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Superheroes

THE EDUCATOR
Josh Garcia
Deputy
superintendent
of Tacoma
Public Schools

Champions for Washington
kids and families

yurts 101

Your go-to guide to 'camping luxe' 35

Good Growing
newsletter inside

 **Seattle Children's**
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SPONSORED CONTENT

**BIRTHDAY PARTY
ETIQUETTE**

Email invites? Siblings in
or out? Find out **48**

**YOUR CAREER
ON-RAMP GUIDE**

How to reinvent your work
self after kids **10**

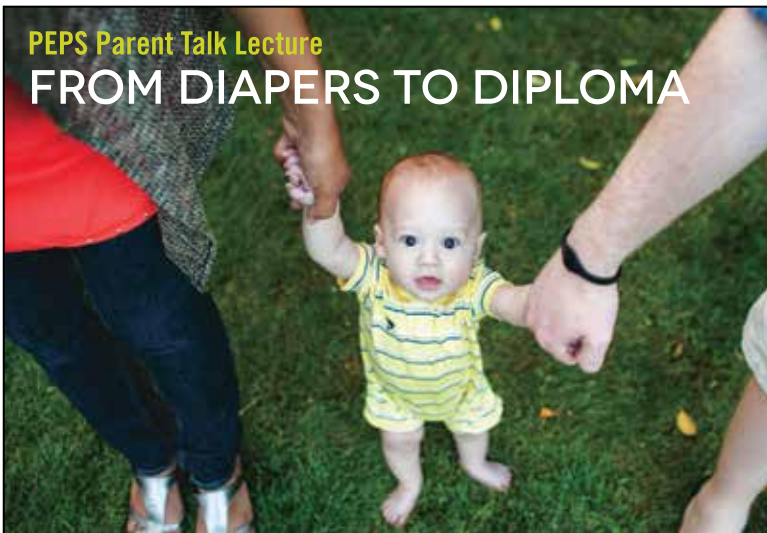


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feature
PAGE 12

ParentMap
APRIL 2015

Superheroes

Champions for Washington kids and families



REGULARS

4 DEAR READER

We're all heroes!

6 PAGE 6

Raise a wild child; find the perfect camp; manage toddler meltdowns

7 ASK THE EXPERTS

When anxiety is a bigger issue; when to worry about a teen mood

9 BRAIN FUEL

Parent news, snack-sized

10 MAKING IT WORK

The mother of reinvention! On-ramping after a parenting break

45 AFTER-SCHOOL SPECIAL

Elevating art, elevating youth

OUT + ABOUT

32-33 APRIL CALENDAR

35 CAMPING IN THE ROUND

Yurts are a 3,000-year-old structure for familial bliss

40 APRIL PLAY LIST

AGES + STAGES

48 4-9 PARTY PEEVES

Your primer for a zero-drama birthday bash

55 10-13 INVITING GIRLS TO STEM

At a critical time, middle-school girls offered mentors and programs

59 14-18 GETTING A RUNNING START

How high school students are earning college credits for free

ADVERTISING SECTIONS

41-56 CAMPS + ACTIVITIES

58 NWAIS SCHOOLS

60-63 SCHOOLS + PRESCHOOLS

COMING IN MAY

• **Mom-and-pop-preneurs:** Looking for balance, parents start businesses of their own

• **Goo goo go!** Your big summer list of new baby + toddler travel and adventure gear

• **Breaking up is hard to do:** Co-parenting strategies for divorce



10

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dear reader

We're all heroes!

In the years since I became a mother (almost 10 now!) I have tried out nearly every combination and acronym of mothering/working I can think of: I've worked long hours full-time in an office while my infant and toddler were looked after by kind caregivers in a too-pricey daycare; I have stayed at home (SAHM); I have stayed at home while working part-time for myself (WAHM) with two preschoolers nipping at my heels. I now work full-time — sometimes at home, sometimes not — while my kids are in school. A manic schedule for mom, dad, kids and the occasional babysitter keeps the train on the rails (barely). I have been lucky in the partner department (equality, as much as schedules allow, is the name of the game in our family), but the challenges I have faced are common to many parents and mothers in particular. When I have had the opportunity to be home with my kids, while I enjoy and adore them, I have sometimes also been bored, or else worried that my career skills and ability to earn an income over the long run are fading. When I feel energized in my career and busy in the workplace, I have the oh-so-common guilt: *Am I giving my children enough of me?* And we haven't even talked about outside hobbies, passions and exercise — ha! In “The mother of reinvention” (p. 10) — a new installment of our yearlong series, “Making It Work,” about the work/life juggle — I explore how parents can think strategically about on-ramping back to work after staying home. Many of you would be surprised to know that your endless volunteer hours on the PTA board actually count as career experience and could help you transition into your dream job!

Speaking of juggling, it takes a village, right?! Each year at ParentMap we are beside ourselves with excitement selecting the new “Superheroes” (p. 12) for kids and families. The roster of champions for 2015 is as heroic as ever, from an evangelist for African American history (Rosanna Sharpe, executive director of the Northwest African American Museum, p. 19) to a hipster deputy superintendent helping improve how a huge school district serves its students (Josh Garcia, Tacoma Public Schools, p. 16), to a joyous advocate shaping youths into leaders (Lori Markowitz, executive director, Youth Ambassadors, p. 14). This year as usual we asked the honorees who inspired them or helped them succeed, and a pretty plausible trend emerged: their parents. Get inspired reading through the stories of our 2015 heroes (expanded interviews at parentmap.com/superheroes2015), and also give yourself a pat on the back. Parenting, as we know, is *all* juggle. The ultimate prize is to find our own joy while inspiring our children to find theirs.

We are all heroes!



Natalie Singer-Velush
Managing editor

MIGHTY MINI MEALS

Embrace your superpowers by baking up a hearty, portable meal that features the “superfood” black beans.

