

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

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

703-354-3446

7209 Quiet Cove, Annandale, VA

Grades: Preschool-6th • Year Founded: 1957 • Coed • Enrollment: 72 • % of Minorities: 32% • Average Class Size: 9 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 9:1 • Grading System: Number • Foreign Language: Spanish beginning in Preschool • Tuition Range: \$7,450-\$15,300 • Number of Computers: 20 • Internet Access • Enrichment Activities • Extended Day • Summer Program • Community Service Club

Small classes, hands-on curriculum emphasizes problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Individualized approach; each child grows academically, socially and emotionally within a caring and positive environment. Summer Camp. Before and after care.

### Open House:

2018: Nov. 12, 12:30-2:30 p.m., Dec. 9, 1-4 p.m.

2019: Jan. 13, 1-4 p.m., Feb. 10, 1-4 p.m. (Special School & Summer Camp Open House), Mar. 10, 1-4 p.m.

## RANDOLPH-MACON ACADEMY

[rma.edu](http://rma.edu)

[admission@rma.edu](mailto:admission@rma.edu)

540-636-5484

200 Academy Dr., Front Royal, VA

Grades: 6-12 • Year Founded: 1892 • Religious • Coed • Enrollment: 354 • % of Minorities: 32% • Average Class Size: 12-15 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 8:1 • Entrance Exam • Grading System: A-F • Foreign Languages: German, Spanish, French beginning grade 8 • Tuition Range: \$20,069-\$42,771 • Number of Computers: 655 • Internet Access • AP Classes • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Summer Program • Flight Program • Air Force Junior ROTC

As students at Randolph-Macon Academy discover "The Power of Rise." within themselves, they develop the ability to think critically, to lead with confidence, and to solve problems creatively, ensuring they have the skills to succeed in life.

### Open House:

Oct. 8, Nov. 12, Dec. 2

## RESTON MONTESSORI SCHOOL

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

[office@restonmontessori.com](mailto:office@restonmontessori.com)

703-481-2922

1928 Isaac Newton Sq. West, Reston, VA

Grades: Infant-6th • Year Founded: 1986 • Coed • Enrollment: 200+ • Average Class Size: 24 • Uniforms: K and up • Foreign Language: French beginning at Toddler • Number of Computers: 12 • Internet Access • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Extended Day • Summer Program • Academic Therapy Services • Additional Programs: Music, PE, Art

### Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

## SAINT ANN CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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

[stann@stann.org](mailto:stann@stann.org)

703-525-7599

980 North Frederick St., Arlington, VA

Grades: Preschool-Grade 8 • Year Founded: 1951 • Catholic • Coed • % of Minorities: 30% • Average Class Size: 20-25 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 2:1 • Grading System A-F for 6th-8th • Uniforms • Foreign Language: Spanish beginning in Kindergarten • Tuition Range: \$4,300-\$11,100 • Number of Computers: 50+ • Internet Access • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Extended Day • Basketball • Lacrosse • Tennis • Track • Volleyball • Robotics • Art • Boys Scouts • Girl Scouts • Chess Club • Student Council • Caritas • Social Justice Club • Math Club

Saint Ann Catholic School has an average of 20 to 25 students per class. Our small size allows us to focus on academic excellence and moral formation of our students. Our community is bound together by a dedication to BELIEVE, ACHIEVE and INSPIRE.

### Open House:

2018: Nov. 13, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Kindergarten Night 7-8 p.m.

2019: Jan. 27, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Jan. 29, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

## WESTMINSTER SCHOOL

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

[admissions@westminsterschool.com](mailto:admissions@westminsterschool.com)

703-256-3620

3819 Gallows Rd., Annandale, VA

Grades: Pre-K-8 • Year Founded: 1962 • Coed • Enrollment: 270 • Average Class Size: 14 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 7:1 to 18:1 • Entrance Exam • Uniforms • Foreign Languages: French, Latin beginning in K • Tuition Range: \$10,926-\$23,466 • Internet Access • Enrichment Activities • Sports • Transportation • Extended Day • Summer Program • Drama • Arts • Orchestra • Daily PE • Odyssey of the Mind • Math Counts • Science Olympiad  
Westminster School provides a unique elementary education based on a classical curriculum, accelerated academics enhanced by the arts and an emphasis on personal responsibility and good character. Students enjoy small classes taught by teachers who specialize in their field.

