

ParentMap

'cause parenting is a trip!

DR. LAURA KASTNER
'From Love
to Limits'
PAGE 11

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MARCH 2015

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ParentMap
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COVER: SEATTLEITES (FROM LEFT) LOLA VELUSH, AUGUST BAIK, REESE VISAYA AND TANSY VELUSH GENERATE CREATIVE ENERGY OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND INDUSTRY; PHOTOS BY WILL AUSTIN



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NANCY SCHATZ ALTON

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navigate great stuff daily!



Making mealtime work

Meal prep is tough. We've got you covered this spring with new one-pot dinners that are hearty, healthy, easy and pleasy: parentmap.com/onepotmeals. Plus more sanity-saving, conversation-starting content from our yearlong series about the work/family juggle, **Making It Work**: parentmap.com/MakingItWork.



What's up with that app?

Do you know **Tinder**? How about **Hot or Not**? Your teens do. Our friends at Common Sense Media (comonsensemedia.org) round up six adult dating apps that teens are using and explain what parents need to know and what problems that swipe could raise. parentmap.com/datingapps



Git yer birthday boots on!

Kick up those heels for the wildest birthday in the West! Our roundup of cowboy and cowgirl party ideas is better than a trick pony: Start out with clever "wanted" sign invitations, pan for gold nuggets, and load up on cattle drive camp snacks and more ideas that should never be outlawed:

parentmap.com/wildwestbirthdays



Vacation from violent video games

A handful of gaming experts spent hundreds of hours playing the latest video games on the market and identifying the 10 most violent games from 2014. Learn which games these are, how they work (and why kids love them), and which less violent alternatives to offer instead.

parentmap.com/violentvideogames

Weather or not

Next time it's pouring, spitting, drizzling, misting or pelting sideways — instead of beelining to an indoor play area, grab your Gore-Tex to get a front-row seat to the spectacular natural forces that mold our landscape. We tell you the best places around the Sound to revel in bad weather, from Discovery Park's crazy fog to stormy drama at Snoqualmie Falls:

parentmap.com/weatherfun



ParentMap
March 2015, Vol. 13, No. 3

PUBLISHER/EDITOR Alayne Sulklin

EDITORIAL

MANAGING EDITOR Natalie Singer-Velush

OUT + ABOUT EDITOR Elisa Murray

CALENDAR EDITOR Nancy Chaney

PROOFREADER Sunny Parsons

CONTRIBUTORS

Gemma Alexander, Nancy Schatz Alton, Will Austin, Hilary Benson, Rebecca A. Hill, Malia Jacobson, Kristen A. Russell, Daytona Strong, Lukas Velush

PARENTMAP.COM

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER Julian Haight

SOCIAL MEDIA + DIGITAL PRODUCTS MANAGER
Rory Graves

PUBLISHING ASSISTANT Nicole Persun

ADVERTISING

SALES MANAGER, EASTSIDE
Ida Wicklund

SALES MANAGER, DOWNTOWN SEATTLE,
SOUTH KING, PIERCE + THURSTON COUNTIES
Dani Carbary

SALES MANAGER, NORTH SEATTLE/SNOHOMISH COUNTY
Jessica Slocum

AD OPERATIONS MANAGER
Elisa Taylor

SALES + MARKETING MANAGER Jessica Collet

MARKETING/EVENTS

MARKETING DIRECTOR Paige Smith

EVENTS MANAGER Tara Buchan

EVENTS MANAGER Lisa Payne

EVENTS ASSISTANT Mallory Dehdod

ART + PRODUCTION

DESIGN + PRODUCTION Emily Johnson

PRODUCTION DESIGN Amy Chinn

ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS MANAGER Barbara Cohen

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/DISTRIBUTION
Angela Goodwin

BOOKKEEPING ASSISTANT Carolyn Brendel

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Taracina Ullevig

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Daniel J. Siegel, M.D.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MINDSIGHT INSTITUTE

ADVERTISING INFORMATION

206-709-9026 or advertising@parentmap.com

Fax 206-709-9031

CALENDAR SUBMISSIONS calendar@parentmap.com

EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS editor@parentmap.com

DISTRIBUTION distribution@parentmap.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS subscriptions@parentmap.com

ParentMap is published monthly.

PMB #399, 4742 42nd Ave S.W.

Seattle, WA 98116

Admin: 206-709-9026, parentmap.com

Subscription rate: 1 year: \$24; 2 years: \$40

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dear reader

Great ideas in action

“Seattle is a city that believes in the power of a good idea — and then invites everyone to the table to take that idea to the next step.”

— Leonard Garfield, executive director, Museum of History and Industry

For decades I’ve given the identical response to my lovingly intrusive relatives’ (aunts, cousins and my three Seattle-born kids) inquiries of how my husband Bobby and I could have possibly chosen to journey to Seattle and leave them behind in Chicago, along with “Da Bears”!

“Seattle gives oxygen to the world” has been my standard answer for decades. You might jump to conclude this hyperbolic statement is false — but ponder these Seattle institutions that roll of any tongue: Microsoft, Amazon, Starbucks, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Expedia. You have a mere sampling of the many thousands of “thinkers and tinkers” who created the bedrock of innovation that serves up coffee and global healthcare, fights to reduce poverty for citizens worldwide, and gives us the ability to travel and buy just about anything with one click. The relatives get it!

One of the magical aspects of “The Seattle Effect” (p. 17) is the variety of audacious organizations that do not run out of heart. Your jaw will drop learning about cures for childhood cancer, citizen empowerment and startup-style fast pitches to support innovative young social entrepreneurs’ passion to improve their world.

By creating innovative parenting content that highlights thought leadership and making that content easily accessible to you each day, we hope you see us as a part of “the Seattle effect.” Our audacious team is made up of persistent and passionate advocates who championed last year’s Just Ask gun-safety campaign. This year we’re enthusiastically devoted to our Making It Work (parentmap.com/makingitwork) content to move the needle on improved work/life balance.

We’re ecstatic to host Seattle parenting expert and luminary Dr. Laura Kastner, Ph.D., clinical professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Washington (parentmap.com/lectures). As parents, you are forever trying to manage your beloved children’s tears, fears and fits. You want to be loving parents who support your child’s secure attachment; self-control and positive discipline will help your child develop new competencies!

Join Dr. Kastner’s lecture with your partner or friend, and you’ll leave laughing, armed with handy tools for these goals and more. Dr. Kastner will address many controversies parents of toddlers and young children face, including how to integrate unconditional love with limit-setting, manage and enjoy technology in your family life, and deal with couples’ parenting conflicts.



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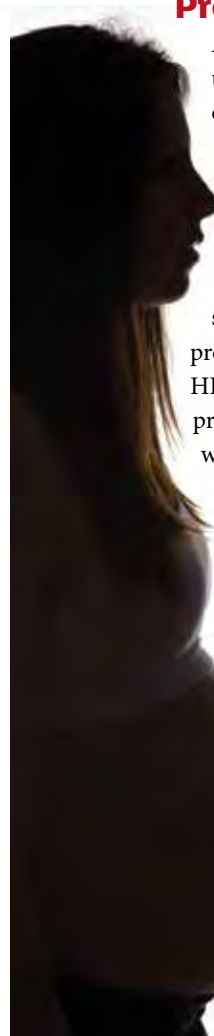
parent news, snack-sized

Don't miss this lecture

She's a guru to parents of tweens and teens, but now Dr. Laura Kastner has tuned her parenting expertise to the needs and challenges of kids ages 3–8. The principles of Kastner's best-selling book, *Getting to Calm*, apply perfectly to parenting younger children. Come learn how to set limits and exercise discipline through love at the March 31 lecture with Dr. Kastner, "From Love to Limits: The Early Years," 7–9 p.m. at Stroum Jewish Community Center, Mercer Island. Tickets: parentmap.com/lectures.

Protein shake

A bombshell discovery is utterly upending decades-old research on gestational diabetes. Scientists at Duke and Northwestern universities have made a discovery that sheds light on how the body metabolizes sugar. They've discovered a protein made by a gene, called HKDC1, which may be a genetic predictor for whether a pregnant woman develops hyperglycemia (excess blood sugar). About 4 percent of pregnant women in the U.S. develop diabetes during pregnancy; 10 percent have gestational hyperglycemia. It's a major concern, because it can cause a child to suffer from obesity and diabetes later in life. The hope is to now develop a screening to measure the risk of developing gestational hyperglycemia.



Joint pain

A mixed baggie of news about marijuana: Looks like legalizing the stuff hasn't resulted in increased use among tweens and teens — yet. The National Institute on Drug Abuse surveyed about 50,000 eighth-, 10th- and 12th-grade students in the U.S. and found no increase in the use of marijuana, despite legalization. But a majority of high school seniors don't see pot as very harmful (only 36.1 percent, down from 52.4 percent in 2009). Experts worry that the decreasing number of students who perceive the substance's harmful effects could lead to a future increase in use. Among other things, marijuana affects brain development; heavy use can lead to compromised learning and memory.



touch each other. Next, researchers at the University of Illinois hope to develop specific strategies for parents to try for the different types of behaviors. Probably not soon enough for you; better get to fixing those shells 'n' cheddar.

Music to my ears

There is now strong evidence that giving your kids music training can lead to cognitive advantages in their old age. A new study of adults ages 55–75 found that those who started formal lessons on a musical instrument before the age of 14 — and kept it up for at least a decade — were less likely to experience a loss of speech comprehension. Scientists think musical training enhances key areas in the brain that support speech recognition.

Recess finesse

Here's a startlingly simple way to get kids to eat a healthier lunch: serve lunch *after* recess. A new study published in *Preventive Medicine* finds that when recess comes first, kids are 54 percent more likely to eat the fruits and veggies on their school lunch tray. Why? Because when recess is after lunch, kids hurry to finish so they can go out to play, dumping the healthier stuff into the trash.

— Kristen A. Russell

Picky, picky

Sweet news for the parents of pastafarians: There is now actual research being done on the causes for and treatments of picky eating. Because of this research, we now know that among 2- to 4-year-olds, there are four types of picky eaters: 1. sensory-dependent eaters, who won't eat anything that's mushy, slippery or lumpy; 2. behavioral responders, who cringe or gag when food isn't prepared in the "right" way; 3. preferential eaters, who won't try new foods and avoid foods that are mixed; and 4. general perfectionists (by far the largest group), who have very specific needs, little variety in their diet and may insist that foods not



Ewww! That's gross!

5 common childhood ailments and how to deal with them

By Daytona Strong

You know the myth: Kiss a frog and you'll get a wart. It's definitely not true, but that doesn't help take the "ewww" factor away from warts — or any other common but embarrassing childhood ailment. From warts and athlete's foot to pinworms and lice, we're taking the taboo out of the gross but common childhood ailments you're likely to experience in your household at some point or another. Trust us, it's icky, but you can deal!

1 PINWORMS

The word "worm" is enough to make anyone squirm. But loosen up: Pinworms are actually the most common type of intestinal worm infection in the U.S. "Pinworms are nothing to be afraid of," says Dr. Cora Breuner of Seattle Children's Hospital.

"People who have pinworms are not dirty," she says, making an important point that applies to many of these ailments. Pinworms are actual worms, thin and white and measuring from about one-quarter to one-half inch in length. Your child can get pinworms simply by touching something that's contaminated with pinworm eggs — anything from furniture or counters to towels or clothes — and then bringing his or her hands to the mouth. That's how pinworm eggs get into the body. Then they hatch, grow, move through the intestines and then lay eggs around the anus, Breuner says. You might spot the worms at nighttime if you examine the area (our sympathies, truly).

"They don't cause any harm (just itching!)," Breuner says, "and it won't take long to get rid of them." If you suspect your child might have pinworms — perhaps by complaints of anus itching at nighttime or a lot of squirming — take them to the doctor. Treatment consists of medicine given twice over the course of two weeks, plus anti-itch cream.

