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READERS' RESPONSES

We welcome your feedback — on specific articles, overall themes and anything else related to editorial content. Enter your comments on the Feedback tab of our website: info@washingtonfamily.com.

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

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**WE WANT
YOUR
FEEDBACK**

Why Mentoring Matters

Yoda and Luke Skywalker. Dumbledore and Harry Potter. Socrates and Plato. We're all familiar with famous mentors and their protégés, both real and fictional. But what does mentoring look like to an everyday teenager?



Mentoring at Oakcrest is an opportunity for each student to converse about her life with someone she trusts — from struggles to personal goals to friendships and everything in between. It's a way for her to reflect on her own growth with the guidance of someone who has a few more years and a little more wisdom under her belt.

We believe this mentoring relationship is crucial to helping middle and high school girls learn about themselves, grow in confidence and strive for virtue. Because of this, mentoring forms the cornerstone of an Oakcrest education.

During monthly one-on-one meetings, the Oakcrest student and her mentor discuss what's happening in her life and ways she can grow and improve. Many schools offer group advising, but our mentoring program is unique because it focuses on an individual, highly personalized experience with each student.

Our mentoring program rests on two core principles. First, we want to help our students grow in self-knowledge and encourage them to embrace both their strengths and struggles. The best way they can do this is by trying every day, patiently and persistently, to grow virtue. By constantly working on themselves, they are equipped to serve others and make the world around them a better place.

Second, we believe that all of us — young or old — need figures in our lives to keep us accountable and guide us as we work towards our full potential. Kate Hadley, director of mentoring, explains that mentoring helps with “learning that you will always need people in your life to mentor you, in every different facet of your life. And to not be afraid to go for help. Even as you grow into an adult, you have mentors who help you financially, you have mentors who help you

spiritually, you have mentors who help you learn how to parent. This is a concept that's an underlying principle of our mentoring program.”

At Oakcrest, 85 percent of female faculty and staff serve as mentors. In the words of teacher and mentor Elizabeth Black, “The mentor is a woman who accompanies the student as she matures into a young woman, listening, giving advice as needed and, in general, being another adult who has a fresh perspective for the student.”

Deep trust and respect form the heart of each student-mentor relationship. Students appreciate that mentors not only give advice and insight, but also take the time to thoughtfully listen to what they have to say. Student Elizabeth Wells ('19) notes, “My favorite thing about my mentor is that she treats me as an adult. Of course, there still exists the line that separates a teacher from a student, but when I talk to her, she speaks to me as an adult and recognizes that my problems require adult solutions.”

Oakcrest teacher and mentor Monica Pompei explains, “A mentor is not a counselor or a psychologist, but rather one who listens to the mentee's concerns and coaches the mentee to reflect and ask herself questions that help her know herself better. She helps encourage truthfulness about oneself without judging the mentee.” Many faculty and staff also support their mentees outside of official mentoring sessions — they'll stop by a student's sports game, attend a ballet she's dancing in, or simply pause and chat with her in the hallway between classes.

Mentors are crucial not just for a young woman's character formation, but also her career aspirations. Writing in *Fortune* magazine, business leader Erin Ganju discusses how she wishes she'd had a female

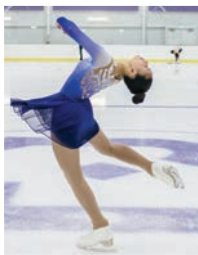
mentor at the beginning of her professional life. All too often, she notes, these types of mentors are lacking, especially in fields traditionally dominated by men. She adds, “That's why it is essential for female leaders to offer guidance to promising young women and girls on paths that traditionally have been closed to them. They can act as role models and encourage their mentees to take the next step, to reach for higher goals, and push them to lean in.” Oakcrest mentors strive to help our girls discover and fearlessly pursue their ambitions.

As in everything else that we do, parent partnership plays an important part in mentoring. The mentor serves as an essential link between parents and school. Students are encouraged to discuss with their parents the goals that they have developed with their mentor. Parents and mentors are in contact throughout the year and parents can reach out to their daughter's mentor at any time. One Oakcrest parent says, “My husband and I see mentoring as one of the great benefits of an Oakcrest education ... Our daughters' mentors have helped them recognize the areas in which they need to grow, but also celebrated the wonderful things that are going on in their lives. We've all heard the saying that ‘it takes a village’ and my husband and I really feel that Oakcrest and the mentors, in particular, are a crucial part of that ‘village.’”

Mentors love the chance they get to have a personal relationship with each of their mentees. They care about not only the girl's academic growth, but also her social, physical, character and spiritual development — at Oakcrest, she is truly known and valued as a whole person. ■

Erin Ganju, “What Star Wars Can Teach You About the Importance of Mentorship,” *Fortune*, June 17, 2015, <http://fortune.com/2015/06/17/>





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Falling for Fall

Fall is in full swing. Can you feel it? The cool, crisp air, the changing leaves, the spirited cheers from football fans all around and, of course, the smells of pumpkin goodness wherever you go. Perhaps I'm a bit biased, but I do believe fall is one of the best (if not the best) seasons, especially in the DMV.

There are pumpkin patches to visit, Starbucks pumpkin spice lattes to sip on, All Hallows' Eve fun to enjoy, and the best fall festivals to attend. While we shared some fall festivals last month, we have even more October fall festivals to share this month in our extended calendar on page 11.

As for pumpkin-galore, we have a great guide on carving and designing the perfect Jack O'Lantern on page 16. Even if you consider yourself a Jack O'Lantern aficionado, writer Dinah Wolfe shares some special carving and preserving hacks to keep your pumpkins looking their best all season long.

To get into the Halloween spirit, we have a not-spooky list of Halloween books for your kiddos to enjoy before the big holiday on page 20. And before any big football game, we have some tailgating-inspired recipes that will score you some serious touchdown points at

your next tailgate-style gathering.

Now that we are well into the start of the new school year, we have some essential tips for students applying to private schools this fall from a local private school teacher, Michelle Ardillo. Ardillo shares essay-writing strategies and ideas that will seriously impress the school's admissions committee on page 22.

And, just because summer is long gone and Christmas is still a few months away, that doesn't mean you can't enjoy another family vacation. Writer PJ Feinstein shares her promising experience with having a family staycation in D.C. and why DMV-area families should consider this little fall mini-vacation as well. She also includes some particularly wonderful family-friendly D.C. hotel options and activities on page 22.

So fall, football, fun and pumpkins ... sounds about right for October. For even more seasonal content and exciting things to do with your family this month, check out washingtonfamily.com. Happy reading! ■

Britni

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TUESDAY 1

FREE PORTRAITURE 101

Learn how to discuss and analyze art with an interactive discussion led by a National Portrait Gallery educator. National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C., 5:30 p.m. npg.eventbrite.com

WEDNESDAY 2

MOTHER, DAUGHTER, SISTER, SPY

Listen to prominent women in the CIA, Department of Defense, and more discuss their experiences in the intelligence agency. The International Spy Museum is hosting their annual panel on women spies. International Spy Museum, Washington, D.C. 6 p.m. \$99. spymuseum.org

THURSDAY 3

FREE KIDS STEAM CLUB

Children in grades 1-5 are encouraged to build LEGO marble tracks at the Arlington Public Library. Parents are also welcome to assist their children. Cherrydale Branch Library, Arlington, Va., 4 p.m. arlingtonva.libcal.com

SATURDAY 5

NORTHERN VIRGINIA MAC AND CHEESE FESTIVAL

Taste the best mac and cheese that Northern Virginia has to offer while listening to live bands and sampling great craft beers. Children under 9 years old enter for free. Arlington and Ballston, Va., \$20-\$35. macandcheesefestival.com

SUNDAY 6

FREE PIKETOBERFEST

Listen to live music, build a sandcastle at The Beach and more at Pike and Rose's version of Oktoberfest. This is the 6th annual PIKEtoberfest. North Bethesda, Md., 12 p.m. pikeandrose.com

MONDAY 7

MAGGIE ROGERS: THE ANTHEM

Watch musician Maggie Rogers perform her hits in Washington's Wharf area. Rogers achieved fame in 2016 when she impressed Pharrell Williams with her song "Alaska." The Anthem, Washington D.C., 8 p.m. \$80. ticketfly.com

TUESDAY 8

GEORGETOWN MEN'S SOCCER

Support the Hoyas men's soccer team as they take on

the Lehigh men's team. Shaw Field, Washington, D.C., 3 p.m. \$5-\$10. wearegeorgetown.com

THURSDAY 10

BROADWAY CENTER STAGE: FOOTLOOSE

Take in this film-turned-musical at the legendary John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Footloose has been nominated for several Tony Awards. The Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C., 8 p.m. \$59-\$175. ken尼迪-center.org

SATURDAY 12

FREE PORTSIDE IN OLD TOWN FALL FESTIVAL

Learn more about the history of sailors, enjoy live music and nautical demonstrations, and participate in all kinds of food and drink related activities along the water in Alexandria's Old Town. Waterfront Park, Alexandria, Va. visitalexandriava.com

SUNDAY 13

FREE SUNDAY NIGHT FULL MOON WALK

Gaze at Washington's beautiful monuments by the light of the full moon. Join Washington, D.C. History and Culture on a walk through one of Washington's most beautiful areas. World War II Memorial, Washington, D.C. eventbrite.com

TUESDAY 15

FREE BOOK BUDDY BINGO

Grades K-5. Read a book together as a group and then play bingo based on the book. One lucky participant will win a copy of the book. Central Community Library, Manassas, Va., 6:30 p.m. pwcgov.org

JACKS PUMPKIN GLOW

FRI, OCT. 4 | 6-9 P.M. | \$17



It is truly a Pumpkin Wonderland with this immersive Halloween stroll filled with thousands of hand-carved jack o' lanterns. Enjoy savory fall-themed snacks and beverages as you wander along a trail illuminated by thousands of intricately carved pumpkins, many showcasing Capital City's pumpkin look-a-likes of iconic landmarks, musicians, movie stars, superheroes and princesses. Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston, Va., glowpumpkin.com



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HALLOWEEN ON THE FARM

Oct. 20 | 4-7 p.m. | \$4



Check out this family-friendly Halloween event hosted this year at the Old Maryland Farm. Festivities include hayrides, costume contest, crafts, pumpkins for sale, and more. Old Maryland Farm, 301 Watkins Park Drive, Kettering, Md. pgparks.com

FRIDAY 18

DADDY DAUGHTER DATE NIGHT

Every third Friday of the month, make it a special night out with your little Princess(es). Enjoy a fun night making memories with music, dancing, snacks, drinks, games and a special photo-op area. The Zen Lounge, Manassas, Va., 6:30 p.m. \$7-\$25.