### Open House:

2018: Preschool- Grade 8 – Oct. 17, 6-7:30 p.m., Nov. 12, 9-10:30 a.m.

Preschool only – Oct. 12th, 9:30-11 a.m.

2019: Preschool- Grade 8 – Jan. 15, 9-10:30 a.m.; Preschool only – Apr. 12, 9:30-11 a.m.



# The PLAYGROUND WORKOUT



*Watch the kids play and make it a fun fitness day*

BY KATY WIDRICK

**T**here are often two common reasons for people not working out: not enough time and not enough support. (Of course, money, lack of access to trainers or gyms, fear of failure and anxiety over body image are also factors.)

It's understandable, especially for busy parents. With kids and work, sometimes just getting out of bed seems like a workout! But it's amazing how easy it can be to fit in some quick, heart-pumping

activity when you stop thinking about the "work" part of a workout. Instead, start looking for ways to have fun and get fit at the same time.

A great example: Head to the playground with your kids. Each station or play area represents a new opportunity to flex your muscles. You'll sweat, the kids will have a blast playing with you, and when you go home, you'll be so happy you made it happen!



## SWINGS



At the playground, most kids head straight for the swings. Who can blame them? Swinging free with your legs in the air, pumping them to go higher and higher — that's pretty close to flying. Just that movement alone is great for your big leg muscles and your core, so grab a seat and start swinging!

Ready to amp it up? Try leaning back, and when the swing is fairly still, slide your hands down the chains as low as you can. Engaging your core, scissor your legs so you cross right over left, left over right, etc. Start with 10 seconds — it's harder than you think! If 10 feels too easy, go for 30. Take a rest, and then start again. If you can make it two to three sets, you'll feel a big difference in your core.

Another option? Try swinging first, and then scissor your legs so you cross right over left, then left over right. This is a great full-body workout, and it will take all of your mind-body focus to do it successfully. Once you've completed your criss-crosses, get off the swing and get into push-up position on the ground directly in front of the seat. Carefully lift one foot and rest it on the swing seat, then lift the other. With your wrists directly under your shoulders, look at a point just ahead of your wrists and slowly bring your knees in toward your chest. Hold for a moment, and then slowly bring your legs back to their starting position. You may feel a little shaky, and that's OK — this is a great move for working on your stabilization, balance and strength. However, you can always bring one foot down to the ground and alternate legs if you feel more comfortable. If you can do eight reps, great! Take a rest, and then try one more set.

## MONKEY BARS



The monkey bars are one of the most effective pieces of workout equipment you'll find at the playground, but you probably just remember how fun they were to swing on as a kid. Nothing has changed, except you're a bit heavier. This is good news for your fitness, since you'll be using your body weight for resistance as you scurry from one bar

to the next. Make sure you bend your knees so your feet stay all the way off the ground.

Ready to amp it up? Do some pull-ups and chin-ups. Keep your hands in either prone or supine position (overhand or underhand) and try to lift yourself up to or over the bar. This will work out all of your big muscles, so if you have any shoulder or rotator cuff issues, this may be a move to skip. If it's too tough, this is a great time to recruit a kid or your partner to help: Have him or her gently give you a little support under your feet or hips, lifting you up slightly so you don't have to raise all of your body weight.

## SLIDE



Going down the slide is really only a workout if you laugh the whole time — and that's not hard to do, since it's so much fun. But try this: As soon as you've reached the ground, put your hands on the edges of slides and try to complete five to 10 push-ups. You'll focus on your triceps, since slides are fairly narrow, so be sure to send your elbows straight behind you and lower down to bring your chest as close to the slide as you can.

Ready to amp it up? Making sure that there's nobody behind you in line, lie backwards at the top of the slide and, hooking your feet on either side of the handrail bars, slide down until you're almost flat. Try some small crunches (not full sit-ups), keeping your hands behind your ears to support, but not tugging on your neck. This is definitely a more advanced move, so if you're afraid you might lose your foothold, please skip this one so you don't go sliding backwards head-first down the slide!

If all of that is too much, try doing jumping jacks at the bottom of the slide while waiting for your kid to come down. When he/she does, take a break to offer a hug and high-five, then get back to work!