2 WARTS

We really shouldn't feel ashamed of warts.

"Our hatred of warts is a learned behavior and is reinforced culturally through old wives' tales



[if you kiss a frog, you will get a wart], fairy tales [wicked witch with the big wart on her nose] and society," says Morgan Maier, a physician's assistant in dermatology at Seattle Children's Hospital. "You never see media images where someone has a wart on their lip or hands; it is always perfect, smooth skin."

But in fact, most people will end up with warts at some point in their lives, and as many as one-third of all primary schoolchildren have them, says Dr. Agnes Wong at Swedish Children's Clinic in Edmonds.

While there really are no reliable ways to prevent them, it's a good idea to not share towels if someone in your household has warts. If you see a wart on your child, you don't necessarily have to do anything, Maier says, adding that treatments take a long time, and some can be painful. A doctor can help you make that decision.

Oh, and be careful how you talk about it.

"I encourage parents to not focus too much on their children's warts, and encourage positive talk,"

Maier says. "Remember that you are teaching your child how to react. If you say, 'Oh, it is just a wart, it will go away,' they will take that as truth and are more likely to accept them."

3 ATHLETE'S FOOT

The same goes with athlete's foot, a contagious fungal infection often associated with feet having been sweaty and enclosed in tight-fitting shoes.

"I would encourage parents to not be too harsh with their kids when it comes to these types of infections," Maier says. "They are not dangerous and more of a nuisance than anything."

Still, along the same lines as not sharing towels if you have warts, if your child has athlete's foot, then you'll want to take similar precautions with sharing footwear to help prevent the spread.

In addition to treating athlete's foot with antifungal cream, let shoes air-dry for 24 hours, wear breathable cotton socks, wear flip-flops on shared surfaces such as at the pool, and avoid sharing shoes or grooming instruments such as clippers or pumice stones, Maier says.

4 HEAD LICE

If the thought of head lice makes you shiver (or feel suddenly itchy), you're not alone.

"Head lice certainly cause a lot of anxiety among children and parents, but they are not dangerous — nor are they a sign of poor hygiene," says Dr. Elizabeth Meade, a pediatric hospitalist at Swedish.

In fact, millions of school-age children in the U.S. get head lice each year, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics' HealthyChildren website (healthychildren.org).

If you suspect lice, have the doctor, school nurse or lice specialist confirm it before you start treatment, and talk to them about what kind of treatment to use (there are over-the-counter products as well as "salons," such as Lice Knowing You, where, for a price, professionals can deal with your child's head and yours). And make sure you know your school's policy: The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages "no-nit" policies that keep children out of school.

5 VAGINITIS, ETC.

Vaginal irritation or itching — often caused by “nonspecific vulvovaginitis” — is common in prepubertal girls and can be brought on or aggravated by anything from poor hygiene or toilet paper in the vagina to irritating soaps to clothing that doesn’t allow air to circulate, Meade says. And girls can be embarrassed to bring it up. Here’s where you come in.

“Both boys and girls should be encouraged from a young age to tell parents about any change in their bodies that they notice or have questions about,” Meade says. Also, if parents notice something, “it’s OK to explain what you see and to ask your child in a calm and comfortable way whether they have noticed anything different,” she says. Don’t act grossed out or make it seem like something abnormal. A doctor can provide treatment and prevention options.

The bottom line: Kids end up with a lot of ailments, many of which can be embarrassing. But knowing how to talk about it with your children — and remembering that your doctor has seen it all — is a wise approach.

Get grossed out behind closed doors if you must, but then put on your calmest mommy or daddy face. You’ve got this!

“Kids learn by example, so the more we can show them that their bodies should not be a source of embarrassment, and that parents and doctors are safe people to talk about anything with, the more we encourage them to have a healthy image of themselves and ask for help when they need it!” Meade says. ■

Daytona Strong is a journalist who writes for a variety of local and national media. She writes about food, family and her Scandinavian heritage at outside-oslo.com.

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Montessori is a child-directed approach to learning that originated from Italian pediatrician/psychiatrist Maria Montessori and emphasizes the development of the whole child. Classrooms are typically mixed-age (usually 2 ½ or 3 to 6 years old), which helps to foster peer learning, and children are encouraged to learn at their own pace with the goal of establishing independence, self-discipline, and self-esteem. More about the tenets and focus of Montessori (learn more at parentmap.com/education):



WHOLE BODY, WHOLE MIND

Montessori's approach to motor development actually stimulates cognitive development and deep concentration. When children begin Montessori education at 3 or 4, they work on motor-skills activities like sweeping, polishing silverware and pouring. These aptly named "Practical Life" activities prepare kids for greater independence and self-reliance in daily tasks but also support the development of higher cognitive functions essential to concentration and attention.

MASTERING MINDFULNESS

Montessori's focus on activities that promote attention, concentration, planning, and organizing — a set of traits known as executive functions — help support a child's development of mindfulness, self-awareness and internal motivation.

ENVIRONMENT AND SCHEDULE

One way Montessori promotes focus is through a carefully prepared environment. Specially designed, real-world materials — from child-size brooms to lacing

cards to counting beads to geometric shapes to working coffee grinders to sound boxes — are prepared to be aesthetically appealing and accessible for young children; simplicity, beauty, and order are paramount.

Montessori schools incorporate concrete learning goals into a child's educational plan, but children are free to choose when and how to complete their work within a specified timeframe. Unlike a traditional classroom, where students cycle in and out of various subjects every 40 to 50 minutes, children are given longer periods — generally 90 minutes — of uninterrupted work time.

SHARED FOCUS

Montessori-style learning helps kids learn the fine art of shared concentration by encouraging them to engage in tasks with a classmate or two — a critical skill in the age of teamwork. Working in groups and across age groups promotes mentoring and knowledge transfer; children share their enthusiasm for a task and build up the confidence of younger students. — Malia Jacobson

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THE SEATTLE EFFECT



Awed by invention inside the Bezos Center for Innovation

PHOTO BY WILL AUSTIN

BY LUKAS VELUSH

How does a place like Seattle become known for something as nebulous as innovation? Ask an adult, and he will tell you it's because we have good ideas, an entrepreneurial spirit, grit and, most importantly, money.

Ask a kid what you need to be innovative, and she'll tell you all you need is creativity.

"Seattle is a city that believes in the power of a good idea — and then invites everyone to the table to take that idea to the next step," says Leonard Garfield, executive director of the Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI) and the Bezos Center for Innovation within it. "We're a city that focuses on the future more than the past, always on the lookout for the next big thing."

Today, the next big thing is growing out of a new generation of Seattle-area thinkers and tinkers of all ages, who are sowing seeds of innovation in technology, science and social progress that are having an impact on kids and families not just around the region, but across the globe. >>>

THE SEATTLE EFFECT

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Roots of INNOVATION

The “Seattle effect” harks back to the Pacific Northwest’s ancestors: Early Native Americans invented gill nets and weirs to catch life-giving salmon; 50-foot-long red cedar canoes for fishing and transport; and longhouses, where they could shelter, enjoy their abundant food supply and do something that gave them an edge: dream up new ideas.

The innovations kept coming, like a chain reaction, after European settlement: the timber industry, then shipbuilding, PACCAR’s heavy-duty trucks and Nordstrom’s customer-friendly retail emporium. More recently, a surge of companies pioneered how to go big with new ideas. Boeing, Microsoft, Starbucks, Amazon and Costco are the most well-known ones, but there are many more.

“This growth is like compound interest — the good ideas keep leading to yet more good ideas, and happily, Seattle becomes the hub of creativity, innovation and the people who thrive in that environment,” Garfield says.

And today that interest is paying off, from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s work to enable people in the Third World to jump the digital divide, to advances in health care driven by the vibrant biomedical community, to a long list of startups feeding off the community’s technological savvy.

Garfield says Seattle has all the ingredients of a uniquely innovative place: a willingness to welcome newcomers; a strong middle class that values education and civic participation; an economy built over time on engineering, education and technology; and a collegial spirit in which folks from different fields frequently get to rub shoulders and, in the process, create the synergy to discover what’s next.

The biggest challenge to new ideas might be what Garfield calls the “corrosive effect of underfunded schools and social inequity.”

The solution, he says, is to close the gap. “We need everyone to get the best education from the earliest age, and we need to ensure that there is not a divide between those engaged in the innovation economy and those on the outside looking in,” he says.

Feed those young minds, and they will pay you back. “Kids in Seattle are natural-born innovators,” Garfield says. “They know technology and they have passion for new ideas.”

Inside MOHAI, through interactive museum displays designed to spark imagination and ingenuity, optimistic youths share their ideas every day.

“Just today some young people explored their concept for the next big innovation — one was a flying backpack, and another was chips implanted in your body so you have a built-in computer to help guide you through life,” Garfield says. “And my guess is these kids may work on bringing those ideas to reality in their own time.”

But perhaps the most important key to raising innovative kids is to model ground-breaking ideas, which, it turns out, we are doing in spades.

Cornering CANCER

THE CHALLENGE:
Cure childhood cancer

THE SOLUTION:
Reprogram the cells that fight the common cold

Draw blood from a child, teen or young adult fighting cancer.

Reprogram it, instructing the T-cells that the patient normally uses to fight colds and other common infections to instead attack her leukemia.

Inject that modified blood back into her bloodstream.

Wait 10 days and marvel when all traces of cancer are gone from her bones.

That’s what early trials conducted at the Ben Towne Center for Childhood Cancer Research — part of the Seattle Children’s Research Institute — suggest will happen. In those trials, 85 percent of patients saw their cancer disappear completely.

Whoa, really? It makes you wonder how we got here.

Traditional cancer treatments such as chemotherapy often don’t work well for children for a simple reason: Such treatments ravage young bodies. So even when these patients beat cancer, they often lose because of permanent damage that affects them for the rest of their lives.

It was nearly four years ago that pediatric cancer researchers from Seattle Children’s Research Institute met with Jeff and Carin Towne, who had lost their son Ben to pediatric cancer.

The Townes wanted to do something to fight cancer in kids, and Dr. Mike Jensen and a group of fellow researchers needed funding to test their notion that the body’s own defense mechanisms could be used to fight cancer without ugly side effects.

As a result, the Ben Towne Center for Childhood Cancer Research (seattlechildrens.org/research/childhood-cancer) was born. “They became the angel funders for getting this research center off the ground,” says Jensen, director of the center and a principal investigator within Seattle Children’s Research Institute.

From day one, the spirit of the nonprofit research center was to move as quickly as possible to help children. The decision was made to locate the center in an old biotech building in downtown Seattle’s Denny Triangle, because it included a factory that would allow the researchers to quickly build and manufacture the products that they invented in the lab. It also helped that the larger Seattle Children’s Research Institute is located there.

Within two years of opening the facility, the researchers were ready to test their reprogrammed T-cells. Using a technique called immunotherapy, they targeted lymphoblastic leukemia, a common childhood cancer

that looked promising for this treatment because it floats around in the blood — the same place that the T-cells live.

Because it's such early days for the therapy (researchers are working as quickly as possible to help real kids who were losing their lives), the center can only treat children whose cancer has relapsed and no longer responds to other treatments. Patients who undergo the therapy would have only a 10–20 percent chance to live if they were to stick with standard treatment. Because of the experimental nature of the therapy, the center can only treat one patient at a time and has to wait to see how he or she responds before treating another. For that reason, only 17 children had been treated by the end of January.

The treatment lasts 15 minutes. "There are no side effects, no vomiting," Jensen says. "For most of the patients, the T-cells think they're fighting a bad case of the flu." The flu symptoms go away after two days for most patients. One in four gets sick enough that they have to be hospitalized for what is basically a very bad case of the flu. (This could be caused by the fact that their immune systems have been weakened by previous cancer treatments.)