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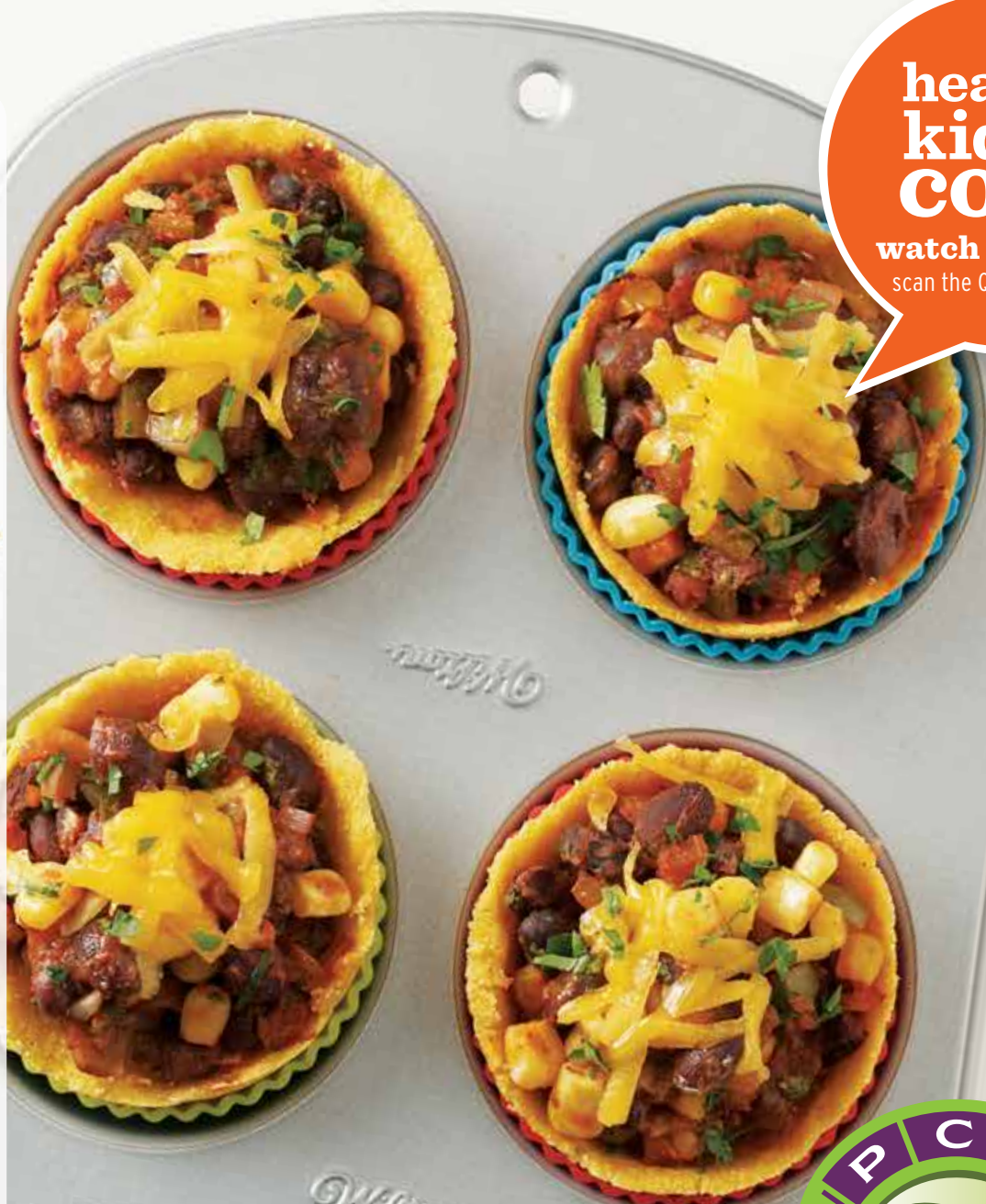


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Manage meltdowns

Do you have a toddler? Does your kiddo have meltdowns? In our new post, get step-by-step advice on how to manage a meltdown (including easy-to-make parent mistakes, and the difference between talking and lecturing) from childrearing expert and author Laura Kastner:

parentmap.com/managemeltdowns.

This is no joke!

Kicking off a new interview series on how Seattle-area parents in a variety of professions balance work, home and creative life, we chat with comic book artist Megan Kelso about working from home, and finding artistic inspiration and dinner solutions: **parentmap.com/megankelso**. Plus check out all the content in our yearlong look at how families are "Making It Work": **parentmap.com/makingitwork**.

Hatch a craft

Peep! We have a garden variety of spring and Easter crafts that kids of all ages will enjoy. Whip up some egg-carton baby chicks, recycled paper poppies, up-cycled floral crafts, embroidered baby sock bunnies and lots more cute, fun projects. **parentmap.com/holidays**



Calling all campers

It's not too late, we swear. Dozens and dozens of Puget Sound-area camps still have spots left for your happy campers. Click through our online roundups of specialized camps, including STEM camps, horse camps, language camps and more, plus pop your requirements into our searchable camps database to find the perfect fit: **parentmap.com/camps**.



Raise a wild child

We all know nature is good for kids, but sometimes it can be hard to make the time in busy family schedules for outdoor exploration and play. On April 2, paleontologist Scott Sampson of the PBS Kids hit *Dinosaur Train* and author of the new book *How to Raise a Wild Child* will speak at Town Hall Seattle about how to help kids fall in love with nature. Read about Sampson's naturific ideas in our Q&A: **parentmap.com/wild-child**. (And for another inspiring read on kids and nature just in time for Earth Day, see Richard Louv's "A walk in the woods" at **parentmap.com/walkinthewoods**.)

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Q&A

ask the experts



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When is anxiety a bigger issue?

Q: My son is 7 and has been having a hard time lately with anxiety. Mostly this rears up at night, when he can't settle down to go to bed and says he's afraid of being alone. He is very aware of fears — dangers, bad guys, being alone — at various points in his day. Is this a phase? How can we help him calm down?

A: Seven is a typical age for anxiety to show up. It is a good idea to explore with your child possible causes of the anxiety. Start with sleep time, because this is happening more at night. If the room is frightening, parents can make it feel safer with a nightlight, pre-bedtime room inspections and reassurances. Medical issues (restless legs, sleep apnea, bedwetting) can mean poor sleep that manifests as anxiousness. Ensure the bedtime routine is consistent; many 7-year-olds do better with a regular routine.