## SANDBOX



Sand is great because it's an unstable surface. From push-ups to jogging,

sand takes a standard fitness move and revs it up significantly. Try marching in place for 30 seconds while your kids build sandcastles. From there, sink into 10 good air squats, by pressing your glutes down and back as if you're sitting in a chair, then pressing back up to the starting position.

Ready to amp it up? Try some single-leg calf raises: Bend one knee so it's flexed behind you and do 10 reps on one leg. Switch and try to go for two sets on each side. This will definitely make you work on your balance!

## STAIRS/LADDER



The stairs/ladder is great for step-ups and step-downs. Keeping a gentle grip on the bars or nearby equipment for balance, step one foot up on a rung, then the other. Then, step down to the ground with one foot, then the other and repeat. You can keep an eye on the kids the whole time, and you'll not only work on your quads, hamstrings and calves, you'll kickstart some good cardio, too.

Ready to amp it up? After you watch your kids scramble up the ladder, why not drop and do 10 push-ups? You can pick how intense the move is: the higher the bar, the easier the move. And the lower you go, the more body weight you'll be pushing up. Try and do five push-ups on each bar, starting at the top and going all the way down. It might be hard, but it's super effective.

The bottom line: Fitness is where you create it. Sure, a gym is packed with equipment and trainers and treadmills. But as a busy parent, if you can't get there, bring your workout to wherever you are. Never miss an opportunity to get a quick workout in, even if it's just a few strength-training moves at the playground. It's good for you, and it's great for the kids who are looking up to you. Fitness should always be a priority!

---

*Katy is a mom and fitness instructor who loves helping people work towards their fitness goals.*





# SPIRIT EQUESTRIAN: IT'S ALL IN THE NAME

By **CYNDA ZURFLUH**

I'm decades away from my initial love affair with horses, but I'm enjoying a re-boot with my youngest daughter. After 10 years of high-test, energy-sapping DMV motherhood, I have literally and figuratively found my "Spirit" right here in Fairfax County: Spirit Open Equestrian.

Spirit is a gem. Its mission is to foster healing and to teach life skills through relationships with horses through a team who is committed to improving the quality of life for participants of all abilities.

I would describe Spirit as a family of wonderful instructors, volunteers and rescued horses making a real difference in the lives they touch. We met the Spirit team when my daughter took what I thought was 'just' riding lessons. What I really signed up for was my daughter's new passion, and a meaningful way for me to pay it forward.

Spirit Open Equestrian, conveniently located in Fairfax County, offers top-notch urban horsemanship and beginning riding lessons. But at its heart, Spirit's goal is to serve those with special needs — physical, psychological, developmental — and give kids and adults alike the opportunity to build themselves up inside and out. Watching the riders sit proudly on the backs of the Spirit horses makes me believe in all things good again.

At a recent volunteer session, I met David. I was tasked with leading Sadie, David's favorite mare, to him. Sadie stepped out of the training rink and came right up to David in his (what I would have thought scary-to-a-horse) motorized wheelchair. She nudged David's face and nibbled on his chair's controllers. They chatted for a moment, and David was placed on the horse he was to ride for his lesson. It's safety first — with harness and

trained side-walking volunteers and someone with more horse sense than I have at the lead rope.

David was joined by five or six other riders — every one of them with his or her specific gift. The students are guided by instructors trained in horsemanship, and when appropriate, social work and psychotherapy. The horses seem to understand who's on their backs and behave accordingly.

The founder of Spirit Open Equestrian, Davorka Svorak, affectionately known as "Dada," seems to intuit her way through the lessons. She anticipates both the kids' and the horses' next moves, and is not shy about insisting they all work hard to bring out their best selves.

My daughter's first lessons with Dada were a mix of typically developing kids and kids with special needs. Everyone could ride independently. The kids were all laser-focused on

PHOTO PROVIDED BY ASHLEY HUANG



### MORE ABOUT SPIRIT

Visit [spiritequestrian.org](http://spiritequestrian.org) and register for lessons through Frying Pan Farm Park at 703-437-9101.

*How do I qualify my child for the Therapeutic Riding Program?*

Visit the [spiritequestrian.org](http://spiritequestrian.org) site and click on "Forms." The online medical form takes a physician through the necessary details to qualify a rider.