A small percentage of patients have not responded to the treatment, but the cancer has completely disappeared in 85 percent of those who received it. In those patients, the cancer has been officially designated as being in remission. (Doctors won't say the "cure" word until the cancer is gone for five years.)

The center has received inquiries from doctors and families around the world wanting to try the treatment. Parents of the children who have received the treatment have been blown away, and how could they not be? Going from knowing your child has almost no chance to live ("planning for hospice and funeral homes," Jensen says) to being told your child is in complete remission is nothing less than remarkable.

The center is moving as quickly as possible to treat more children, but it will take three to five years to properly test the treatment and get needed approvals. "We'd like this therapy to be used right in the beginning, so you don't have to use chemotherapy," Jensen says.

The center also plans to see how the treatment works on other pediatric cancers (and eventually, on adult cancers).

Jensen envisions a manufacturing lab in Seattle to which doctors send their patients' blood from places like Boise, Tallahassee and Bangladesh. The center would reprogram the blood and send it back to the patient for treatment.

Taking this entrepreneurial spirit a step farther, the center is already working to get the private sector to help it mass-produce treatment for common cancers.

To support this research, Seattle Children's launched Strong Against Cancer, a fundraising initiative designed to support cancer immunotherapy research at Seattle Children's Research Institute. Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson is its team captain. >>>

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THE SEATTLE EFFECT

continued from page 19

Training UP

THE CHALLENGE:

Go from poverty to professional position in one year

THE SOLUTION:

Boot camp training at Year Up Puget Sound

At first, Desirae Murphy, a 24-year-old cosmetologist from Seattle's Central District who was cutting hair because "people told me I was good at it," thought it was a scam — too good to be true.

Year Up Puget Sound (yearup.org/about-us/our-locations/puget-sound) was going to pay her to go to school, help her get an internship doing the project management that she always wanted to do and give her life skills training, the kind that would prepare her for working in a corporate environment. All in a year's time.

She soon found out it was true: Year Up Puget Sound would pay her modestly while it trained her and sent her to Bellevue College for classes and certification. It also would help Murphy find an internship at Microsoft, one of the sponsors of the program.

"No one had really told us what it takes to go into a corporation and find a place there," Murphy says. "They helped me go into Microsoft and meet professionals at all levels. It's basically teaching you how to manage life."

Year Up Puget Sound was formed in 2011 to help low-income young people gain the training and skills they need to land professional jobs — jobs that would change the trajectory of their lives.

"Knowing what these young people need to be successful, we provide lots of support," says Ali Friedman, director of development for the program's Puget Sound-area location (there are about a dozen other local sites around the country). That ranges from counseling to making sure they have full bellies and a ride, to, most

importantly, helping them stay motivated to show up every day and work at it.

Knowing there are real jobs with major companies that pay well is what keeps participants motivated, Friedman says. "We provide the runway, and they provide the plane."

There are more than 15,000 young adults in the Puget Sound region who do not have access to livable wage careers or higher education, and Year Up would like to help as many of those as it can, Friedman says. Eighty people enroll in the yearlong program every six months. More than 75 percent of its participants finish, and of those, 85 percent land jobs.

Along the way, they are helping their communities by changing perceptions and showing others that they can do it, too.

Year Up is a market-driven organization: It continually checks in with its corporate partners to see what kinds of jobs aren't being filled and then restructures so that it's training people to get those jobs. A combination of corporate donations, internships and mentorships support the program.

As for Murphy, she graduated from the program at the end of February and found herself choosing between multiple offers to work at Microsoft and other companies.

The way wasn't easy, but it was oh so rewarding.

"The program really works, but you have to allow it to work for you," Murphy says. She resisted at first, but says, "You have to be able to take feedback. There's a lot of holding you accountable," she says. "It makes a difference in people's lives."

Clever VENTURES

THE CHALLENGE:

Fund and launch the next great idea

THE SOLUTION:

Game-show-style coaching and financial support

"Jump on stage and give me your best shot: How are you going to save the world?"

That's the question Eli Weed was asked when he went through Fast Pitch, the Seattle-based idea generator funded by Social Venture Partners (SVP) that takes an approach similar to that of TV's *Shark Tank*.

Weed is a 16-year-old high school junior from Seattle who had an idea: to make it easier for kids with dyslexia to learn how to type.

Last spring, Weed submitted his DyslexiType typing software program to Fast Pitch, was accepted into the contest's high school category and proceeded to advance through several rounds of competition to eventually emerge as the category winner (and recipient of a \$10,000 check) in October.

Along the way, he was challenged, coached, put on stage, grilled, reshaped and made to rethink his idea from all angles. By the end of it, he had a product ready to be tested, a business plan for growing and marketing his company, and a thicker skin. "Now, presentations at school don't seem quite that scary," he quips.

DyslexiType uses color coordination and a friendly font to make it easier for typists to find their keys. Once they can find the letters without looking at them, they do much better, Weed says. Check out his concept at dyslexitype.org.

As part of SVP's program, competitors with ideas in many disciplines (education, business, science and technology, social) get on stage, present their concepts and receive real-time feedback, says Maureen O'Hara, recent lead partner for Fast Pitch. (The volunteer role changes hands each year.)

Experts in the various project subjects volunteer as judges. "Besides money, the coaching is the most valuable thing that they receive," O'Hara says.

Others who have gone through Fast Pitch include Evrnu, which turns wasted cloth into silk and other high-quality materials; Scholarship Junkies, a group of recent scholarship recipients and mentors who give essay writers feedback to help them land their own scholarships; and Unleash the Brilliance, which provides kids an alternative to truancy, bullying, negative peer pressure and drugs.

Another recent competitor was Tiny Trees, which slashes the cost of preschool by getting rid of the classroom altogether (tinytrees.org).

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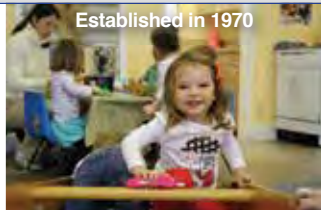


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THE SEATTLE EFFECT

continued from page 20

“Tiny Trees makes preschool affordable for families by tackling the root of the problem — facility and building costs,” Andrew Jay, CEO, says. “We break down the schoolhouse walls and take classes outside to local city parks, where we combine quality math and reading instruction with a world-class science education.”

The solution is taking root. Fast Pitch awarded Tiny Trees a first-place finish in October, giving it \$15,000 to kick-start its big plans, which include launching 20 Tiny Trees preschools by 2020.

Citizen POWER

THE CHALLENGE:
Awaken the masses

THE SOLUTION:
Inspire involvement and personal responsibility

Americans are ready to be citizens again.

Just ask Eric Liu, founder and CEO of Seattle-based Citizen University (citizenuniversity.us).

“We’ve been living in an age where citizen power and citizen engagement has been diminishing,” Liu says. “We now have a culture where everyone is more aware of their power as consumers than they are aware of their power as citizens.”

But that is changing.

Look at the conversation the nation is having about law enforcement after Ferguson. Recall the local grassroots push to raise the minimum wage to \$15, first in SeaTac and then in Seattle. Consider the growing gun-safety activism that came after Sandy Hook, including the recent passage of Initiative 594, the law that requires universal background checks in Washington state. And don’t forget the lasting legacy of the Occupy Wall Street and Tea Party movements.

All are driven by the power of citizens deciding to “stop thinking this is someone else’s problem to solve,” Liu says. “Now the tide is turning. We’re starting to exercise our citizenship muscle. [We

have an] unformed, bottom-up yearning for agency, voice and power.”

Liu formed Citizen University four years ago to help those who have taken a first step into the civic arena to take a second. Liu, along with Nick Hanauer (they are coauthors of *The True Patriot* and *The Gardens of Democracy*), played a pivotal role in helping the activists behind the minimum-wage and gun-safety measures become organized and powerful enough to gain approval.

Liu’s organization isn’t a traditional university; the title is a euphemism for teaching people how to become activists, to agitate for change in their communities. Citizen University holds events, teaches online classes, promotes civic collaborating and, most importantly, helps people build structure around how they want to grow their activism.

Seattle is the perfect place to lead this conversation, Liu says, because it is filled with creative, entrepreneurial people who share ideas, build amazing stuff and then go big. Feeding off the energy of others is what makes the community special, Liu says. “If you really want to make change, you need to create networks inside of networks. That’s a quintessential Seattle view.”

He invites those who are interested in citizen activism to attend his annual #CitizenUCon15 conference, March 20–21 in Seattle. Go to citizenuniversity.us/conference to register.

“We’re at the very beginning of a movement of citizen action,” Liu says, explaining that activism today is not just for fringe, radical people. “What we need now is middle-out citizenship. It is time for all of us to start showing up in citizen life.”

Generation GAMER

THE CHALLENGE:
Bring kids into STEM

THE SOLUTION:
Harness video game culture to incite learning

It turns out that making video games is almost as fun as playing them — if you know your science and math.

That’s what the folks at Redmond-based DigiPen Institute of Technology learned in 1994 when they decided to offer the nation’s first undergraduate degree in video game design. “We had a tremendous amount of applicants who were completely unprepared with prerequisite math, science or art skills,” says Raymond Yan, DigiPen’s senior vice president responsible for its ProjectFun program.

ProjectFun spun out of DigiPen with the goal of harnessing the power and fun of making video games to get K–12 students interested in science and math. Today, the program offers more than 50 different courses, school and weekend programs, and camps that provide a comprehensive pathway for students ages 5–18 to study topics in computer science, engineering, mechanics, fine art, animation production, music and sound design, and game design. “Many of these programs now extend beyond an exploratory level and are preparatory in nature, offering the opportunity to earn high school and college level credit,” Yan says. “Our core goal is to provide our students with the keys that they will need to be innovators, which ultimately means they have to learn to be creators of technology and content, not just users or consumers,” he says.

Equally as important as foundational science and math skills is risk-taking.

“[Our] most difficult challenge [is] to teach students the value of failure, which is a critical concept to embrace when one is truly trying to innovate,” Yan says. “No one likes to fail, but when students are afraid of failure, they naturally run back to known solutions, which is not innovative. Getting all of this accomplished with students makes our programs challenging, yet the success of our graduates over the many years we have been teaching is the real proof that this approach works.”

Learn more about ProjectFun at projectfun.digipen.edu, and DigiPen at digipen.edu. ■

Lukas Velush is a content creator and editor who loves to track tech and science trends, adventure outdoors, and grow food in his garden. He lives in Seattle with his wife, two daughters, ancient cat, two dogs and five chickens. Follow Lukas on Twitter @luvelush and at rootsandspokes.com.