Nighttime anxiousness can also signify daytime stressors. It is important to assess whether your child feels safe in their home, neighborhood and school. Is your child being bullied? Are they struggling with a teacher or subject? Is the neighborhood safe? Is there familial discord? Does your child feel safe with every person he or she spends time with? Does your child watch violent movies or games?

To look for signs of something more concerning, explore how anxiousness is impacting your child's life. Does he or she isolate themselves from people or activities that used to be fun? Does your child repeatedly do things like wash their hands? Is there a family history of mood or behavior problems? Is anything happening with their body, like weight or hair loss? How do they cope with big changes, sudden plan changes? [How do they] communicate worry? Whom does he or she see as good people to talk with? Parents are no. 1, but whom would do they talk to at school?

Even with no red flags, explore your child's environment for consistency. Think about "descheduling" if there are too many activities. Create a regular, casual check-in time, say, during meals or drives to school. Some children blame themselves for things unrelated to their actions (a sibling's illness). If this is the case, help alleviate unwarranted guilt.

Finally, have an "if then" plan. If anxiousness worsens or your child discloses something serious later, discuss this with your health care provider. This may lead to a referral for a child behavior specialist.



Dr. Ben Danielson is the clinical director at Seattle Children's Odessa Brown Children's Clinic (OBCC) and a member of Seattle Children's Research Institute's Center for Clinical and Translational Research.

When a teen's mood is something more serious

Q: How do you tell regular teen moodiness from depression?

A: Depression is a term many teens use to describe their level of sadness. It is also used to describe a treatable clinical condition that 10–20 percent of adolescents experience at some point. These two different experiences are both real. How can parents know when their teen needs help? Staying connected to your teen, communicating and checking in with them can help answer this question.

While a teen's years can and should be a time of strong feelings, passions and challenging authority, it's also when they can develop mental health challenges. Normal adolescent development often includes moodiness that doesn't disrupt families. A teen can be moody without having difficulty meeting responsibilities. When a teen's actions disrupt family function and family members worry about what mood will emerge from the teen at any given time, consider having a trained health professional screen for depression or concerns like substance abuse, trauma and bullying.

Depression looks different in teens than in adults. Teens may not look sad, but they may be very irritable, argumentative, contrary and prone to fighting.

When [a teen's] moodiness, sadness, irritability or self-imposed isolation lasts longer than two weeks, think about having the teen evaluated. If a teen ever expresses the desire to die or speaks of ending their life, the teen must be given immediate access to mental health care (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK [8255]). Sometimes parents think, They didn't really mean it. Even if this is true, often [this indicates that] a teen's coping skills are no longer adequate. Statements like this show a hopeless, desperate teen who believes there is no relief for their pain. Swift assistance with adolescent-focused mental health professionals is critical.

Very simply, if a teen asks for help, they need it. Take it seriously. Without help, teens are more likely to have difficulty successfully transitioning into a productive and mature adult. They are more likely to have depression during adulthood that becomes a lifelong struggle.

The good news is treatment works and can be transformative for a teen. Parents who reach out for assistance for teens experiencing difficulties ensure their teens have the support they need as they grow into adulthood.



Dr. Leslie R. Walker is chief of the Division of Adolescent Medicine at Seattle Children's Hospital and a professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Washington School of Medicine.

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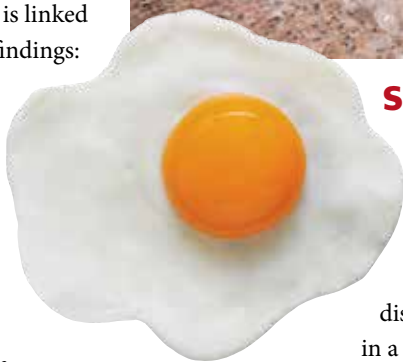
parent news, snack-sized

Over easy

A government advisory panel's newest set of dietary guidelines is like having Christmas, Halloween and my birthday rolled into one. Fresh off the "naughty list": eggs. Until now, Americans were told to limit cholesterol to 300 milligrams a day; now, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are ditching those limits in light of a lack of evidence that dietary cholesterol is linked to blood cholesterol. Other fine findings: It's OK to have a moderate amount of alcohol and as many as five cups of coffee a day (it reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease). And, for the first time, the environment is a factor: The panel urged Americans to eat sustainably and avoid beef. Peeps in the beef industry say the panel overstepped itself and are protesting. Government officials will decide whether to adopt the guidelines later this year.

Shell game

A new study suggests that if babies who are at risk of peanut allergy start eating peanut products regularly before the age of 11 months, there is a very good chance that they won't develop the allergy. The study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that introducing peanut products into the diets of infants was safe and resulted in a better than 80 percent reduction in the development of the allergy. Important note: Parents of infants with eczema and/or an egg allergy should consult a physician before trying this.



Sinking feeling

Another study is dishing about a potential link between allergies and . . . dishwashers. Researchers found that kids in families that wash their dishes in the sink — rather than in a dishwasher — develop fewer allergies. The theory is that kids who grow up in "over-sanitized" homes don't build up immunity against common bacteria. The study's authors call their report, which is published in the journal *Pediatrics*, interesting, but say we shouldn't toss out our washers just yet; more research is needed. OK then!

Melatonin alert

Sleep experts in Australia are warning parents about the potential dangers of using melatonin to help their kids sleep. The hormone plays an important role in the body's ability to develop sleep rhythms and other biological processes. In a paper published in the *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, researchers note that the U.S. is the only country in the world in

which melatonin is completely unregulated. They say that giving melatonin supplements to kids can potentially lead to serious side effects when they are older, including changes in the cardiovascular, immune and metabolic systems. As always, check with your pediatrician before giving your kids melatonin.