*How can I help?*

Spirit Open Equestrian is a certified 501(C)(3) nonprofit. Visit their website to donate or sign up to volunteer!

### WHAT IS THERAPEUTIC RIDING?

Therapeutic riding is a proven method to support the growth and healing of kids and adults with physical and/or psychological challenges.

The interaction between people and horses offers a variety of physical, mental, emotional and intellectual benefits. Equine Assisted Activities complement the work of a variety of therapeutic, developmental and life coaching professionals.

*Why is it effective?*

Simply sitting upon a walking horse requires strength and coordination, while stimulating the muscular and nervous systems. There is a sense of confidence that comes with cooperating with the horses and taking part in directing them. Time-in-the-saddle requires riders to be present and aware of what's happening in the moment, which helps with concentration and attention. Plus, you get a great horse buddy!

Dada's instructions. I don't think I've ever seen my girl concentrate so hard on so many things at once: heels down, feet under hips, toes front, chin up, quiet hands, straight back. Dada teaches horsemanship for real, and the kids make every effort to please her.

Part of their incentive is knowing that when they master Dada's instructions, Dada will sing their praises to the moon and back. She calls out their successes, asking folks in the arena to watch, and we all call out our "good jobs." It's a perfect feedback loop: hard work with lots of earned praise.

I really do strive to be the mom who remembers how great I have it, but volunteering at Spirit takes me to a place I haven't frequented much lately. A place where the kids are precious because they are, and the parents aren't straining under the weight of the DMV's next-level academic and competitive rigors.

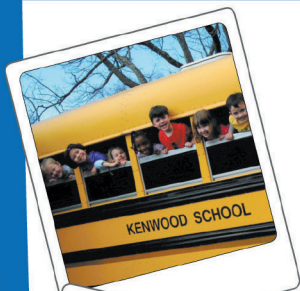
My daughter and I leave Spirit filthy, smelling like the horses we just worked with. But we're refreshed. I find a peace that is a rarity. I even drive home more slowly.

The Spirit team meets me where I am just like they meet David when he rolls in for his lesson. We all have challenges, and Spirit's horses and team members offer us moments of strength, confidence, humility and gratitude.

---

*Cynda Zurfluh is a happily married, working mother of three with an endless to-do list and blessings enough to (almost) make up for the lack of sleep.*





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# Fitness Goal Setting Tips for Kids

By **Nailah Coleman, MD**

**A**s you set your family's fall schedule, consider this: a 2013 study from the U.S. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found only half of kids ages 11-16 get the recommended 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity each day.

Setting goals to get moving as a family can create long-lasting healthy habits. Start simple – take a longer dog walk or join a sports team. Love to run? Consider joining a running club or participating in a charity race like the Race for Every Child, an annual 5K and Kids Dash raising money to support Children's National Health System.

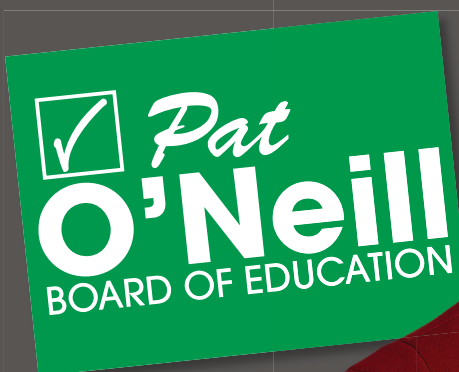
As a Children's National pediatrician, I witness the mental and physical benefits of race participation and how the funds raised impact patients. Take Maia Santiago van den Broeck. Following several surgeries at Children's National, Maia, 9, chose to participate in the 5K to give back and stay healthy. "They helped me, and if I raise money, I can help other kids too," says Maia.

*Nailah Coleman, MD, FAAP, FACS*  
is a sports medicine pediatrician in The Goldberg Center for Community Pediatric Health at Children's National.

## Follow these tips to set your family fitness goals:

- Reserve a regular time for fitness activities.
- Break big goals into small, achievable steps.
- Lead by example. Share your goals and efforts with your child.
- Have healthy snacks available before, during and after activities.
- Follow the mood. When your family seems ready to go, seize the moment!