March PICKS



From Love to Limits: The Early Years
Laura Kastner, Ph.D., renowned author of *Getting to Calm* and *Wise-Minded Parenting*, now shares her expertise on the tricky terrain of exercising discipline with younger ones – kids ages 2 to 8.
Tuesday, March 31, 7 p.m. \$25. Stroum Jewish Community Center, Mercer Island. parentmap.com/lectures



ParentMap Camp Fairs
Stressed about summer camps? Head to one of **ParentMap's three FREE regional camp fairs**, where you can meet hundreds of great camp providers, enter camp giveaways and more. **Seattle Center Armory**, Saturday, March 7, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.; **The Evergreen School, Shoreline**, Saturday, March 14, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.; **STAR Center, Tacoma**, Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. parentmap.com/campfair



Moisture Festival Comedy/Variété
A show that's truly perfect for all ages, this annual Seattle festival features dozens of amazing performers in genres ranging from **comedy, music and magic to juggling, circus stunts and strong-men**. No two shows are alike. **March 19–April 12.** \$10–\$20. Most shows all ages. Hale's Palladium and Broadway Performance Hall, Seattle. moisturefestival.com

SUNDAY

1

Flat Stanley. A boy who dreams of traveling the world wakes up to a big surprise. 2 p.m. and special 4 p.m. sensory-friendly performance. \$15. Grades K–4 with families. Everett Civic Auditorium. villagetheatre.org
Momotaro (Peach Boy). Using bunraku-style puppetry, Thistle Theatre tells the tale of a Japanese boy who saves his village. Saturday–Sunday, Feb. 28–March 8; additional venues through March 22. \$10. Ages 4 and up. Bellevue Youth Theatre. thistletheatre.org

8

Avenue Q School Edition. Youth Theatre Northwest performs a somewhat-sanitized version of the hilarious popular musical. Friday–Sunday, March 6–22. \$13–\$17. Ages 13 and up. The Armory at Seattle Center. youththeatre.org
Kidz Bop Live. Do they still call it teeny-bopper music? Wildly popular group of young singers performs kid-friendly versions of hit pop songs. 4 p.m. \$20–\$25. All ages. The Neptune Theatre, Seattle. stgpresents.org

15

Alice in Wonderland. A one-hour, narrated performance by International Ballet Theatre introduces the magical world of ballet to children. March 14–15. \$25–\$40. Ages 5–12 with families. The Theatre at Meydenbauer Center, Bellevue. ibtbellevue.com
Pippi Longstocking. The wild and wonderful Pippi stars in this musical based on the popular book by Astrid Lindgren. Saturday–Sunday, March 14–22. \$12–\$15. Ages 5 and up. Tacoma Musical Playhouse. tmp.org

22

Songs from the Emerald Isle. A Celtic-themed concert assembled by new TSO music director Sarah Ioannides features *Lord of the Rings* soloist Kaitlyn Lusk and tap dancer Trent Kowalik. 2:30 p.m. \$12–\$19. Pantages Theater, Tacoma. tacomasymphony.org
Shipwrecked! An Entertainment. A storyteller spins an amazing yarn of wild adventures and travels to far-flung locales. Friday–Sunday, March 20–April 4. \$10–\$30; ages 9 and up. Centerstage Theatre, Federal Way. centerstagetheatre.com

29

Winter Hiking Series. Meet in Bellevue and venture out for a hike along the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River; transportation provided. 10 a.m.–3 p.m. \$5; preregister. All ages. Highland Park & Community Center, Bellevue. myparksandrecreation.com
Shrek the Musical. Heavier Than Air Family Theatre presents the musical adaptation of the popular green ogre movie. Friday–Sunday, March 27–April 4. \$10–\$12. Ages 6 and up. Green River River Community College, Auburn. heavierthanair.com

MONDAY

2

Dr. Seuss Day. Celebrate the birthday of this beloved author with story times, crafts and cooking green eggs and ham. 10:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Included with admission. Ages 1–10 with caregiver. The Children's Museum, Seattle. thechildrensmuseum.org
Anansi Stories. OFT invites little ones to enjoy an interactive, 30-minute show, just the right length for young attention spans. 10:30 a.m.; also March 6–7. \$5. Ages 0–5 with families. Olympia Family Theater. olyft.org

9

Maker Mondays. Visit Future of Flight's Maker Space to experiment with 3D modeling and try out the 3D printer. Mondays, 3–8 p.m. \$5; printing extra. Ages 11–18, under 15 with adult. Future of Flight Aviation Center, Mukilteo. futureofflight.org
ONGOING EVENT
Secret Garden Story Time. Visit Ballard's neighborhood book shop for an evening story and a special prize. Mondays, 7–7:30 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 1–10 with families. Secret Garden Book Shop, Seattle. secretgardenbooks.com

16

Shoreline Indoor Playground. Let the kiddos loose at this huge gym with balls, hoops, toys and slides. Monday–Friday, 9:30–11:30 a.m. \$2–\$2.50. Ages 1–5. Spartan Recreation Center, Shoreline. shorelinewa.gov
ONGOING EVENT
Cornerstone Café Open Play. Community café offers drop-in play and other family programs. Monday–Wednesday, 9:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.; Thursday–Friday 1–5 p.m. **FREE;** donations appreciated. Ages 5 and under with caregiver. Cornerstone Café, Seattle. facebook.com/FOCSCornerstoneCafe

23

Play to Learn. Kids and caregivers gather for community play, songs and circle time. Mondays, 1:30–3 p.m.; additional weekly times/locations. **FREE.** Ages 6 and under with caregiver. Willard Early Learning Center, Tacoma. playtacoma.org
ONGOING EVENT
Math Buddies. Elementary students meet with a teen volunteer for math games and activities. Mondays, 4–6 p.m. **FREE.** Grades K–5. Seattle Public Library, NewHolly Branch. spl.org
ONGOING EVENT

30

Spring Break Superstars. Celebrate and support the zoo's "superstar" species — sharks, red wolves, polar bears and more — with special activities. Monday–Saturday, March 30–April 3. Included with admission. All ages. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, Tacoma. pdza.org
Lil' Diggers Playtime. Behold the giant, indoor sandbox of kids' dreams. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 9:30–11 a.m. or 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m. \$7. Ages 5 and under. Sandbox Sports, Seattle. sandboxsports.net
ONGOING EVENT

TUESDAY

3

PEPS Benefit Luncheon. Gather with other PEPs parents to support a beloved organization in our community. Donations requested; preregister. 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Fisher Pavilion at Seattle Center. peps.org
Build a Robot. Work in a team to build a robot with Lego Mindstorms kits under the guidance of Raisbeck Aviation High's Robotics Team. 4:30–7:30 p.m. **FREE;** preregister. Ages 6–12. Seattle Public Library, Delridge Branch. spl.org

10

Tuesday Tales. Cozy up for this monthly story time, this time reading *Armadillo Rodeo* by Jan Brett. 11:15 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. Included with admission. Ages 1–6 with families. Imagine Children's Museum, Everett. imaginecm.org
39 Clues Party. Fans of this popular adventure and mystery series gather for activities. 4–5:30 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 5 and up. Pierce County Library, Dupont Branch. piercecountylibrary.org

17

St. Patrick's Day at the Children's Museum. Leprechaun disguises, a St. Patrick's Day-themed story time, Celtic harp music, leprechaun houses and more. 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Included with admission. The Children's Museum, Seattle. thechildrensmuseum.org/st-patricks-day
Stories of the Salish Sea. Explore our region's ancient forests and waters through Native American flute music. 10:30–11:15 a.m. **FREE.** All ages. King County Library System, Black Diamond Branch. kcls.org

24

Kidz Bounce Drop-In Time. Little ones get a workout at this inflatable gym. Tuesday–Thursday, 9:30–11 a.m. or 12:30–2 p.m., plus Thursday 5–6:30 p.m. \$7. Ages 2–10. Kidz Bounce, Preston. kidzbounce.com
ONGOING EVENT
Baby Jam. A multi-lingual, drop-in musical exploration for babies to preschoolers. Tuesdays, 11–11:30 a.m. \$10–\$12. Ages 0–5 with caregiver. MLK FAME Community Center, Seattle. babyjam.org
ONGOING EVENT

31

Laura Kastner, Ph.D. – From Love to Limits: The Early Years. U.W. Professor Kastner leads parents to "competency-building" approaches to exercising discipline. 7 p.m. \$25. Adults. Stroum Jewish Community Center, Mercer Island. parentmap.com/lectures
Story Time at Mockingbird Books. Stop by this almost-everyday story session to hear old favorites and new picks. Monday–Saturday, 11–11:30 a.m. **FREE.** Ages 6 and under. Mockingbird Books, Seattle. mockingbirdbooksgl.com
ONGOING EVENT

WEDNESDAY

4

Tacoma Resident Free Day at PDZA. City of Tacoma dwellers enjoy free admission to the zoo and aquarium today and March 20, 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m. **FREE** for Tacoma residents with proper I.D. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, Tacoma. pdza.org
After-school S.T.E.A.M. Games. Stop by the library to play games and build skills in science, technology, engineering and more, with snacks. 3:30–5 p.m. **FREE**. Grades K–5. Seattle Public Library, Greenwood Branch. spl.org

11

North Kirkland Indoor Playground. Tots slide, teeter-totter, ride, push, rock and wiggle. Tuesdays, Thursdays, 10 a.m.–1 p.m., Wednesdays, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. \$3. Ages 9 months–2 years. North Kirkland Community Center. kirklandwa.gov **ONGOING EVENT**
Conservatory Story Hour. Lovely verdant surroundings make for a pleasant story time, followed by a short project. 11 a.m.–noon. \$3 suggested donation; ages 11 and under free. Ages 3–8 with families. W.W. Seymour Botanical Conservatory, Tacoma. seymourconservatory.org

18

Living Laboratory. Kids play games and help UW I-LABS scientists learn more about early brain development. Select Wednesdays, 1–3 p.m. Included with admission. Ages 1–5. KidsQuest Children's Museum, Bellevue. kidsquestmuseum.org
Hands-On Science: Bots. Build art bots and hover bots at the library's science workshop series using everyday materials. 4–5:30 p.m. **FREE**; preregister. Ages 8 and up. Pierce County Library, South Hill Branch. piercescountylibrary.org

25

Little Bookworms Story Time. Stop by for stories, songs and a special treat. Wednesdays, 11 a.m.–noon. **FREE**. Ages 0–5 with caregiver. The Shops at the Bravern, Bellevue. thebravern.com **ONGOING EVENT**
The Mask You Live In. This documentary film examines society's definition of masculinity and how boys are pushed to fit into it. 7 p.m. \$6.50–\$10. Ages 16 and up. The Well/Queen Anne United Methodist Church, Seattle. brownpapertickets.com

THURSDAY

5

Nordic Stories. Hear stories by Scandinavian authors, then make a related craft project, the first Thursday of the month. 10 a.m. **FREE**. Ages 3–6. Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle. nordicmuseum.org
Gig Harbor Library Chess Club. Join in for 20 minutes of chess instruction followed by 40 minutes of play. Thursdays, 6–7 p.m. **FREE**. Grades K–8. Pierce County Library, Gig Harbor Branch. piercescountylibrary.org

12

The Great Jungle Yoga. Playful introduction to hatha yoga for kids. Thursdays, 4:30–5:15 p.m. \$17 drop-in or register for a series. Ages 3.5–5. The Umbrella Tree, Seattle. umbrella-tree.com
Goodnight Moon. The beloved bedtime story comes to life with the comb, the brush, the bowl full of mush and all. March 5–April 26. \$20–\$40. Ages 3 and up. Seattle Children's Theatre. sct.org

19

State Parks Free Day. Explore our spectacular state parks **FREE** today in honor of our state park system's 102nd birthday; no Discover Pass required. Statewide. discoverpass.wa.gov
Moisture Festival Comedy/Variété. Musicians, aerialists, jugglers, comedians and can't-be-categorized performers present entertaining variety shows. March 19–April 12. \$10–\$20. Most shows all ages; see website. Hale's Palladium and Broadway Performance Hall, Seattle. moisturefestival.com

26

Tugboat Story Time. Climb aboard a 100-year-old tugboat for stories of the sea. Second and fourth Thursdays of the month, 11 a.m.–noon. **FREE**. Ages 2–5 with caregiver. Center for Wooden Boats, Seattle. cw.org **ONGOING EVENT**
Fundraiser for Ladybug House. Mingle and celebrate the cause of Ladybug House, which aims to create a freestanding, community-based palliative care home for children. 6 p.m. \$50. Osteria Rigoletto, Seattle. ladybughouse.org

FRIDAY

6

Habitat Restoration Work Party. Contribute to our healthy environment removing invasive species and replacing them with native plants. 9 a.m.–noon select Fridays. **FREE**. All ages. Tacoma Nature Center. metroparkstacoma.org
Free First Friday at BAM. Even young kids can appreciate unusual objects made of wood ...a tricycle, a set of keys? Marvel at the use of this material in *Knock on Wood*. 11 a.m.–8 p.m. **FREE**. Bellevue Arts Museum. bellevuearts.org