SATURDAY 19

FALL HARVEST FAMILY DAYS

Participate in 18th Century activities like taking a horse-drawn wagon ride and talking with George Washington at the Fall Harvest Family Days festival. Mount Vernon, Washington, D.C., \$12-\$20. 9 a.m. mountvernon.org

SUNDAY 20

BOO AT THE ZOO 2019

Dress up like your favorite sports player, movie character, or anything else and look at some of the world's creepiest animals at the National Zoo. National Zoo, Washington, D.C., \$20-\$30. 5:30 p.m. nationalzoo.si.edu

MONDAY 21

FREE TODDLER MUSIC & MOTION

Each session offers a variety of music, dancing and other movement activities you're sure to enjoy. First come, first served until capacity is reached. Haymarket Gainesville Community Library, Haymarket, Va., 10:30 a.m. pwcgov.org

TUESDAY 22

SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE LIVE! 2019

So You Think You Can Dance, the 16-time Emmy Award-winning FOX TV show, comes to Merchant Hall for one night. The dancers will captivate audiences with genres varying from lyrical to salsa, hip-hop to contemporary, and the latest street moves, in original choreography seen on Season 16. Hylton Performing Arts Center, Manassas, Va., 8 p.m. \$45-\$100. hyltoncenter.org

FRIDAY 25

MOVIE NIGHT AT CARLYLE HOUSE

In celebration of Halloween, watch scary movies at the Carlyle House in the week leading up to the holiday. Voting for which movies will be played will take place on Carlyle House's Facebook page. Carlyle House, Alexandria, Va., 7 p.m. \$2. visitalexandriava.com

SATURDAY 26

FREE MCM KIDS RUN

Bring your children and watch as they compete in a 1-mile race. MCM is a great way to get your children active in their early years. Pentagon North, Washington, D.C. 9:30 a.m. marinemarathon.com

SUNDAY 27

FREE DEL RAY HALLOWEEN PARADE

All are invited to dress up and parade down Mount Vernon and Commonwealth Avenues and compete for the best costumes in honor of Halloween. This will be the 23rd annual Del Ray parade. Alexandria, 2 p.m. visitalexandriava.com

TUESDAY 29

FREE PRESCHOOL STORYTIME

These story times engage children with short stories, action rhymes, songs and finger plays. They focus on pre-reading skills that all children need to become good readers, and they help parents practice these skills at home. Chinn Park Regional Library, Prince William, Va., 10:30 a.m. pwcgov.org

THURSDAY 31

FREE TRICK-OR-TREATING

Join in for some good old fashioned trickery and treats! Bring your little ghosts, goblins, princesses and action-heroes to one of Alexandria's most haunted dwellings for fun, candy and more. Carlyle House Historic Park, Alexandria, Va., 4 p.m. visitalexandria.com Halloween Happenings ■

Fall for These 5 D.C.-Area October Festivals

By Deb Greengold

OAKLAND AUTUMN GLORY FESTIVAL: OCT. 9-13

This festival is a 5-day annual fall event that celebrates the changing season! Holding a combination of indoor and outdoor activities ranging from concerts, band performances, art exhibits, and even a parade. It was voted as one of the 'Top 50 Small Towns with the Best Fall Foliage' by Good Housekeeping and is known to have something for everyone. Garrett county is welcoming to all to come visit and enjoy the crisp autumn weather! Deep Creek, MD, various times. autumnglory.com

ALL THINGS GO FALL CLASSIC: OCT. 12-13

Here in Washington, D.C., All Things Go Fall Classic holds uprisng musicians with exciting vibes like LANY, Betty Who and Allie X. Having music flying through the air and crippling crisp fall leaves below your feet you'll have an overwhelming feel-good mood for the entirety of the night. Also, make sure to visit one of the food vendors when you get hungry from dancing the night away! There will be pizza, empanadas from local DC chefs, Shake Shack, Insomnia Cookies and so much more! Union Market, D.C., various times. allthingsgofallclassic.com

FAIRFAX FALL FESTIVAL: OCT. 12

The 43rd annual Fairfax festival is finally here! Come to this free event, suitable for all ages and enjoy food, children's activities, and arts and crafts. There will also be a late-night concert in Old Town Square from 5:30pm-8:30 pm. Fairfax, Va., 5:30 p.m. festivalnet.com

TASTE OF DC: OCT. 26-27

Known for being the 'Largest culinary festival in the mid-Atlantic,' check out The Taste of DC. It has been bringing people and food together since 1989, it is a taste bud tingling-packed weekend with 'captivating entertainment.' Don't miss Restaurant Row which holds over 50 of the region's best restaurants and largest beer garden, right here in DC! Audi Field, Washington, D.C., various times. thetasteofdc.org

BOO AT THE ZOO: OCT. 18-20

Even the animals are getting into the Halloween spirit! The National Zoo's annual Boo at the Zoo is an event everyone can enjoy. There will be trick-or-treating stations for the kids, animal demonstrations, after-hour access to the different animal house and this is just to name a few. National Zoo, Washington, D.C., various times. nationalzoo.si.edu ■



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Halloween Happenings

by Irene- Myers Thompson

From zombie walks to creepy haunted houses, we have you covered on the best Halloween events all over the DMV for parents, teens and little ones. Check out the "Scare Level" to see which event is right for you and/or your child.

SCARE LEVEL KEY:



-  = Mild Scares
-  = Medium Madness
-  = Maximum Terror

NIGHT OF THE LIVING ZOO: OCT. 25

Scare Level: 


Experience amazing oddities and performers at the annual adults-only Halloween party, Night of the Living Zoo. Ghouls and goblins will be able to enjoy a dance party, after-hours animal exhibits, plenty of beer options, and food from popular Washington food trucks. Smithsonian National Zoo, 7 p.m. \$30-45.

HALLOWEEN HAUNT AT KINGS DOMINION: THROUGH NOV. 2

Scare Level:  and 

Terror will be around every corner at Kings Dominion's annual Halloween Haunt event. The event features haunted mazes, terrifying shows and performances, and thrilling amusement park rides. Are you brave enough to enter the fright zone? Parental discretion advised. Kings Dominion, 16000 Theme Park Way, Doswell, Va., check website for times. \$40-55. kingsdominion.com

AIR AND SPACE: OCT. 26

Scare Level: 

Explore the scary side of air and space at the National Air and Space Museum's annual Halloween event.


There will be tons of crafts, science experiments, and other Halloween-themed activities. Guests are encouraged to arrive in costume and get into the Halloween spirit. Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, Chantilly, Va. 12 p.m. FREE.

TRICK OR TREAT AT TUDOR PLACE: OCT. 26

Scare Level: 

Get into the Halloween spirit with the Tudor Place as the seasons change, and enjoy trick or treating throughout the site. Kids and adults alike are invited to decorated their own haunted house and participate in outdoor games and pumpkin painting. Costumes are recommended. Tudor Place, Washington D.C., 10 a.m. \$5-15.

FIELD OF SCREAMS: THROUGH NOV. 2

Scare Level: 

Get ready to be scared with Field of Screams Maryland that features over 40 acres of thrills and fun. Walk through the Trail of Terror, play carnival games, and eat s'mores, funnel cakes, and other carnival foods while sitting around a bonfire. 4501 Olney Laytonsville Rd., Olney, MD, check website for times. \$10-21. screams.org



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RAVEN'S NIGHT: NOV. 2

Scare Level: 

Join artists Belladonna and Ken Vegas for Raven's Night, a soiree of dark decadence and ethereal performances. The night will feature tarot card readings, variety arts, and live music. The main event will be a cabaret accompanied by several side performances. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. The Birchmere, Alexandria, Va., 5:30 p.m. \$25.

TRICK OR TREATING AT MOUNT VERNON: OCT. 26

Scare Level: 

Take part in a scavenger hunt, take a wagon ride, and create Halloween-themed crafts in an unforgettable evening. Children and adults will be able to watch historic relics such as chocolate-making, 18th Century dancing, and wool weaving. 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, Mount Vernon, Va., 3:30 p.m. \$8-\$16.


MARKOFF'S HAUNTED FOREST: THROUGH NOV. 2

Scare Level:  and 

For the last 25 years, Markoff's Haunted Forest has been one of the most highly rated haunted houses in the area.


Besides the traditional haunted house, there will be a zipline, games, and food and drink offers. 1920 Martinsburg Road, Dickerson, MD, various times. \$20-\$40. markoffshauntedforest.com

EIGHTIES MAYHEM AT THE BLACK CAT: OCT. 26

Scare Level: 


Enjoy a parents' night out in D.C. and hang out in your favorite Halloween costume at the famous music venue, The Black Cat and listen to music from DJ Steve EP, DJ Missguided and Killa K. The Black Cat, Washington, D.C., 9 p.m. \$15.

17TH STREET HIGH HEEL RACE: OCT. 30

Scare Level: 

Take part in this DC tradition by showing up in costume and watching men and women alike race down the Dupont Circle neighborhood in high heels. The racers will be cheered on for a full quarter-mile in this hilarious event the night before Halloween. 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C., 7 p.m. FREE.

ANNUAL DEL RAY HALLOWEEN PARADE: OCT. 27

Scare Level: 

Special dignitaries and elected officials, children and pets parade in their

Halloween costumes in this annual event. Awards are given for best costume and more! Mt. Vernon Ave. and Commonwealth - Alexandria, Va., 2 p.m. FREE.

CLIFTON HAUNTED TRAIL: OCT. 27

Scare Level: 

This Clifton trail includes terrifying sights, over two dozen skits and freaky movie re-enactments. The haunted train winds through 8 acres and is full of scary surprises. Historic Clifton, Va., 7 p.m. \$13-\$18.

SILVER SPRING ZOMBIE WALK: OCT. 26

Scare Level: 

The Silver Spring Zombie Walk is an annual Halloween party held in various locations around Silver Spring, Md. Come dressed up in your ultimate zombie costume and get ready to embrace the zombie life for a night! The walk includes live music and performances, as well as a zombie-related screening at the AFI Silver Theatre post-walk. Silver Spring, Md., 6 p.m. \$13. ■

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Oh Hey, Pumpkin

A QUICK GUIDE TO CARVING AND DESIGNING THE PERFECT JACK O'LANTERN

BY DINAH WOLFE



Pumpkins are everywhere this time of year. We carve them, eat them and wear them as costumes. We line our mantels with them, turn them into table centerpieces, and bake cookies, cakes and pies with them. For many, pumpkins symbolize family and tradition during this time of year. As Jack O'Lanterns pop up in store windows and on the front steps of every home, make sure your family's carved pumpkins are looking their absolute best with this helpful guide below.

History of Jack O' Lanterns

Why do we go crazy over this iconic fruit, and where does the pumpkin-carving tradition come from? Jack O'Lanterns were originally carved out of turnips and potatoes. While Jack O'Lanterns' location of origin is uncertain, pumpkins are native to North America, and carving and lighting them gained popularity after Irish and Scottish immigrants arrived in the U.S. in the mid-1800s. Pumpkins are harvested in October, just in time for Halloween and Thanksgiving. It was once a common belief that carving scary and grotesque faces in pumpkins and placing them in front of your home would ward off evil spirits (or pranksters) on Halloween.

While pumpkin carving is nothing new, how often have you or your kids attempted to create a pumpkin masterpiece to have it end up falling short? Or, maybe you've had trouble getting a carved pumpkin to last more than a day or two?

Keep reading for some basic but essential pumpkin carving tips and tricks. Perfect for both beginners and more experienced carvers, these tips will surely boost your Jack O'Lantern-making skills this season.

PUMPKIN CARVING 101

Choose the right pumpkin. A large pumpkin with a sturdy stem and a flat base is ideal. Large pumpkins are easier to handle and carve, and a sturdy stem is a sign of a healthy pumpkin that will last longer. Be sure to examine your pumpkin from top to bottom, and avoid ones with soft spots and bruises.

Use the right tools. These days, many great tools for both kids and adults are available in retail stores. A boning knife or serrated knife works well for carving, an ice cream scoop works well for removing the pumpkin seeds, and a scraper cleans the inside walls nicely. For kids, you may want to purchase a carving tool set specially designed for them.



Cut the lid. First, create a lid by cutting at a 45-degree angle so it does not fall into the pumpkin when you place it back on top. You can cut the lid in a zig-zag shape, or another option is to cut off the back or bottom. The choice is based on what you want and the look you want to achieve for your pumpkin.

Scoop the goop. Remove all the seeds and pulp with an ice cream scoop. Place them aside and roast them later for a healthy snack! Once the seeds are removed, scrape the walls with a scraper. If you carve a pattern in the front, try to scrape the back of the pumpkin as smoothly as possible because it will be visible through your carved design and will reflect the light.

Draw and carve. Draw the face or trace a template for your desired design. Your design can be scary, grotesque or funny. Consider using a dry erase marker so you can easily wipe off mistakes. If you are a beginner, start with a simple design. Use a small paring knife or Exacto knife for more detailed designs. Make slow, gentle cuts that go straight up and down, not at an angle. More experienced carvers may use drills and electric carving knives.



Preserve it. You can preserve your pumpkin to make it last longer by spraying or soaking it in bleach or cold water. After you soak it, make sure to dry it completely to avoid mold. As an added preservative, apply petroleum jelly to the cuts. This jelly acts as a barrier to lock in moisture and slow down the dehydration process.