I believe in the power of public education, and now more than ever we need dedicated leaders to make sure that every child receives a top quality education.



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## 5 WAYS TEENS CHANGED MY PARENTING STYLE

BY KATHRYN STREETER

**P**arents of young children sometimes live under the illusion that if they parent well, they'll be spared the challenges common to the teen years. It's what I personally hoped for. But as my kids grew and changed, I realized I needed to, too. Here's what I learned along the way.

**1. I learned to approach beloved family traditions with flexibility.** We raised our kids with the expectation that every Saturday morning started at the local coffee shop. It was a tradition we all enjoyed and looked forward to until my kids suddenly sprouted into teenagers and wanted to sleep until noon. Instead of taking a hardline approach, KidsHealth professionals recommend flexibility when it comes to family activities. Demanding rigid adherence to family activities will likely backfire, creating a tense situation. So instead of an unyielding "always" tone, try the posture of "sometimes." Then identify those family activities on the calendar that rise to the "mandatory" level and let the rest go.

**2. I learned to accept a fluid dinner hour.** It's long been my ambition to eat dinner around the table together, but things grew to a new level of helter-skelter with high schoolers coming and going amidst sporting events, invitations from friends and other commitments. As life bulges to unprecedented levels of busyness, stick with family dinners whenever and however possible says clinical psychologist Dr. Laura Markham of Aha! Parenting. If someone in the family must be absent, carry on with the rest of the family.

The humble dinner hour provides a level of connectivity with teens that's been tied to better grades, lower levels of depression and suicide attempts and less experimentation with drugs, alcohol and sex, says Markham. Furthermore, teens who eat dinner with their families show a healthier approach to food, writes Cody C. Delistraty in *The Atlantic*.

**3. I learned that conversation happens when it's going to happen.** Great conversation may occur around the dinner table but, maybe not. The team of experts at Child Development Institute say to stop, focus and listen whenever

our teens want to talk. "Many teens feel they can't talk to their parents because they're always at work or busy doing something else," says the Child Development Institute. "We often forget to take time out from our hectic lives to pay enough attention to our kids." And listen more than talk, keeping your responses brief, adds Dr. John Duffy, author of *"The Available Parent: Radical Optimism for Raising Teens and Tweens."* Duffy suggests approaching our teens from the perspective of a visiting neighbor; it'll help us view them less critically and with greater empathy.

**4. I learned to turn a blind eye to messy bedrooms.** Reporter Jan Hoffman of *The New York Times* helps uncover why messy rooms are hard for parents to tolerate. Her interviews with distressed parents reveal that parents take it personally. We're embarrassed. We feel an acute sense of parenting failure, making the issue about us and forgetful that teens are on a complex journey to becoming adults. KidsHealth argues that, in fact, bedrooms are teens' personal space and should be respected, adding that resisting to intervene at this level helps teens feel trusted and cultivates personal responsibility.

**5. I learned not to let my teens control my marriage.** Our teens go to bed when we do, or later. We're helplessly collapsing into bed. We have no energy to talk, to be just the two of us. How do we stay connected as a couple? These thoughts are common to parents with teens; psychologist Suzanne Phillips warns against becoming preoccupied with teenage struggles to the point of neglecting our marriages. Phillips describes this danger as "abdication" our role as a partner in order to be a vigilant parent. In reality, teens benefit from signs of affection between their parents. When we come together, we offer our teens a solid home environment, an invaluable gift.

Life is never static and, surely, this truth couldn't be more evident than in homes with teens. The wax and wane of family rhythm are actually signs of growth, not to be feared or resisted. After all, the relationships within our homes — not the particular day-to-day routine — should be what we fiercely protect.