13

Gardening with Your Children. Dig in the dirt and grow with kids, first of a series; attend one or all. March 13, 20, 27, 10–11 a.m. **FREE**; preregister. Lake Hills Greenbelt Ranger Station, Bellevue. myparksandrecreation.com
Snow Falling on Cedars. BPA presents its hometown drama of love and mystery across cultures, based on the book by David Guterson. March 12–29. \$19–\$27. Ages 13 and up. Bainbridge Performing Arts, Bainbridge Island. bainbridgeperformingarts.org

20

Oblio and the Pointless Forest. Check out Bellevue Youth Theatre's eco-cool new theater and see a retelling of the musical fable by Harry Nilsson. Saturday–Sunday, March 20–29. \$10–\$12. All ages. Bellevue Youth Theatre–Crossroads. bellevueyouththeatre.org
Hour of Code. Learn to think like a computer programmer and write real code. 3:30–4:30 p.m. **FREE**; preregister. Ages 8 and up. Pierce County Library, University Place Branch. piercescountylibrary.org

27

Frog Hop. Venture out in the dark to listen for the ribbits and songs of local frogs. 7:30–9 p.m. \$2–\$3; preregister. Ages 5 and up. Lewis Creek Visitor Center, Bellevue. myparksandrecreation.com
Pippi Longstocking. Come along for wild Pippi's adventures in having no parents and no rules. Friday–Saturday, March 20–29. \$14. Ages 5 and up. Stone Soup Theatre, Seattle. stonesouptheatre.org

SATURDAY

7

ParentMap Seattle Camp Fair. Browse oodles of summer camp options and ask questions of camp providers. 10 a.m.–1 p.m. **FREE**. All ages. The Armory at Seattle Center. parentmap.com/campfair
Dino Day. Dino fans dig into paleontology and find clues from dino teeth, bones, poop and more; lots of hands-on activities. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Included with admission. All ages. The Burke Museum, Seattle. burkemuseum.org

14

ParentMap North Seattle/Shoreline Camp Fair. Explore summer camp options from archery to zoology. 10 a.m.–1 p.m. **FREE**. The Evergreen School, Shoreline. parentmap.com/campfair
St. Patrick's Day Parade. Get your green on and celebrate Irish pride. 12:30 p.m. **FREE**. Fourth Ave. and Jefferson north toward Seattle Center (where Irish Fest takes place, Saturday–Sunday). Free monorail rides back to parade start 1:30–2:30 p.m. irishclub.org

21

ParentMap South Sound Camp Fair. Meet dozens of area summer camp providers. 10 a.m.–1 p.m. **FREE**. All ages. STAR Center, Tacoma. parentmap.com/campfair
Northwest Folklife – African Drum & Dance. A monthly cultural series from Folklife. 6:30–8:30 p.m. **FREE**. All ages. Crossroads Bellevue. crossroadsbellevue.com
Zulaika. A tour of Middle Eastern movement and dance. 11 a.m. \$5; ages 12 and under free. All ages. Town Hall Seattle. townhallseattle.org

28

Bike Helmet Fitting and Giveaway. Kohl's and Seattle Children's team up to protect kids' noggins; one helmet per child. 10 a.m.–1 p.m. **FREE**. Ages 1–18 (wearer must be present). Renton Community Center, Renton. makesurethehelmetfits.org
Caspar Babypants. Local indie-turned-kindie rocker with legions of little fans plays his delightful tunes. 10:30 a.m. \$6; babes in arms free. All ages. The Neptune Theatre, Seattle. stgresents.org



LOUISIANA

Dino Day at the Burke Museum, March 7


Seattle Children's
 HOSPITAL • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION
www.seattlechildrens.org

91st Annual Seattle Children's Garden Sale
 Friday – Sunday, April 17 – 19, times vary
 Seattle Children's administrative offices
 6901 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

Get everything you need for your garden while learning from Seattle Children's expert groundskeepers. No cost to attend. Presented by the Laura Brigman Guild. For more information, call 206-987-2153.

Bike Helmet Giveaway & Fitting
 Saturday, March 28, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
 Renton Community Center
 1715 SE Maple Valley Hwy
 Renton, WA 98057

FREE bike helmet fitting and giveaway for kids ages 1 to 18 years old. Child must be present to receive properly fitted helmet. Supplies are limited. Helmets provided by Kohl's Helmet Safety Program at Seattle Children's.

www.makesurethehelmetfits.org



BUNNY BOUNCE

**Hop, skip and jump to the
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**SATURDAY, APRIL 4
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Fun for the whole family including egg
hunts for kids, treats for the animals, and
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Visit www.zoo.org/bunnybounce
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University of Puget Sound



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KIDZBOP

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INTO THE WILD EDIBLES

Foraging is forest-to-table fun for the whole family

BY NANCY SCHATZ ALTON

This spring break will mark our family's third annual clamming weekend. As the winter rains pour down, I picture driving across the Hood Canal Bridge as my daughters spy our favorite beach for digging Manila clams. I can smell the wet sea-salt air and feel the water collecting on my face. I can see my oldest digging next to my husband while my youngest walks atop the logs that line the sand. It won't matter if the sun shows its face as we collect our dinner fare near the bay's water. Rain or shine, my family is nourished by nature during this yearly foraging expedition.

Although many people have discovered foraging as adults, kids take to it naturally, from muddy adventures such as clamming and spring fiddlehead hunting to summer berry

picking on mountain trails. "Once you get them outside, kids are not distracted by cell phones or work issues like adults are. It's amazing to see the transformation. They are just open to everything around them: the sights, the sounds, the smells," says Langdon Cook, Seattle-based foraging expert and author of *The Mushroom Hunters* and *Fat of the Land*.

Hunting for edibles is as old as humankind, of course. But foraging as a family hobby is a more recent phenomenon, with a growing roster of Seattle-area classes, books and websites fueling new interest in this age-old practice. As experts like Melany Vorass Herrera, author of *The Front Yard Forager*, teach, you don't even have to leave the city to harvest edible urban weeds, such as dandelion greens. >>

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out + about

INTO THE WILD EDIBLES

continued from page 27

And although some cities, such as Seattle, ban foraging in their parks, spots like the Beacon Food Forest, a new edible urban forest in Seattle's Jefferson Park, might be the model of the future. The food forest was designed and built to mimic the natural forest while substituting plants that the community needs, from wild berries to edible greens.

"Perhaps foraging is part of the movement to get kids outdoors. People are also looking backward to simpler times, with foraging being part of a rebirth of home arts: sewing, canning and creating backyard gardens. I also see it as part of the pushback to all things media. When a parent notices his 2-year-old is adept at navigating an iPhone, his natural response is to get everyone off of the devices and out into nature," says Cook.

Becoming an ethical forager also teaches kids important concepts around sustainable harvest and a "leave no trace" mind-set. "Ethical harvesting means you have respect: You only take what you need, and you leave some for the people behind you," says Glenn Herlihy, cofounder of the Beacon Food Forest.

Foraging for beginners

Families in the Seattle area can get started foraging in several ways. You can sign up for a local class and buy a guidebook or two that will help you start to learn to identify edible plants — a critical part of foraging safely (see sidebars). "The forager's golden rule is to never, ever eat anything from the wild without 100 percent certainty of its identification," says Cook.

If you live in the greater Seattle area, the Beacon Food Forest is a convenient place to start foraging. Anyone can pick edibles in the west side of the forest — the section open for community harvest — and they can return to help maintain the space at a monthly work party (held the third Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.). During late spring and into the summer months, you can search for strawberries, mint, perennial herbs, spinach, kale, a variety of lettuces, beans and peas, sweetgrass, lemongrass, and possibly gumi berries and currants.

Here are more picks for foraging the bounty that's available this spring and summer in the Puget Sound area.

Find your greens: 5 foods to forage

1 WILD GREENS: You can send kids on a hunt for wild greens, possibly starting in your backyard. Urban foragers can pick shotweed, chickweed, catsear greens, dandelion greens, roots and flowers from lawns, gardens and untended lots during a Northwest spring. Herrera's *Front Yard Forager* gives



MELANY VORASS HERRERA



LANGDON COOK

detailed descriptions of many more edible weeds that are plentiful on undisturbed soil in the spring.

Langdon Cook loves to gather greens ranging from stinging nettles to watercress and miner's lettuce. "Stinging nettles are probably the backbone of my spring harvest. My kids pull on the rubber gloves and help me pick," says Cook. "Back home, a quick parboil neutralizes the sting. I freeze them for use throughout the year and put up lots of nettle pesto, which is great for a quick and healthy version of mac 'n' cheese."

Cook notes that would-be greens foragers should check to make sure it's okay to pick. "In general, it's up to the forager to know the rules, which change from place to place."

2 FIDDLEHEAD FERNS:

Fiddleheads are the tightly curled frond of wild ferns that emerge in the early spring. In western Washington, the only variety of edible fiddleheads is the lady fern, which is abundant in damp spots near streams and creeks in low-elevation mixed woods.

"The best way to learn to forage is to look for a patch of these in the summer when they are up and easy to identify, then you go back in the same place in spring. Then the young growth of the fern (the frond) will be tightly coiled instead of unfurled," says Cook.

3 MUSHROOMS: In western Washington, oyster mushrooms can be found in the same wooded habitats as fiddleheads, growing on dead or dying alders, says Cook. On the east side of the Cascade Range, you will more often see oyster mushrooms on dead or dying cottonwood trees. Drive over the pass to hunt for morels and spring porcini, too.

4 WILD BERRIES: Wild-berry picking might be the most accessible foraging activity for families (who hasn't stopped to snag ripe blackberries in August?). Langdon Cook says that it's also more accepted to pick berries — particularly invasive Himalayan blackberries — in city parks where other kinds of foraging are not allowed.

Cook's picks for wild berries include red huckleberries, usually ripe by early July in the low-elevation mixed forests of western Washington; salmonberries, "often finished before the summer solstice at lower elevations"; and native blackberries, also known as the trailing blackberry, which are "usually ripe around the same time as the red huckleberry." In August or September, you can find mountain huckleberries on hiking trails. >>



LANGDON COOK

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Image: *Maternal Journey* (detail), 2010, Rhonda Holy Bear, Cheyenne River Sioux, b. 1960, wood, gesso, paint, clay, cotton, wool, metal, aluminum wire, glass beads, brain-tanned buckskin, rawhide, fur, hair, feathers, 31 × 42 in., Diker no.816, Courtesy American Federation of Arts.

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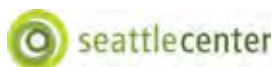
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INTO THE WILD EDIBLES

continued from page 29

5 MANILA CLAMS: These hard-shell clams, available year-round in Puget Sound, are easily harvested by digging at half tide on beaches around the south part of the Sound or Hood Canal. (Check the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife's website to find beaches where the clams are currently available.) Cook recommends digging with a handheld garden cultivator; kids will love trying to find clams by looking for small holes in the substrate. (See parentmap.com/clamming for a complete guide to clamming.)

The challenges associated with foraging can be daunting. But consider its many benefits: "Foraging has a magical quality to it," says Cook. "But it's also a great entry point into issues of sustainability, protecting the environment and good stewardship. Becoming a forager makes you realize every living thing needs clean air and clean water, and young people get that idea right away." ■

Nancy Schatz Alton — writer, editor, writing coach and avid clammer — is the co-author of two holistic health care guides, *The Healthy Back Book* and *The Healthy Knees Book*.

foraging camps + classes

Langdon Cook offers foraging classes throughout the year, ranging from Seward Park Wild Edibles Walks on March 6 and March 13 to a razor clam weekend from May 20–22. langdoncook.com/classes

Pacific Science Center offers two summer day camps at Mercer Slough Environmental Education Center — Slough Survival (for second- through fourth-graders) and Wild Survivor (for fourth- through sixth-graders) — that include lessons on wild edibles and traditional uses of native plants. pacificsciencecenter.org/camps

Seattle Tilth's "Survive and Thrive with Wild Plants" is a weeklong summer day camp for ages 11–15 (from Aug. 10–14); it also organizes classes for adults on harvesting urban weeds and wild foods. seattletilth.org

Wilderness Awareness School's day camps and overnight camps all include lessons in foraging and opportunities to harvest wild edibles (except at the Seattle locale). wildernessawareness.org

guide to foraging resources

Learning to properly identify plants is critical for foraging safely — here are resources to help you learn without leaving the couch. "Armchair foraging helps us know what to look for and how to recognize it when we see it. The fieldwork is the payoff for this self-education," says James Mize, an avid forager who takes his two children searching for wild edibles almost every week.