OTHER PUMPKIN DIY IDEAS

You don't have to carve a pumpkin to decorate it. There are also many beautiful but spooky alternatives to carving a pumpkin for your Halloween decor. You can paint them, decoupage them, or cover them in fabric or tulle. You can embellish them with flowers, gems or gauze. You can even repurpose them and turn them into fall-inspired serving bowls, drink coolers or flower vases. Here are two easy alternatives:

DECOUPAGE

To decoupage fabric onto a pumpkin, cut strips of fabric one or two inches wide. To determine the length needed,

measure from the stem to the bottom center of the pumpkin. Apply decoupage medium directly onto the pumpkin with a paintbrush. Place one fabric strip, and apply another generous layer of decoupage medium on top of the strip. Continue applying strips until your pumpkin is covered. Allow it to dry completely.

COOLER

To make a drink cooler, choose a large, wide pumpkin. Follow the tips and tricks above for cutting the lid, removing the seeds and pulp, and scraping the wall. Do not carve it. Place a glass bowl inside the pumpkin. Fill the bowl with ice and place a bottled beverage inside. Consider embellishing the pumpkin by painting it or attaching paper bats to the outside. This pumpkin drink cooler is perfect for Halloween parties and get-togethers.

BOUQUET

Using a medium to large-sized pumpkin, complete the carving steps above to hollow out the pumpkin. Then, turn the hollowed-out pumpkin into a vase by taking a pre-arranged grocery store bouquet, holding the stems right below the flowers, and trimming all of the stems at once to a length that fits the pumpkin. Place the shortened bouquet into your pumpkin and voilà — a perfectly festive flower arrangement.

The pumpkin is officially an icon of autumn. From Halloween through Thanksgiving we can't get enough of them. So now that you know why we carve pumpkins and how to carve one, it's time to make it a family tradition. Carve them, line them up and light those Jack O'Lanterns! ■

Dinah Wolfe is a DIY expert and runs a successful home décor, crafting and DIY blog.

Clever Hacks

- 1 **Use dry erase markers to trace designs.** Use dry erase markers to draw designs directly onto your pumpkins before carving. Unlike permanent markers or even pencils, the markings will completely wipe off clean with a wet paper towel once you're done.
- 2 **Place silica gel packs at the bottom.** Those little silica gel packs that you find in shoeboxes can serve a great purpose. Put them in the bottom of Jack-o'-Lanterns to extend their life. The packets not only trap moisture, but they also prevent mold.
- 3 **Sprinkle on some cinnamon.** After you've finished carving, sprinkle a little cinnamon on the bottom of the lid or base of the pumpkin. Because of this, when you light your Jack O'Lantern, it will smell just like pumpkin pie!

Getting Crafty on a Budget Inspires Thrifty Fun

BY GINA GALLUCCI-WHITE



After watching a number of YouTube videos on how to tear clothing for zombie costumes, I grabbed a pair of scissors and went to work.

Shortly after Halloween two years ago, my son announced that he wanted his next costume to be Jason Voorhees.

Why? I am not really sure.

He has never even seen a horror movie let alone one from the Friday the 13th franchise, but he never wavered all year in his costume pick. I think it was his fascination with the old school hockey goalie mask.

The only problem with his choice was that there were no costumes like this to buy for a tween. I found many adult-sized costumes, but none to fit my 10-year-old. (In case any large costume producers are reading this: Not every tween boy wants to be a Marvel/D.C. superhero.)

I can't sew and I will never be that Pinterest-worthy mom, so I had to get creative in how to piece together this costume. I Googled costume pictures of the legendary screen villain and found one where he was wearing a torn-up denim shirt, a white T-shirt and blue jeans.

My son had a white T-shirt and a pair of jeans that looked pretty beat up from everyday wear, so that part was done. But, there was no way I was going to buy a brand-new denim shirt just to completely destroy it. So, I decided to go to Goodwill. I donate to the Walkersville location quite often as my two kids have outgrown clothes and toys, so I figured I'd give it a try.

I ended up finding a beautiful George-brand denim button-up shirt in excellent condition for \$1. It was a tad big on my son, but Jason Voorhees doesn't look like the type of criminal that has to have fitted clothes.

After watching a number of YouTube videos on how to tear clothing for zombie costumes (go ahead, look them up), I grabbed a pair of scissors and went to work. I've got to admit that I was a little sad to tear up this shirt, because it looked like it had not been worn much, if at all.

As I snipped away at the fabric, I was actually surprised at how hard it is to make the tears look realistic. I ended up making small cuts with scissors and then using my fingers to rip the incision bigger and pull at the fraying threads. I cut off any parts that were neatly sewn together and made them as jagged as possible. Then we threw the shirt in some dirt and charcoal with some splatters of fake blood to complete the look.

I found a hockey mask at a Halloween store, but it was plain white and didn't have the red markings like the character's traditional facial cover up. After red paint failed to properly adhere, we ended up using a red Sharpie which worked well. My husband scuffed up the mask with sand paper and he applied ash leftovers from a recent cookout for a weathered, beaten-up look.

After finding a fake machete online, the total price for the costume was less than \$10. This was the cheapest costume my son has ever worn, but I think one of the best because of all the creative work it took to bring it to life. I'll admit, I had fun.

Goodwill also helped me to create a costume for my daughter when her class did a wax museum project. Each child was asked to pick a famous individual/hero to research, highlighting his or her background, accomplishments and how the hero overcame obstacles. Projects were displayed in the school cafeteria "museum" with the students posing by info boards they created. When passersby pressed a button on the board, each student came to life to discuss his or her hero.

My daughter chose Urbana High School graduate and American Ninja Warrior superstar Jessie Graff. One of the stuntwoman's most iconic outfits was inspired by Wonder Woman and featured a red crop top and a blue skirt with white stars. I had searched online for possible matches, but each were too expensive for a one-day event.

I headed back to Goodwill since my previous excursion was successful. I found a red top with small stars and a big blue star on the front. For the bottom, I found a one piece Fourth of July dress with red and white stripes on the top and a blue skirt with white stars. The skirt was actually sewn into the top so I was able to cut the skirt off at the hem without having to sew it (whew!). I reused the discarded top as a rag to clean shelves. The look cost less than \$5 and my daughter was thrilled to match her hero.

My takeaway: As your children outgrow items, don't throw them away. Make sure to donate them, knowing that they may come to life again at a wax museum or a Halloween party near you. ■

Gina Gallucci-White is a local mom, writer and reporter for several local and national news outlets.

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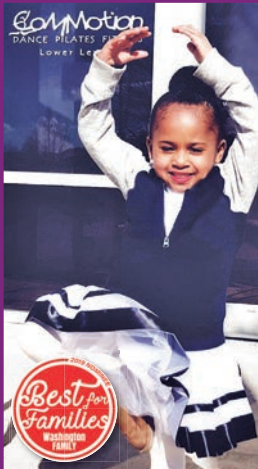
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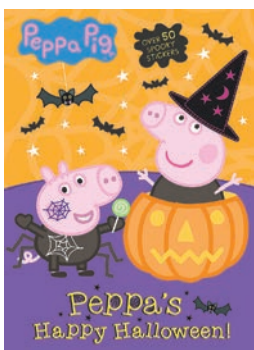


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12 Not-So-Scary Halloween Books for Kids

BY WF STAFF

Halloween icons like ghosts, goblins and witches don't always have to be scary! These family-friendly books below will get your kiddos in the All Hallows' Eve spirit without the fright.

'Halloween 1, 2, 3!'

by Random House

Ages: Baby-3. A Halloween counting board book featuring the cadets from Nickelodeon's Top Wing! Nickelodeon's Top Wing cadets get into the spooky spirit in this Halloween-themed counting board book with sturdy pages and a shiny foil cover.

'Where's the Witch?'

by Nosy Crow

Ages: Baby-3. Gently spooky creatures hide behind bright felt flaps in this Halloween offering. A perfect book to share with very little ones. Five stylishly illustrated spreads show a series of gently spooky creatures hiding behind bright felt flaps in this Halloween offering.

'Dr. Seuss's Spooky Things'

by Dr. Seuss

Ages: Baby-3. Written in super-simple rhyme, little boys and ghouls will giggle with glee at this ever-so-slightly spooky board book starring Things One and Two dressing up in classic Halloween costumes—including ghosts, bats, skeletons, black cats, and pumpkins! It's a sweet Halloween treat and a great way to introduce babies and toddlers to the world of Dr. Seuss!

'Haunted House'

by DK

Ages: 2-5. Are you daring enough to join the brave cat and mouse as they explore the noisy haunted house? If so, open the surprise flaps and hear the funny, light-activated sounds in this spooky sound book that's shaped like a house. With a delightful rhyming story to read aloud to little ones, a sliding door on the cover, and enticing flaps to lift inside, it's the perfect noisy Halloween gift for the scariest time of the year.

'Creak! Squeak! Halloween'

by DK

Ages: 2-5. Creak! Squeak! Halloween is an exciting board book with five sturdy flaps for preschoolers to lift, and five spooky noises including a croaking frog and a creaking door. This high-quality Halloween adventure encourages interaction and hands-on play by rewarding curiosity with surprise sounds and delightful characters.

'Peppa's Happy Halloween!'

by Golden Books

Ages: 3-7. Peppa Pig is a loveable little piggy who lives with her younger brother George, Mummy Pig and Daddy Pig. Peppa loves playing games, visiting exciting places and making new friends, but her absolute favorite thing is jumping up and down in muddy puddles! In this story, Peppa Pig and her friends are planning a Halloween that is full of tricks and treats!

'Trick or Treat, Little Critter'

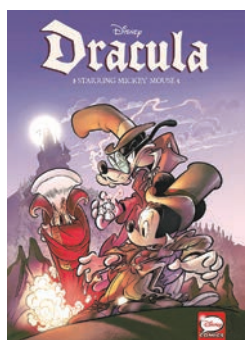
by Mercer Mayer

Ages: 3-7. It's time to go trick-or-treating with Little Critter and friends. Celebrate Halloween with Little Critter in this adorable full-color storybook—with cards, stickers and a poster.

'How to Scare a Ghost'

by Jean Reagan

Ages: 3-7. Who says ghosts get to have all the fun on Halloween? Guided by a tongue-in-cheek instructional style, two children show young readers how to set the stage for a spooktacular Halloween by carving pumpkins, playing games and even reading scary stories. Has a ghost showed up? Great! Now the fun and the scaring can really begin.



'Ghost in the House'

by Ammi-Joan Paquette

Ages: 3-7. Boo! Watch out for this rollicking, cumulative counting book for a Halloween treat that's more playful than scary. When a little ghost goes slip-sliding down the hallway, he suddenly hears ... a groan! Turns out it's only a friendly mummy, who shuffles along with the ghost, until they encounter ... a monster! As the cautious explorers continue, they find a surprise at every turn.

'Give Me Back My Bones!'

by Kim Norman

Ages: 3-7. A stormy night at sea has uncovered some long-buried secrets and surprises. Is that the mast of a shipwreck? A faded pirate hat? A mandible and a clavicle, phalanges and femurs, a tibia and a fibula — could there be a set of bones scattered across the ocean floor? A jaunty rhyme takes readers on an underwater scavenger hunt as a comical skeleton tries to put itself back together piece by piece.

'Bella Broomstick #2: School Spells'

by Lou Kuenzler

Ages: 8-12. Bella Broomstick is back. But she's no longer in the Magic Realm; she's now living in the Person World. She has a new best friend named Esme. With Esme by her side, Bella is finding Person school to be really fun and not as scary as she thought it would be. But chaos erupts when the biggest bully in school mocks Esme's very human (and unsuccessful) magic tricks. Bella secretly casts a real spell but it doesn't go the way she had planned.

'Disney Dracula, starring Mickey Mouse'

by Bruno Enna

Ages: 8-12. Jonathan Ratker (Mickey Mouse) receives a warm invitation from the mysterious Dracula, welcoming him to his castle in Beetsylvania. His objective is to close a deal for his law firm, but he soon finds Dracula's reputation is not without merit, and he is a prisoner in the castle! Ratker seeks refuge in writing letters to his love, Minnina, hoping to one day return to her. However, the supernatural is at play, and Jonathan Ratker must find a way to escape the castle and stop Dracula from going after who he loves most. ■

Happy Birthday, Nikki Grimes!