Try to stay calm

. . . while reading this: Researchers now say that children who spend more than two hours a day in front of a screen are 30 percent more likely to develop high blood pressure. Thirty percent! And if your kid does less than an hour of physical activity a day, her risk increases by 50 percent. The study looked at a whopping 5,000 kids in eight European countries — a big sampling. The upshot (stop me if you've heard this one): Limit screen time and get those kids moving.

Python, Ruby and Java

No, that's not the name of a new PBS kids' show (but that would be cool!). It's a list of common coding languages your child might learn as part of a new program, Code Corps. Seattle is one of seven cities that will benefit from the new program, created by Google and Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Code Corps will recruit and train AmeriCorps volunteers to teach kids ages 9–14 at select Boys & Girls Clubs. The goal is to reach about 5,000 kids nationwide.

Get lectured!

Rosalind Wiseman: "Queen Bees and Masterminds," April 21; John Gottman: "Making Love Last and Marriage Work," May 18. parentmap.com/lectures ■

— Kristen Russell



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making it work

The mother of reinvention

On-ramping after a parenting break

By Natalie Singer-Velush

Seven years ago, I was a working as a newspaper reporter covering some of the city's biggest crimes and juggling care of my infant and toddler daughters. I loved my job but missed my kids. When chaos began to eclipse the satisfaction I had once felt from my career —and despite real fear about mommy tracking myself — I decided to step away for a while to raise my children.

As a stay-at-home mother, I reconnected with my daughters and regained some sanity. Yet even as I sang through story times, toured kindergartens and communed with other mothers and fathers on work hiatus, I had already begun to obsess over two little words: *What's next?*

Over the past 12 years, the percentage of stay-at-home mothers has spiked after a decades-long decline. Many more fathers, too, are taking time off to raise children. But what happens when we, the legions of stroller-pushing professionals on break, decide to go back to work?

What if your skills are outdated — if the jargon around that water cooler is entirely different than it was BK (Before Kids)? Do you go back to school, rely on networking? How do you explain the gap on your resume?

What do you do if the job you left is not the one you want to return to?

The quest for reinvention is becoming common as mothers and, increasingly, fathers navigate the ever-more-porous divide between staying at home and working outside the home.

"Becoming a parent certainly affects your availability to dedicate to a job," says Malia Morrison, an assistant director of academic programs at UW Professional &



Many of the tasks and projects of parenting can actually help you grow professionally.

Continuing Education and a mother herself. "You might have to pick up your kid from day care and have to leave at 5 o'clock every day, or maybe travel becomes impractical. For many people, work consumes much of their identity and mental energy, and you have something new taking that place.

Even if making it to pickup on time is not your top concern — maybe you've found a dream nanny (lucky you), your kids are old enough to be independent, or your spouse is taking a tour of duty at home and plans to have those chicken nuggets ready by the dinner bell — you might be primed for a career makeover.

"If you look at age span, we could all have three separate careers of 20 years each," says Lisa Quast, a business consultant, executive and career coach. She spent 20 years climbing the corporate ladder and is now in her second-act career as a career coach and author. "Embrace the possibilities," Quast says.

But is jumping to a new chapter in your career as easy as turning the page in one of those oh-so-familiar children's fairy tales?

Take stock

A good first step in reinventing yourself professionally is to take stock of what you've done during your time away and plan ahead if possible. Many of the tasks and projects of parenting can actually help you grow professionally.

Quast tells the story of working with a client who took time off work to be with her kids. "She was so worried, saying, 'What am I going to do about this gap? It looks bad.' Then I dug a little deeper and found out that during this time she actually built the website and managed payroll for her husband's business *and* fielded the customer service calls. I said, 'What is your husband going to do now that you are leaving?' And she said, 'He'll have to hire an office manager.' Well, there you go, all those skills were ones she had built."

Going back to school — either in a full-time program or a course or certificate program like those offered through UW PCE — is another great choice for people who want to refresh skills or jump into a new job.

Own the gap

Many parents who want to get back on the career wagon worry about whether to address their domestic gap on their resume.

"Include it," says Sarah Kummer, field sales acquisition account manager for *Monster.com*. Kummer was the secretary of her child's PTA during her gap — not the most glamorous job, but a skill-building one, she says. "There are many things you learn from staying home: patience, organization, scheduling, finances."

While you shouldn't hide the child-rearing gap on your resume, there is an art to how you frame it, experts say.

Don't use terms such as *homemaker* or *domestic diva*, says Katie Walters, development and community relations manager for the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art. In 1996, Walters left her full-time job to raise her children. Then, in 2012, after earning a certificate in museum studies, she re-entered the full-time workforce. While she was home, not only did she serve on the PTA, she also became the publicist for the soapbox derby organization her kids were part of. She wrote their newsletter and built her skills.

Some experts recommend that job seekers with a gap highlight skills in their resume, rather than dates.

Activate networks

When you are ready to work again, don't underestimate the value of connecting with people — something that most parents become naturals at.

"The average person knows 500 people — not just people who can get you a job, but people who can tell you about their experiences," says Jennifer Youngblood, faculty and career coach at Centerpoint Institute for Life and Career Renewal. "Remember,

networking is a two-way street. Make sure you're talking *and* listening."

Kummer decided to stay home until her youngest was in kindergarten. Much of that time, friends were always trying to employ her. She kept saying, "No, but in the summer of 2011 I will be ready." And when she was ready, the opportunities were there — her networking had helped her land a job before school even started.

Embrace change

Don't be afraid to do some serious self-examination and clue gathering, then take a leap, says Youngblood. Assessments, career counselors, connecting with organizations such as *Careeronestop.org*, combing through *volunteermatch.com* to see what sets your heart aflutter, even reading the updated version of *What Color Is Your Parachute?* — all are potential resources.

"But make sure this is [what you want for] your life's work," Youngblood says. "Make sure it matches you."

It's OK if you are not quite sure yet what you want. Volunteer work, internships, going back to school: "You're not quite sure where you'll land, but putting yourself in situations will get you there," Youngblood says.

For me, necessity was the mother of reinvention. While home with my children, I volunteered, started a home business, investigated pursuits I was curious about and built up my publishing and narrative writing skills. Currently my kids are in school, I'm a graduate student and I have the job of my dreams. For now.