Langdon Cook's *The Mushroom Hunters* and *Fat of the Land*.

Melany Vorass Herrera's *The Front Yard Forager: Identifying, Collecting, and Cooking the 30 Most Common Urban Weeds*.

Herrera recommends these websites for information on edible weeds: **Plants for a Future**, pfaf.org; **USDA**, plants.usda.gov; **Eat the Weeds**, eattheweeds.com.

The Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife's (WDFW) website has excellent information for seafood foragers: wdfw.wa.gov/fishing.

Cook recommends books including *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast*; *Edible Wild Plants*; *All That the Rain Promises and More*; and *Mushrooms of the Pacific Northwest*.

Mushroom hunters should also consider joining a mycological society, such as the **Puget Sound Mycological Society**: psms.org.

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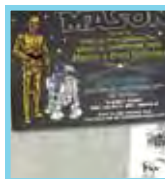


When your little Jedi or Princess Leia asks for a *Star Wars*-themed birthday party, we've got you covered from invitations to goody bags. With these crafty ideas, The Force will be with you. (10 more ideas at parentmap.com/StarWarsBirthday.)



EDIBLE LIGHT SABER CUPCAKE TOPPERS

Kiddos will love these edible light sabers. Brandy at the Gluesticksblog (gluesticksblog.com) shows you how to create these cute little light sabers from rolled fondant. Use to top store-bought or home-baked cupcakes. We bet you could even make a larger version to top off a cake!



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The Etsy shop ChalkDustDesign (chalkdustdesign.etsy.com) creates chalkboard-style Star Wars invitations: R2D2, C3PO, and two light sabers grace the card, along with your party information, written just like the text in the beginning of the movie. You can choose to have the invites printed and mailed to you, or receive a digital file.



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All parents appreciate a non-food goodie bag gift. For a fun and practical party favor, try these Star Wars crayons from the Etsy shop Krazeekrayons (etsy.com/shop/Krazeekrayons). This set of five Star Wars crayons are hand-made, non-toxic, and you choose the colors. A universe of artistic expression awaits!

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Putting quality in the spotlight

Theater programs empower kids

By Hilary Benson



To the Cotton Club strains of Duke Ellington's "The Mooche," Megan Adams leads middle schoolers in a jazz routine. Trumpets, clarinets and other instruments breathe life into "zoo animals" — the choreography transforming kids into heavy elephants, hippos and lithe gazelles. "Picture this as you are swinging your hips or moving your arms: What are the animals doing after the zookeeper goes home?" asks the Village Theatre instructor, challenging the kids to imagine as they practice *chassé* and *pas de bourrée* steps in sequence.

Upstairs at Village Theatre's First Stage in Issaquah, young singers warm up their vocal chords before practicing "Blue Suede Shoes" from the musical *All Shook Up*. Earlier this afternoon, these KidStage students had two hours of acting instruction. But here, the tweens and teens aren't just being told what to do: They are learning through a process of guided discovery, where they take turns coming up with creative ideas, leading exercises, even creating and producing their own musical.

"Theater is, by its nature, an art form that depends on collaboration," says Kati Nickerson, the theater's director of youth education. "You need all different kinds of people, different disciplines, while the stories themselves build kids' ability to empathize. It calls for emotional intelligence."

Garrett Steffen, 14, of Issaquah, jokes with his mom that he would live at Village Theatre if he could. "The kids here are encouraged in a safe space, this family-like group," his mom, Kristina Steffen, says. The benefits of this program have reached beyond the teen's time at the theater, his moms adds. "He has developed a level of self-confidence that's helped in school, an ability to get up in front of a crowd and put himself out there in a way that classmates may not want to do."

The theater hires more than 150 different educators each year between its Issaquah and Everett locations, and that number could grow. Between 2010 and 2014, the Issaquah location increased enrollment from 1,350 to 1,800 students. It may be no coincidence that starting in 2013, the organization embraced a set of voluntary youth

program quality (known as YPQ) standards put forth by School's Out Washington with the goal of helping programs and staff do what they do better.

Like a theatrical production itself, the YPQ standards cover a range of categories across nine domains, ensuring, for example, that each program enriches the physical, social, emotional and creative



development of all the participants. These domains outline what it takes for an extracurricular program to be of the highest quality, and they provide a framework for even top-notch organizations to raise their bars even higher.

What do these standards, and the fact that some programs are adapting them, mean for the student experience, and for how the programs, which parents pay for, are run? One example, according to KidStage program manager Suzie Bixler, is the dedicated time for youth reflection — a deliberate effort to have students think about and share what they have learned that day. Or maybe on another day, they don't share out loud, but instead write down three things they want to work on. "It's about giving kids with all different learning styles different ways to engage," Bixler says. "And this coming year, we will work even more with kids on how to give and receive feedback."

By asking whether extracurricular programs are following the YPQ standards — and by asking questions about how staff empowers young students and incorporates their ideas, for example — parents can better assess what kind of positive impact programming will have on their young children, teens and tweens.

Shannon Nelson drives her 13-year-old

daughter, Claire, from Carnation each week to her theater classes. Claire will be a tap-dancing Tin Man in the Village Theatre Institute's *The Wizard of Oz* in May. A girl who was already comfortable in her own skin, Claire has developed positive traits in this program that have caught the notice of her middle-school classroom teachers. "She is very supportive of other people," says Nelson. "Rather than tearing people down, she builds them up."

Being rooted in creativity, arts programs would seem to naturally excel at youth empowerment — one measurable trait of a high-quality program. But as dance instructor Adams points out, "Music and dance are often a top-down lesson plan." Adams would know. As an 8-year-old, she sang her way into the starring role in Village Theatre's Mainstage production of *Annie*. She has been teaching kids for 25 years.

With her own talent and experience, Adams could relentlessly seek conformity and perfection. However, she understands that top-notch dance numbers cannot come at the expense of "youth voice." Students must be allowed to help shape their work, she says. "The product may not be perfect, but who cares? What we care about is that *they* care about their product." ■

Hilary Benson is a veteran award-winning journalist and mother of three active children. She and her family live in the Seattle area.

Editor's note: In this series, we explore how new voluntary standards developed in Washington state are impacting the quality of after-school programs that serve about 134,000 youths. We explain what parents should seek in a program, look at research on the impact of quality care on kids' development and academics, and visit with programs and kids. After-School Special's independently reported content is funded by a journalism grant in partnership with the Raikes Foundation and School's Out Washington. See the full series at parentmap.com/afterschoolspecial.



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ask the experts!

Feelings of jealousy in friendship

Q: How can I help my kids with jealousy in friendships? I want to help out when they feel left out and excluded by their friends.

A: Usually exclusion and feelings of jealousy in friendship are a matter of normal social pain. It happens to almost everyone, but for each child, it feels like the first — and the worst — time ever. Just because it is universal doesn't mean the pain isn't real. But just because the pain is real doesn't mean it's the end of the world, either. When our children are feeling normal social pain, we need to acknowledge their suffering, bear the pain ourselves and to keep some perspective about it.

To acknowledge a child's pain is to express empathy: "That must have hurt." No lecturing about how they'll get over it or it isn't a big deal. Just listen. You can share your own experiences of jealousy or exclusion to help your child see that you truly understand.

Bearing your child's pain means not becoming so overwhelmed that you can't think straight. Emotional flooding happens when we add our own remembered social pain to what our child is experiencing. Parents who can't bear their child's social pain might interrogate their child, with the lawyer or principal on speed dial; show up at school hopping mad; or confront the other parent and "take matters in their own hands," usually with disastrous results.

Putting the situation into perspective means believing your child will recover from this excruciating pain and may even grow from it. Don't insist that your child have this same perspective. They are probably not ready for that. But if you are solid in knowing (silently) all will be well and that they will make new friends, then you can be a powerful emotional support.

You will notice I didn't mention giving advice. Children don't need us to tell them what to do. They need us to listen, to offer empathy, to maintain our own emotional balance, and then to listen some more.

However, if your child is constantly excluded and never feels a sense of friendship or belonging, this is beyond the level of normal social pain. They may need some help from school counselors or professionals, possibly working on social skills, or dealing with anxiety or trauma issues.



Lawrence J. Cohen, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and coauthor of Best Friends, Worst Enemies: Understanding the Social Lives of Children. Learn more about his work at playfulparenting.com.

My child won't play sports

Q: I would like my child to play a sport for the social and fitness benefits, but she's not really interested. Should I force her to play?

A: Let's start with the easy part: The American Academy of Pediatrics says all children need to exercise an hour a day. Parents have the medical establishment behind them when they make a rule about family exercise.

This hour fulfills multiple goals. If your child plays a team sport, they are in nature and exercising, and team cooperation helps them with social and emotional learning. I tell parents to start with a high goal: From ages 5 to 18, your child will be exercising an hour a day, hopefully on a team. Like children with weekly religious obligations, that's all they know: They participate in the service every week. It's like dental care. Kids might not like it, but they are taking care of their teeth and exercising every day. There's no room for parental ambivalence or defensiveness.

Of course, there are qualifiers, because life is complicated. Your child will probably not exercise 365 days every year. You will miss a season for some reason. But if you start your child young, you might avoid some of the middle-school pushback.

Another qualifier involves shy, anxious and avoidant children. The hyper-reactivity in the emotional centers of their brain makes them novelty phobic; doing something new is like seeing a saber tooth tiger. Don't opt out, though. Parents who are familiar with the research on these children know the key is to gently nudge (no forceful pushing) their children into trying new things.

Finally, your child can pick what they want to play, but they don't get to choose not to exercise. Children can choose not to participate in team sports. Your child can try martial arts or tennis, for example.

Parents need to feel really confident that they are doing the right thing by making their children participate in athletics. Then parents have to do the dance and negotiate the specifics with their children.



Laura Kastner, Ph.D., is a clinical professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Washington and a coauthor of several parenting books, including Wise-Minded Parenting: 7 Essentials for Raising Successful Tweens + Teens.

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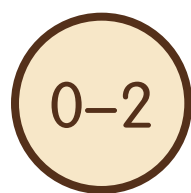
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Surviving tandem!

Parenting a baby with your toddler in tow

By Daytona Strong

You're holding your newborn, cuddled up with pillows, blankets and the soft glow of postpartum hormones. *Aaaahhhh*. But wait! Here comes your toddler, full force, limbs and demands flying, and reality suddenly sets in: You're now the parent of a toddler who expects your full attention *and* a helpless infant. We're not going to lie; parenting isn't always easy with a toddler in tow. But it's possible — and going deuce can be totally rewarding. We talked with some parenting experts to help you make the transition as smooth as possible.

CHALLENGE: Keeping toddler occupied while caring for baby

SOLUTION: Entertain with books and toys, and enlist his help

First up, there are two little ones who need your attention now! Chances are you'll be spending hours a day feeding the baby — often while your toddler wants you to dance or play trains or get him a snack. Unless you master the art of nursing while walking around (and we're not suggesting you do), there are going to be plenty of opportunities to teach your toddler the virtue of patience. But that doesn't mean you can't find meaningful ways to connect with him at the same time.

One of the easiest ways to spread the love is to read together while feeding the baby. Sure, it takes a little juggling and practice before you find a way to comfortably prop a book on the lap, but your toddler will love the dedicated time. Other



options include audiobooks, or a basket of special toys, activities or snacks that you only set out when you're caring for the baby.