*Kathryn Streeter is a D.C.-based mom and blogger.*

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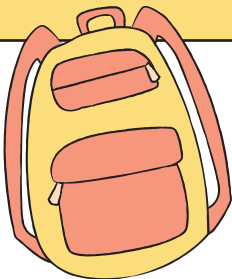
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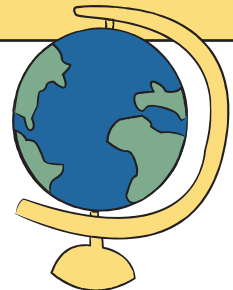
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# OCTOBER

## Family Calendar

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### MONDAY 1

#### **FREE** Baby Storytime

**10:30 a.m.** Storytimes are more than just books! They're interactive experiences that engage children with short stories, action rhymes, songs and finger plays. This storytime event focuses on pre-reading skills that all children need to become good readers. *Central Community Library, 8601 Mathis Ave., Manassas, VA.*

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### TUESDAY 2

#### **FREE** Teen Trivia Tuesday

**4 p.m.** Let your teen test their knowledge at Teen Trivia Tuesday! Compete against other teens for a chance to win something from the prize bin. All teens are welcome. *Haymarket Gainesville Community Library, 14870 Lightner Rd., Haymarket, VA.*

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### WEDNESDAY 3

#### **Disney on Ice Presents Mickey's Search Party**

**7 p.m. | \$15.** Mickey's Search Party brings the magic closer to fans than ever before through dynamic and immersive moments that take place on the ice, in the air and in the seats. Guests will embark on a search for clues to find Tinker Bell after Captain Hook tries to capture her magic. As each scene unfolds, compelling storytelling will be delivered through multi-level production numbers by skaters, performers and acrobats alike. *Eagle Bank Arena, 4400 University Dr., Fairfax, VA.*

---

### THURSDAY 4

#### **FREE** Bricklayer Competition

**11 a.m.** Glen Gery is hosting its third annual bricklaying competition. Come out and watch the best bricklayers in Virginia at work! Enjoy games, raffles and food and drinks provided by the

American Cancer Society. *Glen Gery 9905 Godwin Dr., Manassas, VA.*

---

### FRIDAY 5

#### **Fireside Ghost Stories**

**7 p.m. | \$5.** Ben Lomond has a diverse and grim history serving as a Civil War hospital. Over the years, many local residents claim to have seen ghosts and other spooky happenings at the site. This has led to reports that the site is haunted. Join in for an exciting and eerie evening around the campfire to hear some of the ghost stories associated with the historic site. *Ben Lomond Historic Site, 10321 Sudley Manor Dr., Manassas, VA.*

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### SATURDAY 6

#### **FREE** Natural Magic

**2:30 p.m.** Join Port Discovery educator and former Ringling Brothers circus performer, Gregory May on a comedy magic tour of the animals we see



around us every day. Sometimes they're helpful, and sometimes, they make a mess of things. But, there is always something new and exciting to learn about these wonderful creatures. Ages 3-10. 6692 Cedar Ln., Columbia, MD.

---

## SUNDAY 7

### Teddy Bear Farm Visit

**10 a.m. | \$7.50.** Folk singer, Tony McGuffin, has been the host of the Teddy Bear Farm Visit for 27 years! Activities include a Teddy Bear Contest, Enchanted Express Train ride, pony rides, Pine Tree Maze and a hayride to the pumpkin patch. There will also be food vendors and local cider! *Clark's Elloak Farm, 10500 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD.*

---

## WEDNESDAY 10

### Crybaby Matinee

**Noon | \$12.50.** Crybaby Matinee is a movie for YOU in a baby friendly environment. Enter a judge-free zone where babies can be babies and you can enjoy the latest film in the company of other parents who "get it." We provide a comfortable theater environment for you and your little one so you can enjoy a movie without worrying about unexpected tantrums or feedings in the dark. Children under age 5 get in free! *Angelika Pop-Up at Union Market, 550 Penn St., N.E., Washington, D.C.*

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## THURSDAY 11

### Green Meadows Petting Farm

**10 a.m. | \$14.** The goal at Green Meadows Petting Farm is to educate children of all ages about farm animals while providing a day of fun for everyone. Come out to the farm and get up close with approximately 200 farm animals, as well as the



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### Minefaire: The Ultimate Minecraft Event

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opportunity to milk a cow and feed sheep and goats for free. Also enjoy slides, duck races and more! A pumpkin is also included with each paid admission in October. *Green Meadows Farm, 10102 Fingerboard Rd., Ijamsville, MD.*

---

## FRIDAY 12

### Parent Night Out

**6 p.m. | \$45.** Need a night away? Do your children love Zava Zone? Leave them with us for a safe, fun-filled evening of play while you paint the town red. Drop off your adventurers for a few hours of Zava Zone madness! They will enjoy 1 ½ hours of supervised play, followed by dinner, a movie and then more play! Ages 5-14. Zava Zone, 45685 Oakbrook Ct. Ste. 110, Sterling, VA.