Some of us will never stop wondering, *what's next?* ■

Natalie Singer-Velush is Parentmap's managing editor. Follow her on Twitter @Natalie_Writes.



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2015



Champions for Washington kids and families

BY PARENTMAP STAFF • PHOTOS BY WILL AUSTIN



*W*ho gets to be called a hero? Every year at ParentMap, we sit around the table with a stack of recommendations from readers, child advocates, community leaders and previous Superheroes and talk about just that. We always have many more heroes than we can honor in a given year. As we interview our picks and take their photos (a daylong photo shoot where the do-gooder energy radiates), we hear about how they were inspired to make a difference. Inevitably, trends emerge.

Many of our 2015 Superheroes talk about being supported to succeed by their parents, a reminder of how important it is for kids to have adult mentors who champion them. And this year's heroes are master champions, leaning in so that a new generation of youths can be empowered to follow and achieve their dreams, by learning to lead, getting their ideas and inventions funded for development, writing their stories and more.

Read on to be inspired by these heroes for Washington kids and families. Thank you, Superheroes! >>



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The compassion champion

Lori Markowitz

Executive director, Youth Ambassadors

When Lori Markowitz of Seattle helped coordinate youth engagement for the 2008 Seeds of Compassion event held in conjunction with the Dalai Lama's visit to Seattle, she expected a rich, rewarding, short-term experience. But seven years later, the Youth Ambassadors program she pioneered is still going strong. In fact, it's grown tenfold, reaching youths all over Seattle with a message of hope, compassion and empathy.

As a former coordinator for global exchange program Bridges to Understanding and codirector and founder of Seattle's Middle East Peace Camp for Children, Markowitz had the global insight and connections to facilitate the dreams of young people. Today, with Markowitz as its executive director, the Youth Ambassadors (YA) program reaches more than 500 students across Seattle through school-embedded classes that build compassion along with grit, perseverance and self-confidence.

"The mission of Youth Ambassadors is to develop learners who become leaders through compassionate service to the community," says Markowitz, who co-teaches the classes. "YA engages students in leadership development, mentoring skills and civic engagement. Together, they deepen their understanding of what it means to engage compassion in a purposeful manner."

Through assemblies and grassroots projects, the program enables students to take control of their learning and assume leadership roles in their community and school. Guest speakers, activities and hands-on experiences instill confidence and a sense of accomplishment. "When they leave the class, they feel empowered and engaged in their school community and feel a sense of responsibility for their community," Markowitz says.

One recent grassroots effort culminated in a 2014 assembly that included megastar musician and producer Macklemore and his fiancée, Tricia Davis. The assembly at West Seattle's Roxhill Elementary School launched the school's Buddy Bench project. The school's colorful bench — signed by

the famous couple — reminds students of the importance of friendship, advocacy and empathy. "The students said, 'Nobody will be lonely at Roxhill Elementary!'" Markowitz says.

The mother of two college students, Markowitz hopes to replicate YA in other states. "I hope every student will have an opportunity to be empowered and raise their voice for positive change."

Who is your personal hero?

My husband and children for graciously supporting me. The Youth Ambassador students and Rwandan girls from Impuhwe [an organization helping Rwandan girls obtain an education], who inspire me each and every day. My uncle Adam, a survivor of the Holocaust and an incredibly resilient and kind human being despite the horrors he lived through.

What one thing did an adult or mentor do for you as a child that helped you succeed or become the person you are?

My mom, a single parent, and my sisters taught me the importance of being a strong team player and to care about others.


How do you balance pursuing your passion with your personal life?

It certainly has been challenging at times, and I'm still learning how to navigate my passion for young people with my personal life. Attending a daily 6 a.m. yoga class helps me meditate and reflect on my work/life balance.

What book did you recently read and how did it impact you?


Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol Dweck. I love this book because it reminded me of a student who thanked me for seeing the potential in each and every Youth Ambassador.

— Malia Jacobson



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The educator

Josh Garcia

Deputy superintendent of Tacoma Public Schools



Josh Garcia is changing the way schools view success. When he became deputy superintendent of Tacoma Public Schools (the state's third-largest school district, serving 30,000 students) in 2012, he started a conversation with parents, teachers and the community about what they thought was essential in a child's schooling and overall growth.

Garcia went on to reshape the district's accountability system. Usually, districts measure their success by attendance, test scores and graduation rates; Tacoma's system considers a much wider range of indicators. With the new system in place, Tacoma has already seen positive results — in the past two years, the district has experienced increased enrollment in pre-K programs, graduation rates have improved by over 20 percent, and the number of high school students taking college-level courses has almost doubled.

Garcia also helped establish an opt-out program that automatically enrolls students who pass a state test into Advanced Placement classes. In 2013, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) honored Garcia with an Outstanding Young Educator Award. He was also named a "leader to learn from" by *Education Week*.

But the work to improve hasn't stopped there. "I relentlessly think about what is missing, what we can do to help a child that we haven't yet reached," says Garcia. His excitement seems to be contagious. "For us in Tacoma, accountability is more than shared responsibility," he says. "There is a core group of citizens that have moved toward aligning our efforts."

It takes a village — and in Tacoma, that village is the community. "To work in a city that is so strong and so committed to becoming better is truly a gift," Garcia adds, "We recognize that we may not be perfect, but we can always try to be better."

Who is your personal hero?

The human being. I am fascinated by people and the obstacles they overcome. I have learned that inspiration is everywhere, within each of us daily. We must open our hearts, minds and hands if we are to change the world. My heroes are those that feed the human soul.

What one thing did an adult or mentor do for you as a child that helped you succeed or become the person you are?

My mom and dad really taught me to dream and set goals. They didn't sugarcoat my results, but rather, continued to support me from where I was; they helped me visualize and work toward where I wanted to be.

How do you balance pursuing your passion with your personal life?

I am extremely grateful to work in an amazing team environment with a world-class boss, colleagues and school board. This is matched by a world-class family. They all recognize that I have to run in order to find my balance. This pace makes me feel alive, and they support that.