But what about keeping your toddler occupied while you change a diaper or any other number of baby-care tasks? Don't forget that toddlers often love to help. There are plenty of age-appropriate "jobs" that your toddler can do, from getting out a diaper to finding baby clothes in the laundry bin.

"The more involved and included the toddler feels, the easier it will be to manage two young children's needs at the same time," says Grow Parenting's Melissa Benaroya (growparenting.com), a licensed independent social worker specializing in family coaching and education. "By giving the toddler 'responsibility,' it will also fuel the toddler's feelings of belonging and significance."

CHALLENGE: Germs, germs, everywhere!

SOLUTION: Use common sense, and then lighten up

It's easy to become germophobic when there's a baby in the house. But how realistic is it to expect to shield a baby from the runny noses, dirt, grime and sneezes that often accompany toddlers?

"There is unfortunately no magic to trying to keep babies away from germs," says Dr. David Hildebrand, a pediatrician at Swedish Medical Center. "The usual washing of hands and avoidance of sick people is the best approach. However, even with these precautions, babies sometimes get sick."

So do your best, but don't stress out. Do your homework by talking with your pediatrician about best practices for keeping your baby healthy, and find good ways to make hand washing fun for your toddler.

CHALLENGE: Competing naptimes

SOLUTION: Get help in the short term, work toward simultaneous schedules

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It seems like one of the most common pieces of advice people give to new parents is “Sleep when the baby sleeps.” *What?* How are you supposed to do that when there are not one but *two* little ones?

“Honestly, the most efficient way to deal with nap times is to try and get kids on the same schedule,” Benaroya says. “This can take some serious time and effort, but it will allow the parent a window for self-care and rest.”

Be prepared for it to take a little while, and don’t be afraid to ask for help. Remember that you need to care for yourself, too, no matter how impossible it might seem at first.

CHALLENGE: Mighty displays of affection

SOLUTION: Demonstrate gentleness and offer ideas

Toddlers aren’t exactly known for being refined or gentle. So how do you help them demonstrate their affection while protecting the baby?

“The best ways to help toddlers understand how to show affection for their sibling is to model what that affection looks like,” Benaroya says. They won’t understand the concept of gentleness unless you show them what it looks and feels like.

Benaroya also suggests giving toddlers a couple of ideas, such as gently stroking the baby’s head or lightly touching the baby’s toes.

“By offering two different ways he/she can show affection, it will increase the likelihood that they are gentle and will also increase the likelihood of cooperation, since they are not being told what to do, but are given a choice.”

CHALLENGE: Tantrums, jealousy, etc.

SOLUTION: Create rituals of connection, manage your own emotions

The firstborn was an only child for a while. Now her world has been shaken up. Put yourself in her shoes and try to imagine her emotions. And then give her a big hug. What she’s looking for is time with you.

Benaroya suggests creating rituals of connection at certain points of the day. In as little as five minutes, these rituals can fulfill your toddler’s need to connect with you. Be sure to name it, she says, such as “our special playdate,” “Jonathan time” or “big-girl time.”

If the toddler is throwing a tantrum, take a moment to check your own emotional state before you respond.

“Emotions are contagious, and if we react to our child within a heightened emotional state, they will just escalate,” Benaroya says. “The more we focus on our own emotional state and staying connected to our rational brain, the easier it will be for our child to recover from their big emotions.”

And even when the days seem long, try to keep a longer view.

“If parents take care of themselves and weather the initial storm,” Hildebrand says, “it just seems after six months that everything is the way it should be.” ■

Daytona Strong is a journalist who writes for a variety of local and national media. She writes about food, family and her Scandinavian heritage at outside-oslo.com.

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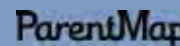
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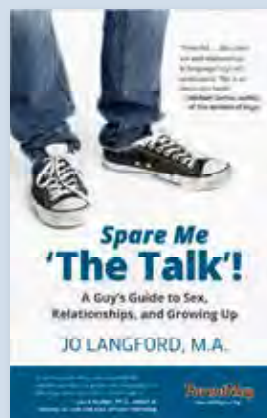
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'Parenteering'*How to help out without burning out, and what to do if you can't volunteer*

By Malia Jacobson

When Kristina Loper's oldest daughter started kindergarten, the Tacoma mom of two wasted no time signing up for the school's parent-teacher organization. "When the parents are involved at school, it helps create a stronger community, and it benefits the kids," she says.

She's right — according to the nonprofit research center Child Trends, parent involvement in school is linked to better grades and fewer behavior problems in students, particularly for those in elementary school. Parent involvement also boosts teachers' job satisfaction. And parent involvement at schools is on the rise: Parent participation in school events increased nearly 10 percent between 1999 and 2012.

But there's a downside: Parent volunteering can quickly snowball from a few hours here and there to an avalanche of emails, committee meetings and late nights sewing 24 bluebird costumes for the spring carnival. Some volunteers, like Loper — who served two years as president of the parent-teacher organization and logged hundreds of hours at the school — get buried, and burned out.

Happily, it's possible to find balance as a volunteer, whether you have hundreds of hours to give or just a few minutes. Here's how.

Boundary map

School volunteer duties have a way of ballooning, Loper says, so it's essential to set boundaries,



especially for officers, room parents and others in time-intensive volunteer roles. She learned the hard way: "I saw all these needs at the school and I tried to fill them all. I definitely got burned out."

At the peak of her school volunteering, Loper recalls, she would whisk her kids past the school's playground after school instead of stopping to let them play, because the minute she set foot on the playground she was flooded with parent questions about meetings, events and other school business — the same types of questions she fielded night and day via email, text and phone.

Burnout buster:

Set limits on your time and energy — because nobody else will do it for you. Loper got a handle

on her burgeoning volunteer load by designating two days per week as "off" days for school volunteering: no school-volunteer-related emails, activities or phone calls on those days.

Rivka Caroline, a time-management expert, mom of seven and author of *From Frazzled to Focused: The Ultimate Guide for Moms (and Dads) Who Want to Reclaim Their Time, Their Sanity and Their Lives*, recommends sticking to a set number of monthly "pro bono" hours per month: "Once those hours are used up, you know that volunteering has to wait until next month."

Eyes on the prize

If you feel as though the parent-volunteer pressure has been mounting in recent years, you're not alone. "I think the requests are increasing because we want to give so much more for our children than we had," says Lela Davidson, mom of two and author of *Blacklisted from the PTA*, a tongue-in-cheek collection of essays about, among other things, her love-hate relationship with school volunteering.

"At a recent PTO meeting at my kids' high school, an organizer asked for help with a theme, food, music and games for the after-prom party," she says. "When we were kids, that was called the prom."

"In our constant quest to make every event in our kids' lives unforgettable, we're creating a whole lot of work for ourselves."

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Burnout buster:

Prioritize volunteer activities that have the biggest impact on your child's success in school, and put the rest in the "not now" pile. For example, that might mean spending more time assisting with the track team or supervising the lunchroom, and cutting back on other volunteer pursuits.

Banish guilt

Maybe fundraising isn't your thing, supervising the second-grade field trip to the zoo leaves you drained, or you can't leave work to help your child's class make risotto. Don't waste time and energy feeling bad about it, Caroline says. "Either volunteer or don't, but there's never room for guilt."

Burnout buster:

If there's one key to volunteer satisfaction, it might be this: Find the one volunteer activity you really enjoy — or at least, don't hate — and do that. Extroverted parents may love staffing school dances and helping out in the classroom, but that won't work for everyone.

Play to your strengths and schedule: Tech-savvy parents can update the school website or facilitate a class Facebook page; those who can't get away until after the kids are in bed can help clean up after a school event, instead of working the entire thing.

Parents who can't attend daytime events can stay connected to teachers and coaches via email, says Caroline. Stick to a regular check-in schedule — every two weeks or every month — and ask what your child can focus on that month to help support her success.

Dip a toe in

After she was "swept into" the role of PTA treasurer and then copresident, Lisa Steele Haberly, a Tucson, Arizona, mom of two, noticed something: The kindergarten classes at her children's elementary school had plenty of parent help, but not the upper grades. "I realized that the parents of the older kids were burned out," she says. "They'd put in their time."

That kind of thinking is common, but upper elementary and secondary grades need parent help, too, says Loper. Parent volunteering takes a different shape as kids get older — think chaperoning school dances instead of supervising finger-painting — but parental help is still needed and appreciated. And as Child Trends notes,

parent volunteering benefits kids in middle school and high school, too.

Burnout buster:

Think of parent volunteering as a marathon, not a sprint, Loper says; don't burn through your energy right out of the gate. Instead of signing up for everything at that first PTA meeting, try out a single volunteer commitment. Pace yourself, and you'll be better prepared to serve your kid's school community for the long haul. ■

Malia Jacobson is an award-winning health and parenting journalist and mom of three. Her latest book is Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades.

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- Update the school website

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Gateway books

Can 'bad' books inhibit literacy?

By Gemma Alexander

The argument erupts in every generation: Should children be made to read quality literature, or should they be allowed to follow their own interests, even if that means *Goosebumps* and comic books?

Parents are often caught in the middle of reading tug-of-wars. In an essay last fall in *The New Yorker* titled "The Percy Jackson Problem," Rebecca Mead worried about a generation of kids who only read Rick Riordan while admitting that she enjoyed Enid Blyton during her own childhood. I can relate. My fifth-grader has craved high fantasy like it is Turkish delight in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* since discovering Riordan's books three years ago. Should I be worried?

Choose your own conclusion

Author Neil Gaiman asserts that reading of any kind is valuable because it ignites a love for words and information. In his talk for the nonprofit Reading Agency, Gaiman says, "The simplest way to make sure that we raise literate children is to teach them to read, and to show them that reading is a pleasurable activity. And that means, at its simplest, finding books that they enjoy, giving them access to those books and letting them read them."

On the other hand, author and literature professor Tim Parks argued last year in *The New York Review of Books* that the pleasures of genre fiction are distinct from those of more challenging literature, so there is no motivation to move from one to the other. In other words, *Sweet Valley High* is not a gateway to Jane Austen.

Educational research on the development of reading skills is reassuring. "A study that I found most compelling related to this question looked at first-graders' exposure to print. They found that children's knowledge of books at the first-grade level contributed uniquely to their reading comprehension and general knowledge 10 years

later," says Deborah McCutchen, professor and interim dean of the College of Education at the University of Washington.

Think of this in relation to the Matthew effect — a theory of accumulated advantage (you've heard it as "The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer"): The more books that there are in a child's early life, the more books there will be in their later life. It does not matter what books first-graders are familiar with or whether they can read the books themselves. What is important is simply the number of books they are exposed to.

"It's not a big assumption that any book will use vocabulary that is outside of a child's daily experience," explains McCutchen. For example, Riordan's books use words such as "trident" and "sarcophagus." *The Incredible Hulk* uses "gamma radiation."

Children with less exposure to print run into a higher proportion of unfamiliar words in assigned reading and struggle to make sense of them, which slows the learning process.

Comprehension is what counts

"Until third grade, children are learning to read; after third grade, they are reading to learn" is a familiar axiom in parent-teacher conferences. After third grade, what children read becomes more important, but not necessarily in the way you might expect.

"Connecting with the text keeps them reading

and practicing skills. That's the basis of reading comprehension. I have seen a lot of students increase their reading ability simply by reading

books of interest," says Genya Devoe, chair of the Reading Endorsement Program at Antioch University Midwest.

"Meet the student where he or she is," McCutchen advises. Some students may require a simpler version of the text, or a different format. "Read books aloud that are at a higher level than what kids can read themselves, but also explain the readings with explicit vocabulary instruction," Devoe suggests. The important factor is engagement with extended text.