Each month, we celebrate a birthday of literary significance.

Nikki Grimes started writing poetry when she was only 6 years old. She gave her first public reading when she was 13 at a library in Harlem, New York, the neighborhood where she was born and raised. She now lives in California.



Grimes has written more than 75 books for children. Her first, a novel entitled, "Growin,'" was published in 1977.

In 1993, she was an NAACP Image Award Finalist for "Malcolm X: A Force for Change," which tells the life story of the activist. In 2003, she was awarded the Coretta Scott King Award for "Bronx Masquerade," a slam-poetry novel about high school students who use poetry to discover who they are. Her 2008 children's book "Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope," was a New York Times Bestseller. In 2016, Grimes received the Virginia Hamilton Literary Award from Kent University for her contribution to multicultural youth literature, and in 2017, she received the Wilder Medal from the Association for Library Service to Children for her lasting contribution to children's literature.

This year, Grimes launched a speaking tour across America. She will be in Washington, D.C. at the

Politics and Prose Bookstore on Oct. 10 and will be in Baltimore at the National Council of Teachers of English conference from Nov. 21-24. ■





Express Yourself

TO IMPRESS THE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

BY MICHELLE BLANCHARD ARDILLO

Eighth-grade year for many brings tears of joy and sadness.

Students must leave the safe cocoon of middle school and spread their wings as high school freshmen. For parents interested in pursuing secondary education in a Catholic school or private school for their children, this process can be formidable. And, to make matters worse, this same process will repeat itself in four short years when it is time to apply to colleges and universities. Many of these tips and strategies will be helpful for both.

Where to begin? Gather as much information as possible. Research the school online, talk to friends who are alums or have older children who attended the school, go to an open house, attend a sporting or performing arts event, schedule a day for your 8th grader to shadow at each school and drive to and from the school during rush hour traffic. Inquire about tuition, book fees, meal options, bus and/or carpool options, dress code, curriculum, in-house tutoring and especially advanced placement and honors courses. If you have a child with documented learning differences, investigate what programs and resources are available for your student.

After choosing schools of interest, the next step — applying for admission — is equally daunting. Here are some tips to ease into the competitive world of Catholic or private high school admissions.

THE APPLICATION

Every school's application is different. In today's digital age, most schools require that you set up an online account to access the school's application. As soon as the applications are available, set up your account and print out a hard copy of the application. Set up a two-pocket file folder for each high school of interest. On the front of the folder, in black marker, write the important dates for that particular school, such as:

- ▶ date of open house
- ▶ date of scheduled shadow visit
- ▶ deadline for the actual application
- ▶ deadline for applying for financial aid
- ▶ deadline for applying for an academic scholarship, a performing arts scholarship (some schools offer performing arts scholarships in speech and debate, theatre, music and dance), or a fine arts scholarship

- ▶ deadline for teacher recommendations or letters of recommendations from alums of the school

THE ADMISSIONS ESSAY

Applications for most Catholic or private high schools require an admissions essay. The purpose of the admissions essay is twofold: It gives the admissions committee a sample of your writing, and it lets the admissions committee get to know you in a different way.

Some high schools have a specific writing prompt for the essay topic. Some high schools have an open-ended statement or question to respond to.

ANSWER THE PROMPT

First, is there a writing prompt on the application? If so, read it carefully. Decode and analyze the prompt: What is it asking? It is important to answer the prompt fully to submit the best possible essay.

Here are some sample topics that have been on applications for Catholic and/or private schools over the years:

- ▶ *If you were able to get into a time machine and travel anywhere in time or place, where would you go and why?* This is a very specific prompt. It is asking the 8th grader to specifically identify a time and place they would like to visit in person. The essay must be filled with visual images

and sensory details. The student must use words to paint a picture in the minds of the admissions committee.

► *Tell me about the one person that has been the most influential in your life so far.* This essay is an opportunity to speak about a teacher, a coach, a neighbor, the moderator of an after-school club, the parent of a friend or a relative. The entire essay must be an introduction to that person. The introduction should give a physical description of this person and identify some personality traits, as well as how you know this person, when you met them, and how they are a part of your life. The body paragraph should give specific supporting details as to how this person has influenced you, how you've grown as an individual as a result of knowing this person, and what examples of kindness, compassion, courage, faith, knowledge, etc., this person has shared with you. The conclusion should reflect back on this person's place in your life. Imagine your life if you had never known this person and end your essay talking about that.

► *Describe yourself using a metaphor.* A metaphor is a literary device of figurative language. It is somewhat analogous to a simile, but a metaphor goes a step further. A metaphor replaces one thing with another. For example, after a long summer, your backyard is covered with a thick layer of green grass. But, after an early winter blizzard, your backyard is a carpet of white velvet. In describing yourself using a metaphor, pick an object: animal, plant or mineral. Find the strong attributes of that object. Then, match those attributes to your strengths. Talk about how they are the same and how you *are* that object. A student who dances to the beat of a different drum might describe himself like a salmon, swimming against the current, never following the popular crowd, staying true to himself and what his own goals are. Or, how he perseveres even when things are difficult. This would be a perfect example of using a metaphor to describe this type of student.

► *We know what our school can give you. What can you give to our school?* This prompt is asking a simple question: Why do we need you? What will you bring to the school that other students can't bring? Do you have a special talent, are you very serious about service to others, or are you skilled at something that this school does not currently offer as a sport or after-school club/activity? They are looking for something a bit more than "I'm really good at soccer." What makes you special?

FOCUS THE ESSAY

If there is no specific writing prompt and, instead, the application just asks you to "tell us about yourself," this is an opportunity to choose a topic that has some meaning to you. Remember that your application already lists all of your activities, honors, accomplishments and grades. You do not need to talk about this. Instead, think about the last three years of school and life, and think about one event or activity or episode in your life that you can write about in a three-paragraph essay.

This type of essay, where you have some freedom in what you write about, really requires you to focus on one specific thing. Make an outline. Write a thesis statement (topic sentence) that states clearly what you are writing about. Don't announce it;

don't say "this essay is about." Then, select three main points that support that thesis statement and have a few supporting details or examples for each main point. This will easily add up to a body paragraph of five to eight sentences. Be sure your body paragraph has a strong topic sentence and a strong transition sentence (now you have seven to 10 sentences in your body paragraph).

Here's a possible thesis: "Being stage manager of my school's spring musical

made me a better student." Support this example with the following points: It taught me to manage my time, it taught me how to communicate and cooperate with my peers and teachers, and it taught me how to work well under pressure. Perhaps

Where to begin?

Gather as much
information
as possible.



HELPFUL HINTS ABOUT ADMISSION ESSAYS

Admission essays should be typed unless the application states otherwise. Use the front only of white printer paper and black ink, double-spaced with indented first lines of paragraphs. Use Times New Roman 12 pt. font or something very plain and easy to read. At the top left, type a heading (full name and date). Your title for your essay should be centered under your heading.

Admission essays should be three paragraphs unless the application specifically states otherwise. If it says, "in one paragraph ..." then write a one-paragraph essay. Otherwise, you should have an introduction, a body paragraph and a conclusion. Intro and conclusion can be four to six sentences, but the body paragraph should be longer, seven to 10 sentences.

Proofread very carefully. Run the spellcheck app in your word processing program. Read the essay out loud so you can "hear" what your eyes will miss when reading your own writing.

Write in first person (I, we, me, us, our) unless it specifies otherwise. Do not announce your essay in your writing: "In this essay I will" or "I hope you have enjoyed this essay". Do not "speak" directly to the "reader" of the essay.

Be sure you have answered the writing prompt completely!

Let your English teacher or an adult read over it and give you some comments. Edit and revise, proofread and print again. Remember: Do your own work! ■

you have a relative or close friend with a serious illness or disability. What has this taught you? How have you included this person in your life and made yourself a part of theirs, in spite of the illness or disability? You could discuss gratitude for your good health, a willingness to help others less fortunate, or a desire to choose a career field where you can be of service to others such as medicine, social work or special education.

GET ORGANIZED

All good writing starts with brainstorming and pre-writing. Spend an hour making notes about things you would like to write about. You won't write about everything in your notes, but it will help you organize your thoughts. Make an outline, just like you do for a school essay. The admissions committees are looking for evidence that you can organize your thoughts and explore a specific topic from start to finish. A strong outline will make the writing process much easier.

GET PERSONAL

Remember that the admissions committee for each high school uses a variety of things to decide upon your acceptance such as:

- ▶ grades
- ▶ recommendations from teachers
- ▶ clubs, activities, sports, volunteer/service work, religious involvement (if applying to Catholic school)
- ▶ honors, awards, achievements



Take a Deep Breath

Remember that everyone goes to high school.

Get Organized

All good writing starts with brainstorming and pre-writing. Spend an hour making notes about things you would like to write about.



- ▶ high school placement test score
- ▶ admissions essay
- ▶ interview (not all schools have interviews, but those that do are looking for eye contact, a firm handshake, good posture, a good conversation, positive things about your middle school and positive things about their high school)

So, the essay is only one part of the puzzle, but it is something you have total control over, unlike some of the other things on the list of things they use to decide whether you will attend their school. Talk about positive and personal things that show who you are in the best possible way. Talk about school pride and school spirit. Talk about being a good role model, a leader, a caring friend. Talk about how you connected with your middle school, your teachers and your classmates. If you had a particularly difficult struggle, but somehow managed to come out on top, consider discussing this because it will show that you have determination and character. Don't brag, but don't hide your strengths either. If you must mention a weakness, embrace it, but also talk about the positive steps you take to combat it.

DON'T PROCRASTINATE

Start now. As soon as those applications are online, get your writing prompts out in front of you. Write a first draft and let a parent read it. Edit and revise it. Ask a language arts teacher at your school to read over it. Review the comments from the teacher, and edit and revise it again. Plan ahead and start early enough

that you are not stressed to finish right before the deadline, missing the opportunity to have time to send out your very best work. As Aristotle said, "Well begun is half done."

DO YOUR OWN WORK

This is obvious, but it must be said. Do your own work. School administrators are very good at assessing students' work, and if the admissions essay presented to them feels more like that of a seasoned professional than that of a rising freshman, it will not bode well for you.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Remember that everyone goes to high school. There are many fine choices among the Catholic and private high schools in this area. If tuition costs are a barrier even with financial aid and/or scholarships, explore your public school options. Visit and/or shadow there. Talk to neighbors. Investigate magnet programs or schools that have a performing arts or STEM focus. Make an appointment to meet with an administrator.

And finally, remember: It is not always just about the destination. It is also about the journey. ■

Michelle Blanchard Ardillo is a freelance writer and middle school language arts teacher. She has successfully guided hundreds of students through the high school application process for 12 years. Follow her @michardillo on Twitter or Goodreads or at michelleardillo.com.

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Amy Wright (center),
Bitty (left) and Beau.



coffee shop brews opportunity

People with
disabilities
staff Bitty
& Beau's
in Annapolis

BY ERICA RIMLINGER



In September, a new coffee shop will replace the Starbucks on Dock Street. Bitty & Beau's Coffee is, like Starbucks, a chain, but smaller and with a very different mission.

Amy and Ben Wright, the Wilmington, N.C.-based founders of Bitty & Beau's Coffee, named their coffee shops after their son and daughter who have Down syndrome, and primarily employ people with disabilities.

"But it's not just about creating jobs and opportunity for people with disabilities," says CEO Amy Wright. "It's about the customers' experience and their takeaway. We're trying to reach people and change people's perceptions about people with disabilities. It's amazing to see people come in for a cup of coffee. A lot of people who have maybe never spent time with someone with Down syndrome or autism have a transformative experience."

Starting three and a half years ago, in their hometown of Wilmington, the Wrights have been steadily expanding on the southeastern seaboard and opening Bitty & Beau's Coffee in Charleston, S.C., Savannah, Ga., and now Annapolis.