How can we inspire today's youth to pursue their biggest dreams?

We must believe that every child has infinite power to endless possibilities. Our job is not to determine their dreams, but rather help them achieve those dreams. We need to stop fearing our youth and instead embrace them for the gifts they are to each of us and our collective future.

— Nicole Persun

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The history preservationist

Rosanna Sharpe

Executive director of the Northwest African American Museum

Rosanna Sharpe has an expansive vision of what museums should be.

“Places for alternative ways of learning,” she says, explaining that museums provide a venue for creative problem solving, for family time and learning to go hand in hand, and for students whose learning style doesn’t fit into the traditional school system.

At the Northwest African American Museum (NAAM), she says, “We’re telling stories that often get left out in classrooms and social studies books.”

Sharpe’s path to a leadership role at the seven-year-old NAAM wasn’t a completely straightforward one. She loved to draw as a child, sometimes mimicking her mother’s sketches, but by high school, her focus turned from the arts toward more academic pursuits.

During college, she says, “I looked to the arts as therapy,” a way to balance out a heavy academic load. It’s not surprising that she might have needed an outlet, with a college career that began with the rigors of West Point.

Knee surgery interrupted Sharpe’s time at West Point and brought her home to the Northwest. While recuperating, she enrolled at Pierce College. Walking into the college’s art department changed the course of her career. “That really was a ‘life stream’ moment,” she says.

Sharpe earned degrees in arts management and museum studies, and went on to hold positions at the Tacoma Art Museum, the Museum of Glass and EMP Museum.

“We’re really preserving, rescuing history and interpreting it for the greater public benefit,” she says of NAAM’s focus. Sharpe wants young children of all colors to embrace and respect history, and in it to find role models who will inspire them to make their own contributions. In particular, she wants young African-Americans to see the accomplishments of their forebearers that they might not see on TV or read in books. One special program, NAAM’s Genealogy Center, helps local families research their own histories. Plans are in motion to expand the center to allow more families to discover their legacies.

Who is your personal hero?

Celebrity-wise, it’s Michelle Obama. To me, she personifies the essence of black beauty and health, exhibits poise and style, and values family, education and loyalty. On a day-to-day [basis], it’s the aggregate of the many strong, loving and accomplished women whom I’ve had the privilege of crossing paths [with].

What one thing did an adult or mentor do for you as a child that helped you succeed or become the person you are?

My parents. They encouraged learning and gave me praise academically. Before I entered school, they purchased a set of Encyclopedia Britannica. That was their first major investment in my education, and symbolic of how much they valued learning.

How do you balance pursuing your passion with your personal life?

I learned how to do this when my daughter turned 13. I sadly realized that I was spending more time at museum events than I was spending with her, and our relationship suffered. But I made the necessary adjustments, and truly believe in self-care and living a balanced life. Practicing yoga helps me stay true to this aspiration.

— Nancy Chaney

The social trailblazers

Janet Levinger

Board chair, Eastside Pathways

Will Poole

Managing partner at Unitus Seed Fund



Seattle-area social-impact leader Janet Levinger is someone who makes each minute count: Most days, she juggles a full slate of meetings in Seattle or Bellevue, yet she still manages to exercise and cook dinner daily. She pauses to giggle when describing her thriving 36-year marriage to social technologist Will Poole. “I met Will when he was a 19-year-old college student. He worked 24/7 in those days, and he works 24/7 now. No surprises there!”

Like Levinger, Poole works hard with a purpose. He’s currently a managing partner at Unitus Seed Fund, a \$20 million fund investing in startups based in Seattle and Bangalore, India; the 13-and-a-half-hour time difference means Poole is often taking business calls after most Seattleites have powered down their laptops for the night.

A number of Unitus investments focus on education, a passion the couple shares. Unitus is a lead investor in Hippocampus Learning Centres, the largest private kindergarten in India, and CueLearn, which offers after-school math instruction to low- and middle-income families across India via “micro franchises” operated by well-educated women.

Levinger and Poole met at Brown University. Levinger studied honors English; Poole, computer science. After graduating in the early ’80s, they moved to New York with jobs in the growing high-tech sector. Soon after, they launched an automated-backup startup called Gemini Software, which they sold in 1985. Eleven years and another startup later, they landed in Bellevue, two young children in tow, after Microsoft purchased Poole’s company at the time.

After 16 years of working in high-tech marketing, Levinger was looking for a change. “When my son was 14 months old, Will’s aunt asked me if I would work if I didn’t have to,” she recalls. She did have to — with her husband in startup mode, she was frequently the breadwinner in those years — but the question made her realize that her true passion was elsewhere. When she witnessed a passionate political protest over a proposed school levy in which young parents waved signs in favor while older adults demonstrated against it, she decided she wanted to support access to quality education for all kids.

She volunteered with United Way of King County, then Social Venture Partners. Over the next two decades, she amassed thousands of hours working with organizations such as Eastside Pathways, the League of Education Voters and Thrive by Five

Washington. "In the early-learning field, we've come so far," Levinger says. "The fact that the City of Seattle is talking about universal pre-K is amazing. When I first started working on these issues in the '90s, nobody was talking about that; people still thought all mothers should simply be home with their kids."

Working with youth is one of the most satisfying aspects of Poole's work with Fast Pitch, the business training and pitch competition for social innovators ages 16 and older, which awarded \$300,000 in cash and prizes in 2014. "Every year, we have over a dozen high school and college students competing right alongside the others, and ultimately, we put four of them on stage in front of the big audience at McCaw Hall. They are always inspiring, often presenting better than others who are many years their senior," he says.

"Last year, the mom of one of the winners told us, 'You guys may have changed this kid's life.'"

What one thing did an adult or mentor do for you as a child that helped you succeed or become the person you are?

Levinger: My mother taught me to read when I was 3. My older brother went to kindergarten and was learning to read. I was jealous, so my mom showed me. I just took off. We used to go to the library every week, and I would check out as many books as I could and read them all.