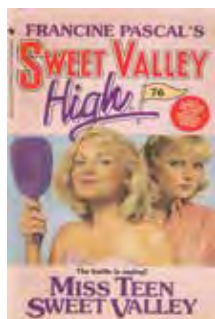
"It is increasingly important to get kids reading nonnarrative, informative texts," McCutchen says. Books with a hierarchical information structure develop important study skills that narratives don't, such as reading graphs and using an index. According to Devoe, even comic books are beneficial because they connect to the skills used to find information online. They also often hold more interest for students who struggle with traditional texts.

Once kids find a series they love, they do tend to continue in that genre. Teachers and parents should provide opportunities and guidance to branch out from exactly where students are. They need something to scaffold on, so encourage them by helping them select different books that connect to their interests," Devoe says. Riordan fans might appreciate a collection of Greek myths or nonfiction about ancient Greece. A young Winnie the Pooh fan may enjoy a book about bears.

But what about quality? Is it enough for children to read a lot, even if they never read James Joyce?

"Gaining a sophisticated competency in literacy, I think, can be divorced from the issue of taste," McCutchen says. "We forget that the 'good books' change dramatically over time. Is it better to read James Joyce or Shakespeare? Whose canon is the right one? I like a good murder mystery when I get on an airplane." ■

Gemma Alexander encourages reading in any form. She blogs about books and other creative things at gemmaealexander.wordpress.com and spends too much time on Twitter @gemmaetweet. She is under promise to her daughter to read Percy Jackson soon.



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13–18

Tackling test anxiety

By Rebecca M. Hill

My son gets mostly A's and B's on his homework, but he does poorly on his exams. When test time comes, he gets nervous. He draws a blank. He simply can't remember what he studied the night before. He has classic symptoms of test anxiety. Fortunately for kids like my son — and there are many — knowing what strategies to employ can make all the difference.

It's a testing world

Kids today take a lot of tests. In fact, in today's schools, standardized testing consumes almost 20–50 hours per year. Plus, students can spend 60–110 hours per year in test preparation alone. This increased emphasis on testing starts as early as the third grade, which invariably creates more pressure on students to excel. Because of this, we are seeing more students with test anxiety; in fact, test stress affects more than 20 percent of all students, making it the most prevalent impairment in school today. Clearly it is no small problem, and left unchecked, test anxiety can have an impact on long-term learning.

What is test anxiety?

Test anxiety can manifest itself in a variety of ways. Depending on how old the student is, parents and educators can see a wide range of emotions, from absolute refusal to go to school to stomachaches to loss of sleep to heart palpitations to a real sense of dread and failure. Sometimes, says University of Chicago psychology professor and researcher Sian Beilock, students see failure at test taking as an indictment of who they are as a person, so they don't feel like they have the ability to succeed. In her research, Beilock has seen kids as young as 6 years old with test anxiety. What really happens, says Beilock, is that these worries can have an impact a person's ability to hold information in their head via their working memory. "The key is to figure out how to help kids manage this anxiety," she says.

Test anxiety's impact on the working memory

Working memory is our short-term memory cache, which temporarily stores information



until we decide to permanently remember it. Consisting of a central executive function that controls and coordinates our auditory and visual spatial abilities, working memory is, says Beilock, our cognitive horsepower. Working memory is "like a mental scratchpad that helps us keep what we need in mind and other things out. It helps us remember all sorts of things in our daily life, like our phone number or doing math problems." But working memory is limited, Beilock says, when we are stressed and anxious, and these worries can co-opt the working memory so we have less brainpower to use.

Some kids have strong working memories, and others do not. For instance, with a math word problem, kids must keep the numbers in their memory, figure out how to solve the problem and then write out the solution on their worksheet. Kids with poor working memories might have trouble capturing and keeping those numbers in their head. But for kids with test anxiety, their worries about failure and forgetting essentially elbow out what they studied the night before. As a result, their worries take over their memory.

Working memory is limited when we are stressed and anxious

As with my son, anxious test-takers may draw a blank or simply not be able to grasp exactly what the test is asking of them. So for students who have test anxiety, the question is how can we free them from stress and anxiety when they are taking a test so they can fully use their working memory?

Deep muscle relaxation and breathing

One successful method is deep muscle relaxation and breathing. Psychologist Heidi Larson, assistant professor at Eastern Illinois University, has conducted studies with students ranging from third-graders up to high school students on the impact of deep muscle relaxation and breathing on test anxiety. She has found that teaching students to do these exercises has significantly helped to reduce their anxiety. When she added chewing gum to the mix, she found that it also increased students' focus on their performance in other areas in addition to test taking. The whole idea, Larson says, is to slow down your system, breathing through the stress so you are able to recall and remember what you learned. She believes that everyone needs to learn to manage their stress, and that teaching students how to relax their muscles and do deep breathing is a life skill.

Expressive writing

Another method of reducing test anxiety was pioneered by Beilock. Patterning her research after that done with patients with depression, she found that students who engage in expressive writing can



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Helping your kids prepare for overnight camp



Overnight camps can be a fabulous opportunity for kids to learn independence and new skills. But just because your child meets the age guidelines of a camp doesn't mean they're ready. Here are tips on how to tell whether your child would benefit from overnight camp and how to prepare them.

PRACTICE

Day camps are a great first step. Some overnight camps also offer shorter camp experiences which is good practice. Another litmus test is when a child can stay for several days with a relative or friend, without parents around, and not be anxious.

LET THE CHILD CHOOSE

One way to tell if your child is ready for overnight camp is, quite simply, if they ask to go. And allowing your child to help choose the camp or particular session as well as learn about the new environment can boost his confidence and ease fears.

LEARN ABOUT THE OVERNIGHT CAMP

Once you've signed up for a camp, use the camp's orientation booklets, website, counselors or

alumni to research the environment beforehand. Share this information with your child.

PLAN YOUR CORRESPONDENCE

You and your children should agree on how often you will be in touch. Address and stamp envelopes in which kids can mail their letters home. Overnight camps usually discourage phone calls.

CHOOSE YOUR WORDS CAREFULLY

While it is helpful to say, "It's normal to be homesick," it is not helpful for kids to hear how much you will miss them. Don't say things like, "I hope you'll be OK," which instills fear. Instead, be enthusiastic and optimistic!

— Hilary Benson

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Test anxiety

continued from page 43

reduce their test anxiety and improve their test grades by nearly a grade point. There is a long line of research in clinical psychology showing that for depressive individuals who tend to have more physical ailments, writing and journaling can be a great way to reduce doctors' visits and physical consequences," Beilock says.

In the case of test anxiety, students use expressive writing to share their fears and anxieties. By leaving their worries and stress on the page, they effectively eliminated their worries and were able to free up their working memory to remember what they studied. Still, one size doesn't fit all, Beilock says. Every kid is different.

Larson agrees. "Each of us releases tension in different ways. I think that putting it all down on paper can have the same effect [as deep muscle relaxation and breathing]. But what I like about muscle relaxation and deep breathing is that it is a quick and simple tool that we know is effective," she says.

For educators and parents, information about these two methods just might relieve some stress of their own. And while some anxiety is useful, because it can help a student prepare and study, too much anxiety is harmful, Larson says. Learning to employ these methods could improve scores now and help a student later on when they have even bigger issues to tackle. ■

Rebecca Hill is a freelance writer and a parent to two teenage boys. Much of her writing time is spent working on articles about education, parenting, reading and science pieces. See her work at rebeccaahill.com. The rest of her time is spent trying to keep up with her boys, one a Purdue Boilermaker freshman and the other a 16-year-old wrestler. She lives in Zionsville, Indiana.

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Someone you should know

By Elisa Murray • Photograph by Mark Olencki

SARAH IOANNIDES, the celebrated new music director of the Tacoma Symphony Orchestra (TSO), has won accolade after accolade for her conducting talent and innovation in a field still dominated by men. Her inaugural season with TSO, meanwhile, is selling out concerts and earning rave reviews. Ioannides, who was born in Canberra, Australia, is also music director of the Spartanburg Philharmonic Orchestra in South Carolina. She is mother to three young children and is married to Yale professor of trombone Scott Hartman.

How did your early interest in music start?

I was exposed to music from the very beginning: When my mother was pregnant with me, she was attending concerts and singing in a choir that my father conducted. So I suppose that spark was always there and somewhat inherited; I come from a long line of musicians. My first instrument was piano; then, violin. By the age of 8, I was playing three instruments, violin, piano and recorder.

How did you develop a passion for conducting?

My father, Ayis Ioannides, is a conductor so I grew up with an immediate conducting role model. When I was younger and still living in the United Kingdom, I won a place as a violinist in the National Youth Orchestra as well as the National Youth Chamber Orchestra. In both of these orchestras I was introduced to internationally renowned conductors and that's when I was first inspired to start studying conducting. I was also quite interested in the psychology of musicians and what makes them do certain things.

What are your plans for TSO and its community and family programs?

My first goal is to draw a passionate following for the symphony and live orchestral music; part of that will be community engagement and reaching out to different pockets in Tacoma. We hope to bring groups of musicians out in the community and performing across the region, and to really have our performances be top quality and follow wonderful guest artists. In addition we are doing some new things; like the world premiere of a percussion orchestra [Ioannides' inaugural concert featured a world premiere of a percussion concerto by Sean O'Boyle].

[As far as programming specifically for children] the Mini Maestros concerts are performed by a chamber orchestra group of four-five players. It's a wonderful program. We want to offer children's performances more often and would like to have more story repertoire on a regular basis. We would love to hear from readers on what they'd like to see.

What are some upcoming highlights of the Tacoma Symphony Orchestra's season?

In May, we're doing a multimedia show called "The Planets"; it will be played with photographs, imagery and film from the Hubble telescope. It will be very exciting.

We also have our pops concert on March 22, "Songs from

the Emerald Isle," with a piece by a friend of mine ["Tour de Tap," a concerto for orchestra and tap dancer by composer Kim Schamberg] and featuring a Tony Award-winning tap dancer [Trent Kowalik] and guest vocalist Kaitlyn Lusk, who was chosen to be the singer for *Lord of the Rings*.

How do you support your children's musical development?

We have three children, ages 4, 4 and 7: two girls and one boy. The girls play violin and piano. Our little boy is playing ukulele. He wanted to do something that was his own thing. They have lessons once a week, and often do lessons by Skype.

How do you keep up music lessons and practice amid all the transitions?

You have to commit to it. If the parent commits, the child commits. The sessions don't have to be long. Do a little bit at a time, small bites, regularly.

They might not want to do it every day, but there are the days when they are very pleased with it and realize practice is making them better.

What helps you juggle such an extraordinary career with raising small children?

We have to do an immense amount of preplanning because we go away so often. My 7-year-old daughter goes to school in South Carolina, Connecticut and Tacoma. The twins are in school in two places. The way we survive is we have a wonderful au pair, who is German.

Also, getting enough sleep is really important, staying healthy, making sure we've all got stress-relieving activities. Inevitably, something has got to give. In the end, it doesn't matter, as long as you're keeping up with really important stuff.

Anything else you'd like to share with readers?

Being exposed to music and live music and performance is a whole other world that can be so enriching and that can show [kids] the greater world out there. Set aside some time and resources and savings for that. We are such a world obsessed by things, but I think what we do is more important than what we've got. ■



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For Teens 12 - 17 years of age. June 29th - August 14th.
(425-564-2263)
bellevuecollege.edu/ce/summer-teen-program

Bellevue College does not discriminate on the basis of race or ethnicity; creed; color; national origin; sex; marital status; sexual orientation; age; religion; genetic information; the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability; gender identity or veteran status in educational programs and activities which it operates... Please see policy 4150 at www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/.




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parentmap.com/lectures





SUMMER DAY CAMPS

Registration for Bellevue Parks & Community Services' Summer Day Camps is now underway!

Don't miss out on a summer packed with fun, adventure, variety, and value.

Visit <http://goo.gl/jyzSyy> to find your fun this summer.

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