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## SATURDAY 13

### FREE The Great Pumpkin Race and Fall Festival

**11 a.m.** Come and enjoy a great fall day with music, food and games for the whole family! Start planning your strategy now to build the fastest themed pumpkin racer —bonus points if you dress to match! Parking on site is limited, so consider parking at the Montgomery Village Foundation and utilize our free shuttle! *North Creek Community Center, 20125 Arrowhead Rd., Montgomery Village, MD.*

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## MONDAY 15

### FREE Lego Club

**5 p.m.** Do your kids like Legos? Then have them come to the library to build their own creations! Legos will be provided, but all materials must stay at the library. So bring a camera to capture your adventures. Grades K-5. *Central Community Library, 8601 Mathis Ave., Manassas, VA.*

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## WEDNESDAY 17

### Grandparent's Day at the Farm!

**10 a.m. | \$0-\$14** (Free admission for grandparents). Green Meadows Farm has a special each Wednesday just for grandparents! Every grandparent gets one free admission to the farm with one paid general admission. Price of admission includes a farm animal petting zoo, a wagon ride, cow milking, a pig race and free sheep and goat feed. *Green Meadows Farm, 10102 Fingerboard Rd., Ijamsville, MD.*

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## THURSDAY 18

### FREE Reading to Dogs

**4 p.m.** Practice reading aloud while you make a new friend by reading to

a therapy dog at the library. Reading to dogs helps young readers improve their skills in a relaxed, friendly environment. Bring your own book or read one of ours. For readers in grades K-5. Chinn Park Regional Library, 13065 Chinn Park Dr., Woodbridge, VA.

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#### FRIDAY 19

#### **FREE** Stafford County Agricultural Fair

**5 p.m.** Come join the fun at the Stafford County Fair! Take a ride on the monster truck, see the 4H animals, watch the Miss Stafford Pageant, listen to great music on stage and much more! Enjoy a ton of carnival treats and good eats from local vendors. *Stafford County Fairgrounds, 2135 Mountain View Rd., Stafford, VA.*

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#### SATURDAY 20

#### **FREE** Princess Tea Read-Along with the Girl Scouts

**11 a.m.** The Girl Scouts invite you to tea! Come listen to stories read by Girl Scout Juniors, learn a little about Daisy Scouts and finish with a craft and tea. *Dale City Neighborhood Library, 4249 Dale Blvd, Dale City, VA*

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#### SUNDAY 21

#### **Fall Harvest Family Days**

**9 a.m. | \$12-\$20.** Celebrate the autumn season with 18th-century activities at Mount Vernon's Pioneer Farm. Take a horse-drawn wagon ride and play colonial games on the bowling green before heading to the Pioneer Farm to observe 18th-century demonstrations and greet General Washington. *George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon, VA.*



**October 27 | 3:30 p.m. | \$8-\$14**

#### **Trick-or-Treating at Mount Vernon**

Trick-or-treat at Mount Vernon! Participate in a special scavenger hunt, take a wagon ride on the 12-acre field and create a boo-tiful Halloween craft in this unforgettable evening. Watch wool carding and spinning, historic chocolate-making demonstrations in the historic area and participate in a children's costume parade. Prizes will be awarded for the best George and Martha Washington costumes! *George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon, VA.*

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#### TUESDAY 23

#### **FREE** MONA Preschool Fair

**7 p.m.** Picking a preschool is hard, so let the MONA Preschool Fair help! Come out to the annual preschool fair to meet representatives and parents from over 50 local preschools. *Columbia Baptist's Child Development Center, Falls Church, VA, 103 W. Columbia St., Falls Church, VA.*

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#### THURSDAY 25

#### **FREE** Farm & Forest Explorers

**10 a.m.** Calling all young explorers! Join Butler Montessori's Farm & Forest Explorers program and experience farm life and nature through fun, hands-on activities like harvesting carrots to collecting chicken eggs.