Poole: My mother taught me to never accept limits imposed by society or "the system." When I was a high school freshman, she helped me enroll in computer science classes at a local university, Brown. The administration said, "No, high school freshman can't handle these courses." Undeterred, she and I appealed to the professor, who said, "Sure, try it out, and if you do OK, I'll help convince the administration." It worked, and it changed my life.

How can we inspire today's youth to pursue their biggest dreams?

Levinger: I think kids will naturally pursue their dreams if they feel they have the chance to achieve them. So we have to create a system that surrounds kids with support, provides opportunity for all and believes in them. This system starts with basic needs: food, housing, clothes, health care. Then we have to make sure they get a strong early start, which often means supporting their parents as a child's first and most important teacher. Next, we have to ensure that kids are ready for school — and schools are ready for kids.

Poole: Ensure they know there are no limits to possibilities if they work hard and smart. And to ensure the inspiration is not dampened by the reality of the costs of higher education; give free and/or affordable access to decent quality educational resources so they can develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.

— Malia Jacobson



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superheroes

The survivor advocates

**Cheryl Stumbo, Courtney Weaver
and Jane Weiss**

Courtney Weaver, Cheryl Stumbo and Jane Weiss share an experience that no one wants to share: They've all been personally affected by gun violence.

Weaver was shot in the face and arm in a 2010 attempted murder. Stumbo was one of five women shot in the 2006 Jewish Federation of Seattle shooting. Weiss lost her beautiful niece, Veronika Weiss, in the Isla Vista, California, shooting in May 2014.

They're not just survivors, they're advocates.

2014 was a big year for gun violence prevention legislation in Washington state. Legislators unanimously passed House Bill 1840, which gives law enforcement officers more tools for removing firearms when a protection order is issued. Voters also passed ballot Initiative 594 in November, which requires a background check on every gun sale in Washington state. I-594 was the first ballot initiative of its kind, circumventing legislators who have been reluctant to pass gun-related legislation and bringing the vote directly to the people. Stumbo was citizen sponsor of the bill.

"We've created a model for other states when it comes to how we can pass gun violence prevention legislation when our legislators refuse to act," she says.

These three advocates have publicly told their stories on countless occasions at press conferences, before legislators, and while volunteering at phone banks and fundraisers to help garner support for this life-saving legislation.

They'll tell you firsthand that it's not easy to constantly relive their painful experiences.

"People can say some hateful things. But I'm not going to be silenced. Too many people have been silenced by gun violence," Weaver says.

Who is your personal hero?

Stumbo: Eleanor Roosevelt. I admire her strength of character and the way she took on issues in a male-dominated world and made things happen.

Weiss: Hillary Clinton. Just look at all of the different ways she broke the glass ceiling.

Weaver: Tina Turner. She was one of the very first performers who came out publicly about domestic violence . . . she showed the world what a survivor looks like.

What one thing did an adult or mentor do for you as a child that helped you succeed or become the person you are?

Stumbo: My favorite high school teacher, Dr. Louis Graham, saw that I was willing to try anything once, even if I had no experience at it . . . he encouraged that quality in me.

How do you balance pursuing your passion with your personal life?

Stumbo: Trying to separate my experience as a survivor and have it not define



Left to right:
Cheryl Stumbo, Rory Graves,
Jane Weiss, Courtney Weaver

me didn't work. I needed to integrate it fully into who I was. I had to come to terms with the fact that my life has changed and I am not the same person that I was before, to own that rather than be a victim to it.

Weaver: I volunteer on the Fatality Review Board for the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) and also write music about my experience. A lot of my advocacy is a quest for answers, and piecing together and analyzing patterns of violence that happen in society . . . that data is the road to finding the solutions.

How can we inspire today's youth to pursue their biggest dreams?

Weiss: I am faced with picking stories to read with second- and third-graders. We've been reading biographies. And, almost in every case, someone overcame what should have impacted them negatively and turned

it into something inspiring, which I see these kids drawing inspiration from.

Stumbo: Children have a natural imagination . . . I don't think it is a matter of inspiring them, but a matter of not driving that creativity and imagination out.

Weaver: When I look back on my lofty childhood dreams, the main thing I want to tell my younger self is, "Believe in yourself."

What book did you recently read and how did it impact you?

Stumbo: I am rereading one of my most favorite book series, *Outlander*. It has strong female characters. . . . I love reading and the power of story.

Weiss: I just read the Newbery Honor winner *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Jacqueline Woodson, the author, grew up in the '60s during the civil rights movement. . . . It is inspiring to think about how things have changed.

— Rory Graves

Fearless wordsmith

Teri Hein

Executive director, Greater Seattle Bureau of Fearless Ideas (BFI, formerly 826 Seattle)

Ask Teri Hein about the Greater Seattle Bureau of Fearless Ideas' accomplishments, and she shares a story. Meron was a seventh-grader who lived near the Greenwood-based writing center. Her immigrant mother, who had limited English, signed up Meron for BFI's free tutoring sessions.

"Meron quickly became a fixture," remembers Hein, "joining our Youth Advisory Board, employed as our youth mentor and, with our help with writing and homework, thriving at Ballard High School. Today, she is a junior at Bryn Mawr and, as I write this, spending the semester abroad in India."

Meron is one of hundreds of kids in Seattle whose lives have been changed by the nonprofit writing and tutoring center that Hein, a teacher with 25 years of experience and a published author, founded in 2004. Started under the name Pencil Head, after one short year, the organization was asked to become a chapter of Dave Eggers' 826 writing centers. As 826 Seattle, its programs grew, adding writing workshops in schools and at the center, along with kid publishing projects, open mics and writing clubs (including a pen-pal club between kids and seniors). Programs were free, kid-driven and supported by a growing corps of volunteers, teachers, well-known writers, board members and staff.

"The success of this place has been a giant collaboration from the very beginning," Hein says.

In 2011, as 826 Seattle, it won the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, presented by first lady Michelle Obama. In late 2014, under Hein's leadership, it separated from the national 826 and rebranded as Bureau of Fearless Ideas (BFI).