"We like to plant ourselves where there's a lot of tourism and foot traffic,"

Wright says. They've chosen to open shops in cities and towns where "you have your community and you also have the influx of tourists that come in."


This, she says, increases the reach of Bitty & Beau's Coffee's mission.

"Those customers go back to their workplaces and look around and say, 'Wait a second, why don't we have somebody working here who has a disability? Let's do something about that.'"

That ripple effect, Wright says, is what's "going to really create change in our country."

Amy and Ben met while enrolled at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. It was, Wright notes, "love at first sight," and they moved quickly. After meeting in September 1992, Ben proposed that New Year's Eve in Times Square, and the two married in May 1993. Five years later they had their first child, Lillie, and 19 months later, welcomed another daughter, Emma Grace.

Their world changed when, five years later, their son, Beau, arrived. "Though we had an idea he might have Down syndrome, we did initially go through that shock and sadness in the beginning days," Wright remembers. "It was something that didn't



last too long for us. After we got through grieving the son we thought we were going to have and embraced the son we were given, it was just a wonderful, freeing light-bulb moment that really changed us as people."

Just as the Wrights felt as though they were "learning the ropes" as parents of a child with a disability, they became pregnant again and welcomed a daughter who also had Down syndrome. Bitty's given name is Jane but, Wright says, earned her nickname "because she's always been itty-bitty."

"When Bitty was born it was like a Mack Truck hit us," Wright says, explaining that she and her husband came to think "this was bigger than making sure the world was good and welcoming for Beau and Bitty. We've been trusted with a job here. We need to find the best platform we can to advocate for people with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities. That's when the soul searching started. We tried a lot of different things: benefit concerts, walks, blogging, a variety of things in our community."

The idea to open Bitty & Beau's Coffee "hit me like a lightning bolt," she says.

Just like their whirlwind romance-engagement-marriage two decades before, just a few months passed between the idea and its fruition. Wright's idea came to her in November 2015, and they opened their first shop in January 2016.

"It was a real risk for us," Wright says. "We didn't know anything about coffee shops. We were creative people, but we just educated ourselves on every aspect of it."

The whole family got involved, "whether it was painting the walls or putting furniture together or marketing," she says. For its first six months, the coffee shop operated out of a 500-square-foot spot.

The risk paid off: "We had a line out the door from day one. It was originally called Beau's Coffee. We hadn't even given too much thought to naming it. Beau was with me and I said, 'This may be someplace you want to work someday, Beau.'"

When they moved into a 5,000-square-foot former Hummer dealership, Beau requested the shop be renamed to include his sister.

It's been "a whirlwind" three years for Bitty & Beau's Coffee, says Wright, and the support they've received for their shop in Annapolis has been "overwhelming. We felt welcomed in Charleston and Savannah, but this was unlike anything we had so far."

Hundreds of people have reached out to say they want jobs, she adds. They plan on having a hiring fair and spending a week-end interviewing candidates. There's no requirement for employment at Bitty &

Beau's Coffee other than a "willingness to learn, a great attitude and a willingness to be part of the team," Wright says.

Bitty & Beau's Coffee's mission is, in part, a response to what she calls an "unemployment epidemic that faces people with disabilities." According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 80 percent of people with disabilities are not in the workforce. Kids with disabilities "get all this support through school, and all these teachers are invested in making sure kids are prepared for the workforce, and then there are no jobs," Wright says.

But she advises parents of kids with disabilities to stay optimistic about their child's future. "Parents of children with special needs are really good at advocating for their children to find their place in the world," she says. With that momentum, "good things can happen."

And spend a couple minutes in the coffee shop to see what's possible, she says. "Not just for individuals to work in coffee shops. That's not the point. They can be in any place of work, shoulder to shoulder with typically developing people."

"I do feel a shift in our country," she adds. "I feel like people are beginning to see value in these individuals. I think the coffee shop has shown our country what is possible for people with disabilities." ■

Staff gathers for a pre-opening pep talk.



Katie, a coffee shop employee, is ready to take orders.



YOUR AUTISTIC TEEN WANTS A JOB

How can
you provide
support?

BY DANA REINHARDT

All of us remember our first job. Whether it was helping out with the family business, serving sweet treats at the local frozen yogurt shop, mowing lawns or working at a summer camp, it was an experience that, for better or for worse, you'll always remember.

While first jobs rarely launch your career, they are an important step to establishing yourself in the workplace. They are an opportunity to practice working as part of a team, taking responsibility, conducting oneself professionally and interacting with customers. All teens should have access to these valuable experiences.

For parents of teens with autism, the job search can be a daunting idea. Significant gaps in education, awareness and inclusion continue to persist in the workplace regarding individuals with autism. This has resulted in a high unemployment rate for those individuals. According to Autism Speaks, nearly half of 25-year-olds with autism have never held a paying job.

Here are a few tips as you consider job opportunities for your teen, help them navigate the interview process and equip them to succeed once they've landed the job:

Set clear expectations for the job-hunt process

It's important to have mutual guidelines and parameters you and your teen can agree on upfront before diving into the job search. For example, how many hours is your teen willing and able to work, given other commitments? Will they need help with transportation? What kind of environment will be most conducive to success? Consider lighting, noise level, potential for crowds, etc. that could be sensory triggers. This will help focus your search and ensure that you invest time in finding a job that's going to be a true fit for your teen's needs and your family's needs.

Consider their strengths — and interests

When people picture individuals with autism in the workplace, they may picture jobs that are routine-based and entry level. While jobs like this may be an excellent fit for some individuals with autism — especially in the summer when the learning curve can be steep and fast — individuals with autism are a diverse group. Like all teens looking for a job, individuals with autism have a wide range of strengths that can be

valuable in a variety of settings, whether that's an excellent memory, attention to detail, analytical abilities or high-level math skills. It's important to emphasize and encourage these strengths in your teen and explore opportunities for them to leverage and build on those skills.

At the same time, it's important to encourage your teen to think about their interests and passions. Some teens with autism may find themselves limited by the box in which society has placed them. But as with any young adult, taking a job that they are excited about can be more



fulfilling, can encourage creativity and can inspire them to dream big and take ownership of their future.

Play out several mock interview scenarios

In anticipation of the unpredictable nature of interviews, run a few different scenarios with a mix of questions so that you can talk through potential responses with your teen and prepare them for the uncertainty. This allows them the opportunity to work through those challenges in an environment where they feel safe and comfortable and with someone they know and trust. It can even be helpful to ask another friend or family member to conduct one of the mock scenarios so that they can practice with different interview styles and generalize their skills.

Provide a toolkit for self-advocacy

As your teen explores job opportunities, it's important to be both realistic and supportive. We know all too well the harsh realities of this world and how cruel people can be. There's a possibility your teen will face disrespect, discrimination, and rejection along the way. Consider how

According to Autism Speaks, nearly half of 25-year-olds with autism have never held a paying job.

you can equip your teen to face those circumstances when they arise, whether it's during the hiring process or once they've landed the job. This can include educating them about the types of interview questions that employers legally should or shouldn't be asking as well as sharing ideas for how they can message their strengths and skills.

Look for community education opportunities

See the process as an opportunity to advocate for your son or daughter while you educate your community in the process. Take time throughout the year to reach out to a few businesses in your community to see if they would be interested in inclusion

training or a workshop. This can be a unique way to raise awareness and create more opportunities not only for your teen, but also for other individuals with autism.

Remember that while individuals with autism certainly face a unique set of challenges, rejection is a universal feeling. You can remind your teen that they are not alone by sharing stories of individuals with all different types of backgrounds who faced rejection before they found success.

As parents, though we want to protect our kids from facing hurt and rejection, we need to give them the opportunity to explore their independence. And as a community, it's important that we continue to advocate for inclusive hiring practices and workplace policies for our children and future generations. ■

Dana Reinhardt is the education director of HASA, a Baltimore nonprofit that provides health, speech-language, education, language access and inclusion programs to people of all ages, and oversees Gateway School, a nonpublic school for children with autism and other communication-related disorders. She can be reached at dreinhardt@hasa.org.

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margaret.hartigan@cathedral.org
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Grades: PreK-3rd • Year Founded: 1933 • Religious: Ca-thedral 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 At Beauvoir, the National Cathedral Elementary School, we provide an extraordinary early childhood education in a diverse community that values every individual. Beauvoir's program encourages creative, courageous learners and builds an enduring foundation for a lifelong spirit of inquiry and joy in learning.

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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

British International School of Washington is a thriving international school in Georgetown. We are a premier private school for children age 2 through to the International Baccalaureate Diploma from more than 60 nationalities.

Open House:
Individualized visits available
Monday - Friday

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.

MARYLAND**THE AUBURN SCHOOL**

theauburnschool.org
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-

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.

BARRIE SCHOOL

barrie.org
admission@barrie.org
301-576-2800

13500 Layhill Road, Silver Spring, Md.

Grades: 12 months-Grade 12 • Year Founded: 1932 • Coed • Enrollment: 300 • % of Minorities: 60% • Average Class Size: 11 • Student-Teacher Ratio 10:1 • Grading System: Montessori: Lower School NA, Project-Based Learning

Middle & Upper School: A-F

• Foreign Languages, Spanish, French, &

Mandarin beginning at 3 years. • Tuition Range: \$18,500 - \$33,230 • 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

Located minutes from the ICC and Glenmont Metro, Barrie School is rooted in Montessori and Project-based Learning approaches—that inspire excellence, resilience, and responsibility through learning by doing. We create rich and challenging learning experiences, foster a deep sense of belonging, and empower student voice and responsibility. This is key to unlocking students' intrinsic motivation and their insatiable desire to explore challenging problems. The result: a truly diverse student body of engaged citizens with diverse and inclusive worldviews, who are confident to be themselves. Barrie integrates local, national and global educational opportunities. In addition to our school, our 45-acre campus



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Investing in the early years of learning. Building a foundation for their future.

Advanced, Research-Based Curriculum for:
Passionate Learners
Creative Problem-Solvers
Collaborators
Engaged Citizens

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Tuesday, October 29 at 9AM

Schedule a Tour: 703-533-1064

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

is home to a summer camp that has been a Washington, D.C.-area tradition since the 1950s, and the world-renowned Barrie Institute for Advanced Montessori Studies.

Open House:

2019: Oct. 19, Montessori for 12 months-Grade 5; Oct. 21, Project-Based Learning in Grade 6-12; Nov. 11, Admission Tours; Jan. 11 and Apr. 25 All School Open Houses

BETHESDA MONTESSORI SCHOOL

bethesdamontessori.com
admissions@bethesdamontessori.com
301-966-1260

7611 Clarendon Road, 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 Road, 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
The area's leader in educating academically gifted children, Feynman School features extraordinary programs in science, math, language arts, theater

and music designed to maximize your child's potential while also providing time for unstructured play. Half- and full-day preschool programs.

Open House:

Call to schedule a tour.

FRIENDS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

friendscommunityschool.org
connie@friendscommunityschool.org
301-441-2100

**5901 Westchester Park Drive
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
Experience the joy of an extraordinary Quaker education! For life-long learners, courageous risk-takers, and joyous peacemakers. We welcome all

backgrounds, educate the whole child, and offer exciting curricula. Grads enter leading high schools and colleges.

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL

htrinity.org
admissions@htrinity.org
301-464-3215

11902 Daisy Ln., Glenn Dale, Md.

Grades: Preschool-Grade 8 • Year Founded: 1963 • Religious • Coed • Enrollment: 491 • % of Minorities: 85% • Average Class Size: 20 • Student-Teacher Ratio: 10:1 • Entrance Exam • 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
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



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meets bright students where they are,
with the goal of setting every student up for
a lifetime of success.**

• **www.theauburnschool.org** •

**Campuses in Baltimore, Silver Spring,
and Fairfax**

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Does your child with special needs require more attention than your public school can provide?

MANSEF's 80 nonpublic, state-approved special education schools provide specialized services to children in collaboration with public schools.

MANSEF schools serve more than 4,000 students between the ages of 2 and 21 who have a range of disabilities that affect their physical, emotional, or intellectual well-being. These students receive customized services delivered by experienced teachers

and other staff. Students are referred by Local School Systems, which results in no cost for parents, and schools are located across the state.