*Butler Montessori Campus, 15951 Germantown Rd., Germantown, MD.*

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#### FRIDAY 26

#### **Ghostly Tales**

**7 p.m. | \$5.** Join storytellers from Alexandria's Footsteps to the Past on the front lawn of Carlyle House for a fun evening of ghostly tales of Alexandria's past! *Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA.*

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#### SUNDAY 28

#### **Halloween Costume Parades**

**10 a.m. | \$7.50.** Let your kids join in on the Clark's Elioak Farm costume parade! After the parade, take a ride on the Enchanted Express Train and enjoy other afternoon activities like pony rides, train rides, mazes and more! *Clark's Elioak Farm, 10500 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD.*

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#### WEDNESDAY 31

#### **FREE** Halloween Story Time and Costume Parade

**10:30 a.m.** No trick, just treats! Wear your costume, enjoy a not-at-all-spooky Halloween story time, then take a promenade around the library to collect some fun treats that are just right for kids. *Bull Run Regional Library, 8051 Ashton Ave., Manassas, VA.*

#### **FREE** Carlyle House Trick or Treat

**5 p.m.** Come out to the Carlyle House on All Hallows Eve for good old-fashioned trickery and treats! Bring your little ghosts, goblins, princesses and action heroes to one of Alexandria's most haunted dwellings for a fun evening of free trick-or-treating, games and crafts. *Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria, VA.*



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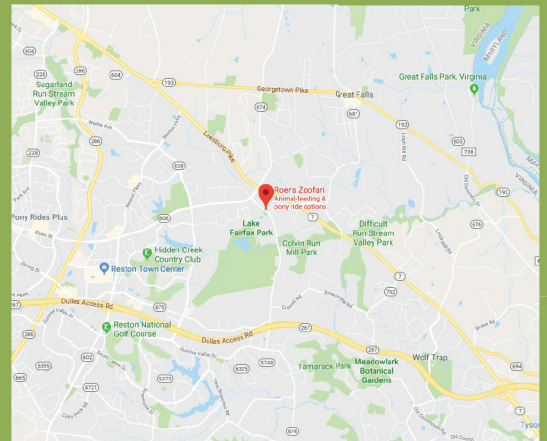
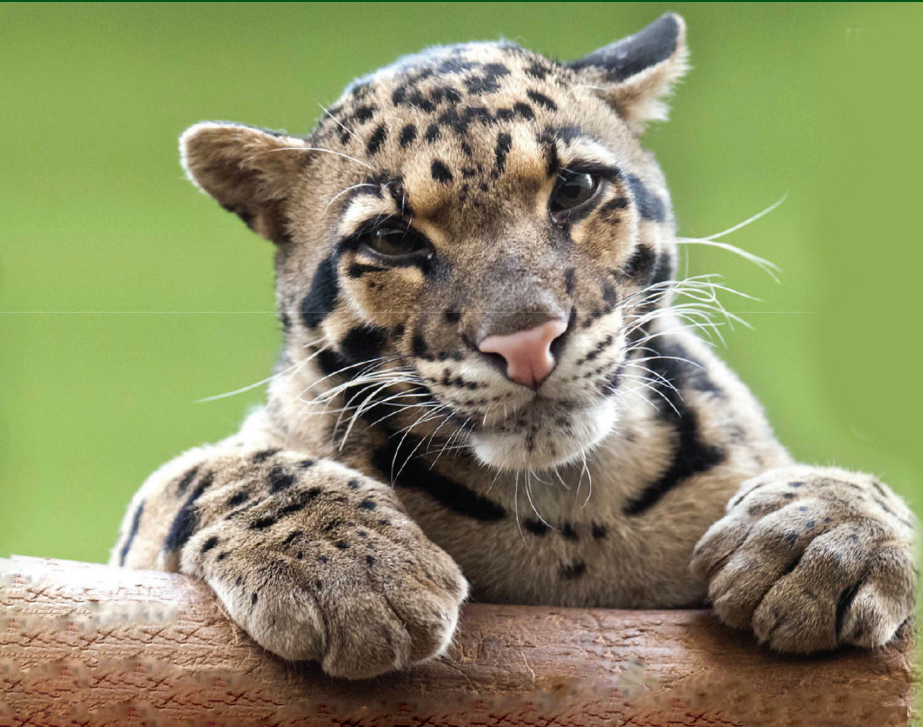


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