MANSEF also provides resources and support to families of students with disabilities and advocates on their behalf.

To find out more about MANSEF and to locate a member school, visit www.mansef.org

**The Maryland Association of Nonpublic
Special Education Facilities (MANSEF)**
P.O. Box 6815, Baltimore, MD 21285
410-938-4413 • www.mansef.org



the whole child. We are a private, independent school that serves preschool to grad.

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

THE MANOR MONTESSORI SCHOOL

manormontessori.com

301-299-7400

10500 Oaklyn Drive Potomac, Md.

5450 Massachusetts Av

Bethesda, Md.

11200 Old Georgetown Road,

Rockville, Md.

Ages: 2-9

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

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 Road,

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,

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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 Road, 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: Call to schedule a tour.

WASHINGTON WALDORF SCHOOL

washingtonwaldorf.org

llawson@washingtonwaldorf.org

301-229-6108

4800 Sangamore Road, 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: Call to schedule a tour.



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myschoolace.com

703-471-2132

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

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: Call to schedule a tour.

THE AUBURN SCHOOL

theauburnschool.org

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 Dis-abled 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

mcLean_admissions@basisindependent.com

703-854-1253

8000 Jones Branch Drive, 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: Call to schedule a tour.

BEANTREE ASHBURN CAMPUS

beantreelearning.com

571-223-3110

43629 Greenway Corporate Drive,
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

703-961-8222

5003 Westfields Blvd., Chantilly, Va.

Grades: Infant-K • Year Founded: 2007 • Coed • Average Class Size: 14 • Student-



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School Admission Events

LOWER SCHOOL

Discover Montessori
12 months - Grade 5
Saturday, Oct. 19 at 10 am

MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL

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Grades 6-12
Sunday, Oct. 27 at 1 pm

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barrie.org

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1:00 pm 1:00 pm

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www.Nysmith.com | 703-713-3332 | 13625 EDS Drive Herndon, VA 20171

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
brksfield@aol.com
703-356-5437

1830 Kirby Road, 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
info@burgundyfarm.org
703-960-3431

3700 Burgundy Road, 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
admission@congressionalschool.org
703-533-1064

3229 Sleepy Hollow Road, 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: Call to schedule a tour.

EDLIN SCHOOL

edlinschool.com
703-438-3990

10742 Sunset Hills Road, Reston, Va.

Grades: K4, K5-8

Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

FAIRFAX CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

fairfaxchristianschool.com
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:

Does your child need...

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Camp Aristotle at The Auburn School
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Fairfax: 703-382-6305

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.

GUIDEPOST MONTESSORI

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

24328 Marrwood Drive, Aldie, Va.
42945 Waxpool Road, Ashburn, Va..
4550 Walney Road, Chantilly, Va.
13251 Woodland Park Road
Herndon, Va.

Ages: Infant to elementary

Guidepost Montessori in Loudoun and Fairfax counties is among a growing, worldwide network of schools that offer

language immersion for ages infant through elementary.
Fall Festival and Open House at Aldie
October 12, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

KENWOOD SCHOOL

kenwoodschool.com
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
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 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 Road, McLean, Va.

Ages 2 ½-12
Preschool and Elementary classes

The Auburn School



The mission of The Auburn School is to grow the social and academic potential of bright students with social and communication challenges. We offer a dynamic educational program for intellectually curious students with challenges in the areas of communication, socialization, pragmatic language, and organization.

Open now, our Little Leaves center-based ABA

program for young children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder is run in a preschool-like setting. We also work with children in their homes, daycares and schools throughout the Baltimore metro area, Washington DC and Northern Virginia.

Silver Spring Campus

Beth Kubovci

(703) 793-9353

bkubovcik@theauburnschool.org

Fairfax Campus

Ashley Pawlowitz

(301) 588-8048

apawlowitz@theauburnschool.org

www.theauburnschool.org

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- Small Classes
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Annandale, Virginia
703.354.3446 • pinecrestschool.org

• 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

13625 EDS Drive

Herndon, Virginia 20171

Phone: (703) 713-3332

Website: <http://www.nysmith.com>

Email: ebalberde@nysmith.com

Grades: 3 years - 8th Grade

Founded: 1984

Religious: No

Enrollment: 550

% Minorities: 49

Average Class Size: 18

Entrance Exam: Yes

Foreign Languages: French/Latin

Spanish/Latin

Grade Foreign Language

Begins: 3 Years

Tuition Range: 27,750 - 37,900

Number of Computers: 400+

Sports Programs: Yes

Enrichment Activities: Yes

Transportation: Yes

Extended Day: Yes

Summer Program: Yes

Description: The award winning Nysmith School for the Gifted is committed to making school fun. We nurture your student's love of learning and help your child learn to their

potential. Top 10 School in the World.

Open House:

Oct. 24 & Nov. 21, 9a.m. & 1p.m.

OAKCREST SCHOOL

oakcrest.org

admissions@oakcrest.org

703-790-5450

1619 Cromwell Road, 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: Oct. 19, 2-5p.m.

THE PAVILION AT BEANTREE

beantreelearning.com

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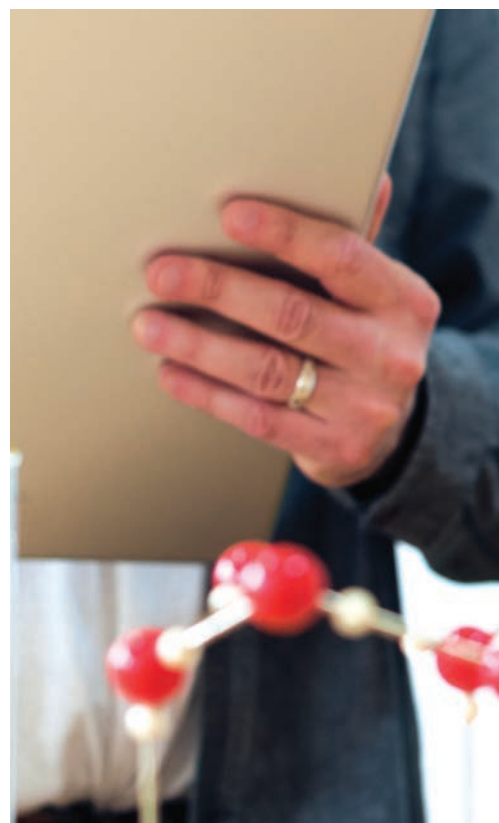
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TECH'ED OUT

BY MEGHAN THOMPSON

WE KNOW the modern classroom no longer thrives on information-packed lectures to students (sometimes struggling to pay attention). Instead, schools use technology to supplement curriculums and make learning a more interactive experience. But just how much technology does your child encounter in the school day? We took a look inside the classrooms of Baltimore County Public Schools and Arlington County Public Schools to get an idea.



LAPTOPS & DEVICES

All BCPS students are equipped with laptops for everyday use. This is part of BCPS's blended-learning approach, which uses technology to enhance the curriculum, says Ryan Imbriale, executive director of BCPS's innovative learning department. Students can use their laptops to log onto BCPS's digital learning ecosystem, BCPS One, which provides them with teacher-vetted resources.

At APS, students are also equipped with laptops and tablets for everyday use. According to their website, APS started this with a 2011-2017 strategic plan that aimed at providing students in grades 2 to 12 with a personal digital learning device to support instruction. They chose iPad Airs for elementary and middle schools and Macbook Airs for high school. Now that the plan is fully implemented, the school says they are pushing further. Their goal by 2020 is to become "the country's top media-rich personalized platform that features seamless integration with all instructional systems. This includes "creating a user-friendly interface that gives teachers an efficient tool for sharing instructional resources, assignments, activities and assessments" according to APS's "Executive Summary on APS Digital Learning."

“INCORPORATING LAPTOPS into the classroom is the primary fixture of BCPS's blended-learning approach, which uses technology to enhance the curriculum.”

RYAN IMBRIALE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BCPS'S
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CODING CURRICULUMS

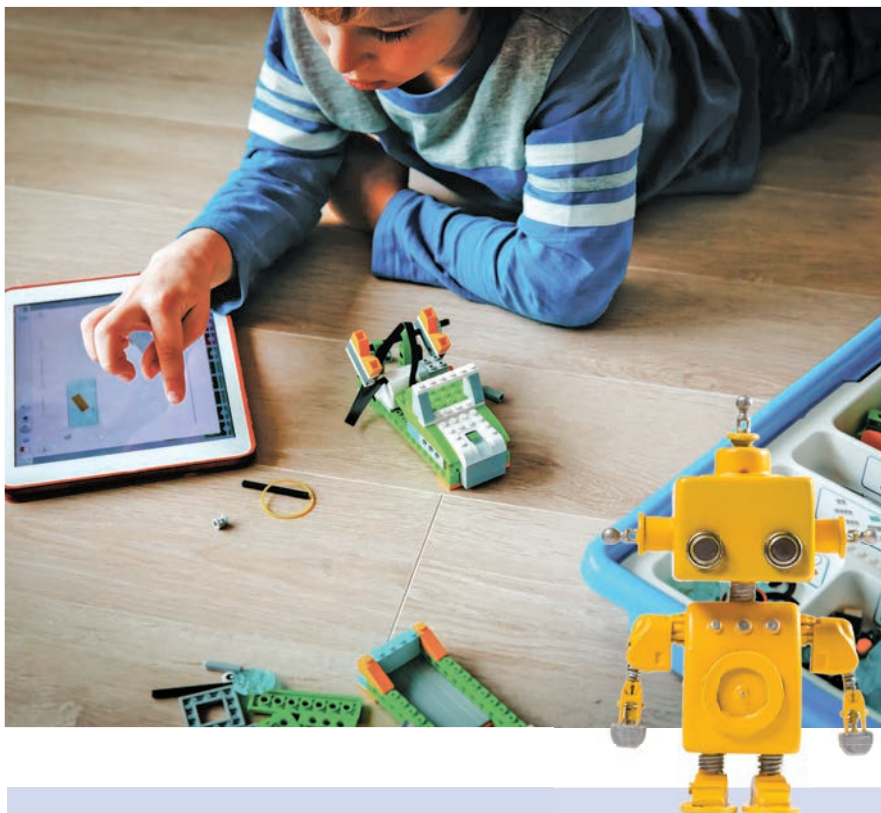
Students as young as kindergarteners are learning to code and to develop an understanding of how programming allows them to create from their keyboards. LEGO robotics club is just one example of where students can explore computational thinking and watch their digital commands create action in the physical world — and, of course, make robots.

MOBILE INNOVATION LAB

In 2016, BCPS launched its Mobile Innovation Lab, a makerspace for students housed in an old school bus that travels among elementary schools. The lab features a 3D printer, a computerized cutting machine, mini-drones, LEGOs and robots for student experimentation.

DO KIDS STILL HAVE TEXTBOOKS?

Yes, but no more chunky textbooks and unreasonably heavy backpacks. While BCPS and APS students still have access to paper books and magazines in their libraries, more options are available in e-book format. A big advantage of digital materials is accessibility. While print textbooks are still used in the classroom, online libraries like APS's 24/7 "MackinVia" portal, provide expansive access to endless resources on a public-school budget. ■



LEGO ROBOTICS CLUB is just one example of where students can explore computational thinking and watch their digital commands create action in the physical world — and, of course, make robots.



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ADHD & Homework

Common Struggles and How Parents Can Help

BY ANN DOLIN



If your child has ADHD, it goes without saying that you're committed to helping them become successful, resilient and to overcome their academic challenges.

But on average, students with ADHD say that 80 percent of their interactions at school are negative ones.

Whether that's because of how they feel about themselves, their surroundings, their peers or just school in general, it means they spend the majority of their day feeling negative.

And there's one issue in particular where this negativity tends to manifest itself most: homework.

With ADHD, homework can become a real struggle. But what we also know, is that it's not a problem that can't be overcome if we take the right steps.

Below are three keys to success for students with ADHD, including different ways ADHD manifests itself and approaches to homework and studying that will move your student in the right direction.

1 Know how ADHD manifests itself in your child

It is important to know how ADHD affects your child before you can choose the best approach to help them succeed academically.

For example, in an interview with Pat Quinn, M.D, the author of "Understanding Girls with ADHD," she discussed how ADHD can manifest itself differently in girls than it does in boys.

More often than not, you hear ADHD and you think disruption. However, that is not always the case, especially when it comes to girls. Girls with ADHD may actually tend to be more shy and withdrawn. This is because when their minds wander away from the task at hand, they're more inclined to not want you to know they're not paying attention. As an avoidance strategy, it's more straightforward to stay quiet.

Alternatively, with boys (generally speaking, of course) the research shows they tend to manifest their ADHD symptoms more externally, whether through running around, interrupting vocally, or actively misbehaving. But it would also be a mistake to characterize all boys with ADHD in this way, because there are many who don't exhibit this behavior.

The bottom line is this: Every case is different. You know your child. So it's essential to try to best understand your child's strengths and

weaknesses when it comes to schoolwork to determine which strategies are appropriate, and which don't seem relevant.

2 Be the "Charismatic Adult"

Studies show the top differentiator between students with behavioral, attention or learning disorders who succeed and those who do not is the presence of a "charismatic adult" in their life.

As psychologist and researcher Julius Segal notes, "From studies conducted around the world, researchers have distilled a number of factors that enable such children of misfortune to beat the heavy odds against them. One factor turns out to be the presence in their lives of a charismatic adult — a person with whom they identify and from whom they gather strength."

Reflect on your own experiences: How did you get to where you are today both personally and professionally? Did you have a charismatic adult in your life who encouraged and believed in you?

Being this figure in a child's life does not mean being Mother Theresa, but it does require taking an interest in the child and their strengths rather than focusing on his or her shortcomings. And when mistakes and failures do happen, it means helping them work through them constructively so that they walk away from the situation knowing more than they did before and feeling positive about the experience.

3 Set them up now with healthy homework and study habits

For most kids with ADHD, homework and studying are filled with dread and excuses, but it doesn't have to be. Let's break it down by topic so we can really hone in on how to help develop these essential habits that will carry them to success now, and later in their academic careers.

ADHD AND PROCRASTINATION

Your child constantly procrastinates, even after dozens of reminders. How can you get him more excited about homework and completing it earlier?

Step 1: Have a predictable schedule

Allow a 30-minute break after school before getting started on homework. When kids know what to expect, they are less likely to procrastinate.

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Step 2: Consider the “Tolerable 10”

Set a timer for just 10 minutes and encourage them to work as hard as they can until the time runs out. This helps give them a push to get started, and after the 10 minutes is up, they can either take a short break or continue for another round.

ADHD AND TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management is the enemy of kids with ADHD. Your child is smart, but when it comes to completing assignments, they can take hours longer than the instructor intended. How do you help them minimize distractions and encourage productivity?

Step 1: Make a game plan

Break homework or projects into smaller, more manageable tasks. Check in, and make a big deal when he’s accomplished one or a set of tasks. For many kids, time is too abstract of a concept. Consider using candy or baseball cards and letting him know he’ll be rewarded when the task is complete.

Step 2: Help prioritize

Ask what they will do first to help them get started. Make sure they understand the directions and can do the work. Then, let him go at it alone but stay close by so you can help if needed.

Step 3: Use a timer

Once you have broken up the assignment into more manageable pieces and helped prioritize their work, set a timer and encourage them to work in short spurts (see the “Tolerable 10” above). Then slowly make the time longer, but never more than 30 minutes.

ADHD AND MISSING ASSIGNMENTS AND INSTRUCTION

Either they miss the teacher’s instructions, forget homework and books, or sometimes just ignore assignments entirely. How do you ensure homework and assignments are getting done without seeming overbearing?

Step 1: Trust but verify

Set expectations, rewards and consequences for completing homework and assignments. Then verify with an online grading portal if one is available. Communicate with teachers if necessary, but always do this with your child so that they’re involved in the process.

Step 2: Tie privileges to effort

Link things like screen time and hanging out with friends to the amount of time spent studying and doing homework, rather than outcomes like grades. Kids can see the direct correlation between working and learning and a benefit ... rather than feeling overwhelmed by the idea of getting better grades, when they may not know exactly how.

Step 3: Talk to teachers about emailing assignments and homework

Kids with ADHD and executive dysfunction may benefit from having the option to submit homework online or through email. They can focus on one thing at a time, and submit it right then and there, rather than having to wait, organize and bring it into school to turn in.

ADHD AND DISTRACTIONS

Pulling your child back into study mode from a break or video games seems near

impossible. So how do you pull them away from those distractions to focus on homework?

Step 1: Put a limit on breaks

Kids may need a break after a long school day. For elementary-aged kids, a 30-minute break after school should do the trick. Older kids may need more time to “chill” after school is out, but ideally, assignments and studying should start before dinner time. Use this to have them indulge their break time, while still setting boundaries.

Step 2: Control screen time

Limit breaks to outdoor activities or things that don’t involve a screen. Video games and social media are specifically designed addictive and hard to detach from. So allow a mental break, but don’t let them make things harder on themselves than they need to be by getting wrapped up in something that’s hard to pull away from.

ADHD AND HOMEWORK: WHAT’S NEXT?

The best way to ensure your child will be ready for the independence they crave is to back off slowly, but stay supportive.

Set up weekly meetings and discuss upcoming assignments and offer support. You’ve guided them through this far and it is time to let them take the wheel ... just make sure they don’t head off in the wrong direction. ■

Ann Dolin is a former Fairfax County teacher and current founder and president of Educational Connections Tutoring, serving the D.C. area.



On average, students with ADHD say that 80 percent of their interactions at school are negative ones.



For millions of kids with food allergies, the risk of exposure to food allergens on Halloween is high, from accidental ingestion to cross-contamination.

Making Halloween Safe and Fun for Kids with Food Allergies

BY IRENE-MYERS THOMPSON

We're approaching that hallowed time of year that spooks parents. Last-minute costume scrambles, sugar-induced meltdowns, tracking teens' whereabouts, and attempting to monitor the candy calorie intake. But for parents of kids with food allergies, there is a different and extra reason to be frightful.

For millions of kids with food allergies, the risk of exposure to food allergens on Halloween is high, from accidental ingestion to cross-contamination. Six of the top eight allergens are in high circulation around Halloween. Wheat, milk, soy and egg are used in many chocolates, fruit chews and caramels and often, candies are made with the same equipment used with peanut or tree nuts.

The scare for children is very real. According to Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE), one in every 13 children has a food allergy. Halloween, and its guaranteed grab-bag of surprises, requires parents of children with food allergies to have a few more tricks up their sleeves to ensure their kids can safely enjoy the holiday.

"Safe" and "fun" can co-exist at Halloween. There are easy ways to plan ahead and help avoid food-allergen related surprises by incorporating new traditions so parents and kids can enjoy the holiday without any scary surprises. Here are some tips to prepare for the best Halloween yet.

- Create a Halloween action plan with your child's allergist. Food allergies are specific to each child and it's important to consult the medical professionals who know your child's situation best. Review the plan, in advance, with your family and friends who plan to trick-or-treat with your child so they can put on their capes and help save the day.
- Spot the safe places. The Food Allergy Research & Education's (FARE) Teal Pumpkin Project is a recent initiative to help children and parents identify neighbors who offer non-food treats.

Teal-colored pumpkins placed at the doorsteps of homes serve as a "safe" sign for trick-or-treaters. This indicates homeowners have giveaways that don't include food — sending a message that treats and surprises come in more than candy packages.

- Get others involved to help foster a more inclusive holiday. It's a great time to break out your DIY skills and show others how fun and easy it is to create a community that supports families with food allergies and sensitivities. Host a "Trunk or Treat" party in a community parking lot and invite friends, neighbors and family to deck out their cars and load up their trunks with non-food treats, like bubbles, glow sticks or Halloween temporary tattoos.
- Develop a candy plan. Trick-or-treat with your child and monitor what they receive as you go from house to house. Carrying around a bag full of goodies can be tempting for kids, so tuck a few "safe food" items in your pocket to help deter your child from reaching into their stash. When you arrive home, create a candy exchange game, so kids can trade in items that may trigger their allergies, for other candy or non-food treats.
- Watch for possible signs of an allergic reaction. Keep an eye out for any symptoms or any out-of-the-ordinary behaviors — these could be early signals. If you think your child may be at risk of suffering an attack, follow your allergy action plan.

If you're unsure if your child has a food allergy, contact your doctor or a walk-in clinic. Other providers, like UnitedHealthcare's "24-Hour Nurse," can help you decide which symptoms may need a doctor's eye.

Irene-Myers Thompson is the wellness director for UnitedHealthcare of Mid-Atlantic.

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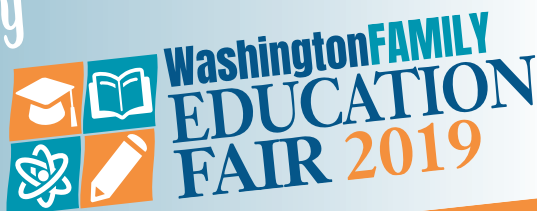


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STAYcation, Anyone?



A FUN KID-FRIENDLY GETAWAY IN THE DISTRICT

BY PJ FEINSTEIN

My husband and I may have surprised our two boys this summer with a staycation in D.C., but we actually got the idea from them. For nearly a year since a canceled flight unexpectedly kept us overnight in Savannah, Georgia, they'd been asking when we'd be able to sleep in a hotel again — and for nearly a year we responded, “We don't know!” When we travel, it's usually because we're visiting family, and we didn't have any other trips on the calendar for the upcoming school year.

However, after my kids asked about staying in a hotel for the 187th time, it dawned on me that we didn't have to book an expensive long-distance vacation in order to spend the night at a hotel. There are a ton of hotel options in D.C.; we could stay locally and be tourists for a day right here in our own city.

We decided on the Omni Shoreham Hotel, which overlooks Rock Creek Park, because of its resort-style atmosphere and

its proximity to a Metro station. Best of both worlds, right? After arriving one Saturday, the four of us headed outside for a quick lunch at the pool bar, fueling up for our first adventure of the day — a ride on the Metro.

My boys are 5 and 8, still young enough to love the Metro. They seriously could be content riding the red line from Shady Grove to Glenmont and back again, but that day we had a surprise destination in mind. See, like many children, if there's one thing my kids love more than the Metro, it's superheroes, so we took them to the National Museum of American History's “Superheroes” exhibit of costumes and comic books.



→ Fun at the Jefferson Hotel

→ International Spy Museum

After posing for a photo in front of Michael Keaton's Batmobile and my little one's jaw hitting the floor at the sight of Captain America's shield, we wandered the museum for about an hour and a half before hopping back on the Metro and returning to the Shoreham. There were still a few more activities to accomplish on our staycation agenda, including a dip in the pool, room service for dinner and a movie in bed. Plus, the hotel had one more surprise for the boys — complementary milk and cookies delivered to the room for an evening snack. A nice touch.

The next morning we stuffed ourselves with omelets, Belgium waffles and assorted pastries at the breakfast buffet and then let the kids lead us on the Shoreham Scavenger Hunt, a kid-friendly way to explore the hotel's interesting history. An older property, the hotel is elegantly appointed and boasts an array of artifacts from significant political and cultural events that had taken place at the property over the years. My boys were less than impressed that the Beatles stayed at the Shoreham before their first performance in America (they scribbled their setlist on a piece of hotel stationery!), but were very excited to win a branded Frisbee for answering all of the questions on the form.

Staying close to home allowed us to not only save money on travel expenses but also to make the most of our weekend. We crammed quite a few adventures into our 24-hour staycation, and the boys had an amazing time. How do I know? They're already asking when we can stay at a hotel again.

Wanting to plan your own D.C. staycation this fall? Check out these hotels and activities:

→HOTELS

The Madison is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the moon landing with out-of-this-world activities for kids through December 31, 2019. With their D.C. overy Family Package, kids get a backpack filled with space-themed swag, such as a plush astronaut bear, moon landing activity book and colored pencils — and parents get free parking at the hotel.

Add the Dinosaur D.C. Package to your reservation at the Capitol Hill Hotel and make it a dino-themed staycation. Kids receive a dinosaur coloring book, colored pencils and a stuffed dinosaur at check-in and refreshing dino drinks (plus cocktails for adults!) after visiting the new Hall of Fossils at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.

Thoughtfully planned by the hotel's historian, The Jefferson's complementary walking guide for guests takes families on a



tour of local landmarks dedicated to "Kids Who Made American History," including Sheyann Webb, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Smallest Freedom Fighter," Sacagawea, the young Lewis and Clark expedition leader; and Gavin Grimm, the transgender student who brought his fight over school restrooms to the Supreme Court.

Guests at The Willard InterContinental have access to the hotel's Kids Concierge, which offers complementary age-appropriate amenities like in-room dessert, board games and toys to borrow, and an adventure map. Young guests can earn "Duck Bucks" throughout their stay (named after the program's mascot, Millie the Mallard) and redeem them at the property's ice cream cart.

While staying at The Darcy, kids can check out complimentary backpacks that include everything needed for a fun adventure out in the District. There are few themes to choose from such as "Wild in the City," a spotlight on animals, which includes resources like "First Animals" in the White House and a guided map of Smithsonian's National Zoo.

Have a big family and don't want to feel cramped? Georgetown Suites offer ultra-spacious apartment-style suites with a fully-equipped in-room kitchen so that your family can have tons of legroom and get a good night's rest after a long day in the city. While typical hotel rooms are about 350 square feet, Georgetown Suite's room are about 600 square feet at a similar standard hotel cost.

→ACTIVITIES

See more sights in less time on a day bike tour with Fat Tire Tours. Departing twice a day, each three-hour tour takes you to the White House, the Capitol, the National Mall, various war memorials and other famous sites. Best of all, bikers of all ages and experience are welcome: Parents



can rent baby seats, tandem bikes, toddler trailers and smaller city bikes for kids ages six to 11.

"My Computing Devices," a new exhibit at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, features more than 30 devices dating back to 1840, including a 1901 cash register and Google Glass smart glasses. STEM-loving kids can take a look at notebooks from famous programmers and participate in an interactive photo opportunity.

At the recently relocated Spy Museum, now at L'Enfant Plaza, children collect intelligence at digital interactive kiosks, crawl through air ducts, and test their sleuthing skills by participating in the museum's Undercover Mission activity. (FYI, kids younger than seven will likely need an adult's help to complete the missions.) A full debrief, along with your child's disguise photo and scores, is available online after your visit.

Sightseeing not your thing? Skip the museums and monuments and head to Rock Creek Park, where families can golf; ride horses; or rent kayaks, canoes, stand-up paddle boards and other boats. There are also more than 32 miles of trails to explore, so help your little ones lace up their hiking boots and grab a free trail map at the park's Nature Center. ■

PJ Feinstein a writer and the content editor of Wolf + Friends, an app that connects moms raising kids with special needs. She lives in Potomac with her family and would love to have a staycation with just her husband one of these days.



Tailgate season means it's time to break out your party's favorite foods.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF
FAMILYFEATURES.COM
AND GETTY IMAGES

Take Down a Tantalizing Tailgate

Whether you prefer watching your favorite teams in-person or on TV, tailgate season means it's time to break out your party's favorite foods from appetizers and snacks to all-out meals.

Go long for a touchdown-worthy tailgate or settle in for game day on the couch with these recipes for a bold burger, sweet-and-spicy wings and creamy coleslaw. For an appetizing pregame warmup, try this assortment of nacho toppings to give your whole party something to cheer about.

HOMEMADE NACHOS WORTH THE HYPE

Perfect for pairing with game day dishes of nearly any variety, nachos allow a special amount of personalization for guests of all ages and taste preferences. Along with tortilla chips, of course, try nibbling on these topping options throughout your party:

- Shredded cheese
- Melted nacho cheese
- Sour cream
- Guacamole
- Salsa
- Black olives
- Shredded meat
- Sliced peppers
- Diced tomatoes
- Corn
- Beans

A FLAVORFUL, EXOTIC SPIN

No tailgate is complete without a game day staple: burgers. For a twist on tradition, try serving a different style of beef to give guests a new take on an all-time favorite.

This Grass-Fed Wagyu Burger with Red Radish Chili Pickles uses First Light 100 percent grass-fed Wagyu beef from New Zealand, home to some of the world's most natural tasting beef and lamb. With cattle allowed to roam and graze freely over lush green hills and pastures all day, every day, the result is a tender, flavorful meat that tastes as nature intended.

Remember to cook the patties quickly over high heat to help retain juiciness, tenderness and flavor. With a touch of chili pepper in the pickles, you can add just enough spice with a sweet kick.

GRASS-FED WAGYU BURGER WITH RED RADISH CHILI PICKLES

RED RADISH CHILI PICKLES:

- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons sliced fresh red chili peppers
- 1/2 cup sliced red radish

WAGYU BURGERS:

- 1 1/3 pounds First Light New Zealand Grass-Fed Wagyu Grind
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon grainy mustard (optional)
- 2 tablespoons rice bran oil
- 4 hamburger buns
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 4 lettuce leaves
- 2 vine-ripened tomatoes, sliced
- 2 tablespoons onion jam

To make Red Radish Chili Pickles: In small saucepan, heat vinegar, water and sugar. Add chili and radish; remove from heat.

To make Wagyu Burgers: Season Wagyu grind with salt and pepper, to taste. Mix in mustard, if desired. Form into four patties.

Lightly brush both sides of burgers with oil. In frying pan, sear burgers over high heat then reduce heat to medium and cook until well caramelized. Flip and repeat process on other side.

In frying pan, lightly toast burger buns.

Spread mayonnaise on buns; top with lettuce, tomato and burger.

Spread spoonful of onion jam

on each burger then finish with Red Radish Chili Pickles.

CRUNCH INTO COLESLAW

Appetizers, main courses and snacks may dominate many tailgate parties, whether at home or the stadium, but don't forget to incorporate sides that can accompany all the flavors of your festivities.

This Honey-Dill Coleslaw, for example, makes for a complementary dish to just about any protein from burgers to wings and beyond. Plus, with only a few simple ingredients, it's an easy side to whip up yourself or enlist help from an eager guest.



Honey Dill Coleslaw

HONEY-DILL COLESLAW

Recipe courtesy of the National Honey Board
Servings: 4

- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 teaspoon dried dill weed
- 1 package (16 ounces) coleslaw mix
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced onion
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

In small bowl, combine honey, sour cream and dill.

In large bowl, toss coleslaw mix with onion and honey-sour cream mixture. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Serve immediately.

A SWEET-HOT HANDHELD

Ditch the plates and dive right into a sweet and spicy snack perfect for the whole party with these Honey-Sriracha Grilled Wings.

To help simplify prep, try grilling ahead of time and keep in the oven until guests arrive. Or, if you're tailgating in style at the stadium, toss into a pan and cover with foil to keep them warm until it's time for a bite.

HONEY SRIRACHA GRILLED WINGS

Recipe courtesy of the
National Honey Board
Servings: 8

4 pounds fresh chicken wings
water
3 cups rice wine vinegar
1/4 cup Sriracha sauce
2 tablespoons salt
2 cups honey, divided

Heat grill to 225-240 F.

In large bowl, rinse wings with cool water. Add rice wine vinegar, Sriracha, salt and 1 cup honey. Fold to incorporate all ingredients and coat wings evenly.



Honey Sriracha Grilled Wings

Place wings on grill, cover with lid and cook 12-14 minutes before turning once and cooking additional 15-18 minutes.

Open lid and turn wings. Brush remaining honey on wings. Cook 5-8 minutes,

remove from heat and serve. ■

Find more tailgating recipes at
beefandlambnz.com and honey.com.

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We expect our teenagers to 'get better' while our elderly parents continue to decline and eventually pass on.

Arms Around Both Generations: Caring for Teens and Aging Parents

BY KATHRYN STREETER

Juggling the demands and learning curve of blossoming adolescents is tough, but just what if this process prepared parents for handling their own aging parents? Understanding where similarities lie between teens and aging parents puts a new twist on the popular theme of feeling “sandwiched” between these two lovable but stretching generations.

Family therapist Colleen O’Grady, the author of “Dial Down the Drama,” says there are similarities between teens and aging parents and that “skills you learn from raising teenagers are helpful.” She offers valuable encouragement needed for dealing with both in her simple admonition, “Remember, it’s not personal.”

Though her book focuses on teenage girls, her mantra of not getting pulled into the drama is at the heart of her family counseling strategy, a message she was privileged to share onstage in her TEDx Talk last year. Not getting sucked into the drama, she says, is equally critical for adult children in their relationship with aging parents.

Observation

Watching teens’ nonverbal signals grows increasingly important because often, many things go unsaid, simmering below the surface. Noting expressions, the way they walk through the front door or hastily leave the dinner table offer clues to what’s going on.

Similarly, there’s a lot to be learned from watching aging parents. How’s their driving? Do they struggle with balance or basic housekeeping?

Instead of badgering them, approach the issue you’ve detected with open-ended questions, O’Grady advises, such as, “Is it hard keeping up with the housework?” instead of threatening, leading questions like, “You can’t clean the house by yourself, don’t you agree?”

O’Grady says, “When you listen, most of the time you will hear an opening for advice.”

In “How to Care for the Emotional Needs of the Elderly,” Frances Evesham identifies the core needs of an elderly person, including that of engaging in pleasurable activities. Just as one would for a teen, take steps to support an aging parent’s areas of interest. Being watchful and observant is the first step in offering solutions, so, she says, “Take time to listen carefully to an elderly person.”

Evesham advises that if your aging parent loves

reading, for example, but is struggling with seeing the text, consider buying large-print editions. The take-away: Do what is possible to maintain their dignity and independence so they can continue doing what they love.

Intervention

Knowing when to intervene requires discernment. Sometimes parents have to be reminded that their teens deserve respect; aging parents deserve no less.

O’Grady sheds light on where the “drama” comes from, explaining that aging parents can spend a majority of their days in the limbic system of their brain, i.e., the reactive part. Prompted by fears of losing control, their independence or their dignity, fear of the future, among other things, makes aging parents prone to “a plethora of negative emotions — especially anxiety.” The brain, she continues, goes “off-line” from the higher brain — the cerebral cortex, which is the big-picture, problem-solving part of the brain — and instead lodges in the limbic system, the reactionary part.

Likewise, teens often tend to live in the brain’s reactive limbic system, but unlike their grandparents, they do so because their pre-frontal cortex, responsible for cognitive behavior, is still in the process of development.

The poor judgment and reasoning piece is where LuAnne Smith, geriatric care manager and elder care consultant, sees similarities between teens and seniors. “However, the sad difference is that we expect our teenagers to ‘get better’ while our elderly parents continue to decline and eventually pass on,” Smith says.

Even when there’s no dementia, O’Grady says cognitive decline is common in the elderly, so they will typically get emotionally flooded and react quickly, seeing events in the extreme.

It’s a struggle to demonstrate our sincere care for aging parents without making them feel like they’re being shadowed.

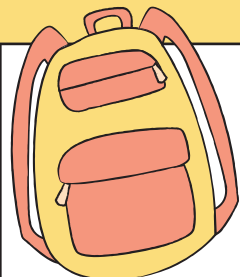
This sage advice is reminiscent of counsel given to parents regarding their teens, to give them space to live their own lives. Barring medical problems, this learned posture conveniently provides adult children with a useful template for caring for aging parents. ■

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

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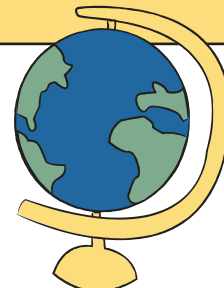
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A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a dog's face, likely a Weimaraner, with brown and white fur and striking green eyes. The dog is looking slightly to the left of the camera.

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