The new identity is giving BFI more flexibility to tune its programs to the growing number of Seattle communities it serves. And the name,

Teri Hein
with former
student, Meron

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Hein says, couldn't be more perfect. "To write one's stories requires a certain fearlessness. And, as an organization, we always want to also be a place that takes risks and tries new things."

Who is your personal hero?

My personal hero was a woman named Betsy Presley who started The Hutch School at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, where I worked for many years. She passed away last year at age 92. She was someone who walked the walk her whole life, wasn't afraid to take risks for the right reasons, taught me so much about looking at the whole child, and how to do serious work while having a ton of fun.

What one thing did an adult or mentor do for you as a child that helped you succeed or become the person you are?

It is going to sound kind of corny, but I would have to say my mom. She had four daughters and imbued in all of us the sense that we needed to be independent women who could stand on our own two feet.

How do you balance pursuing your passion with your personal life?

I have never really cared about the "work-life balance" so many folks think is so important, as if there is some wall built between the two concepts. I love my work and my family and a farm we have on the Peninsula and making writing when I can and traveling and drinking cocktails with my friends. I do BFI stuff seven days a week, but when I feel like screwing off, I do, or if I want to work from the Peninsula farm some days, I do. I guess I like extremes more than balance.

How can we inspire today's youth to pursue their biggest dreams?

Let them know that life's biggest lessons come from failures, and failures only happen if you take risks. If you write a story you are proud of and you get up in front of people to read it and your voice freezes and you can't utter a sound and you feel mortified . . . just know it will be a great story when you are older, and the next time it won't be so scary.

What book did you recently read and how did it impact you?

I recently read Atul Gawande's *Being Mortal*. It really is a book about crafting one's life, [in] one's old age, [into] a life about living, not dying. That sounds kind of grim, but it really isn't. Lately I've been kind of thinking about starting my own (green) cemetery . . . but that's another story.

— Elisa Murray

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The community helper

Dennis G. Smith

President and CEO, United Way of Snohomish County

Dennis G. Smith brings what he learned during his years as a therapist to his role as president and CEO of United Way of Snohomish County. This friendly, curious conversationalist loves asking thoughtful questions when he meets people.

His leadership position melds strong strategic planning skills with his passions. “Working here takes what I knew as a therapist for improving human life and brings that to a community level. I plan ahead, trying to move everything to a positive resolution,” Smith says.

While leading United Way’s response during the 2014 Oso mudslide, he woke up one night thinking about the best way to help the families and communities affected by the disaster. “There were about nine different organizations collecting donations from the public. I realized we needed to coordinate distribution,” he says.

United Way received \$2.67 million in contributions for the Oso disaster.

Organization leaders began meeting regularly to work together to get the dollars to the community. “When people asked who they should donate to, we said it didn’t matter because in essence, we are all working together,” Smith says.

Who is your personal hero?

When I was 14, I watched Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a dream” speech live. I was very inspired by his sense of making society a better place through love and positive engagement. King admired Gandhi, and I also did a study of Gandhi. I followed a bit of King’s path, going into ministry and then jumping to social services. I have felt very fortunate to take those early childhood inspirations and bring them to some level of fruition.

What one thing did an adult or mentor do for you as a child that helped you succeed or become the person you are?

My father. Earl Smith was an accountant, and he also wrote poetry. He believed every human being has three jobs in life. First, we discover our gift. Secondly, we develop that gift and become the best person we can based on our gift. Third, use that gift to help advance the common good and the community around us.

How do you balance pursuing your passion with your personal life?

My wife and I have been married almost 42 years, and we raised two daughters, who are now married and live near us with our two grandkids. Spending time with them brings me grace, relaxation and love. I’m a planner, so I plan GIFTs: grandkid informational field trips. We do local outings as well as bigger trips, such as our history vacation to the East Coast.

How can we inspire today’s youth to pursue their biggest dreams?

Parents like to tell kids about what they ought to do. One of the best ways we can help promote our kids is to sit down and listen. That’s what I did with my own daughters: I had them talk first. I’d look for bridges of agreement so I could say, “Boy, that really makes sense.”

What book did you recently read and how did it impact you?

A book I actually read for the first time in 1980s: *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher and William L. Ury. It’s a study of negotiation skills. The most common bargaining type is taking your position and arguing it, trying to convince the other person. This is the least effective form of negotiation. The book talks about the importance of active listening and finishing with the bridges of agreement.

— Nancy Schatz Alton





The shelterer

Chuck Morrison

Regional executive director, American Red Cross, Snohomish County

Chuck Morrison feels comfortable in two different worlds. He loves the solitary pleasures of fly-fishing and hiking throughout the Northwest, and he's learned to be calm while leading Snohomish County's American Red Cross (ARC).

Morrison grew up in Massachusetts, but moved at age 30 for work at Everett Community College, making the switch to ARC 11 years ago. "Volunteers are 95 or 96 percent of our workforce, and they aren't just in name only. They do incredible work. It's a privilege to work with them and our staff, too, who are all totally devoted to the work," he says.

The ARC team was an integral part of the response to the 2014 Oso mudslide. With the roughly \$5 million raised for the effort, ARC immediately set up five shelters for victims, volunteers and first responders, and the agency continues to support survivors and the community.

Morrison is most proud of how his ARC team balanced the needs of the survivors with their need for privacy from the media. "Everyone in our shelter in Arlington had lost family members; there was nobody there whose family was whole," he says.

During a crisis, Morrison is on 24 hours a day. He talks of fielding a 1 a.m. phone call from a young woman looking for her parents after the slide. "When we gave her the news that her parents weren't [in the shelter], she asked us to notify her kid brothers, who were both in the military. People don't know this is a role of the Red Cross. We got the messages to her brothers, and they were able to get home within a few days and stay for months until they found their parents' remains," says Morrison. "I think of the survivors every day. Their path to recovery is long and difficult."

Who is your personal hero?

My late father-in-law. He was a perfect example of kindness, leadership and the importance of family. Six years after he's passed away, my wife still mourns him every day. Even after he was diagnosed with cancer that would quickly kill him, he spent time walking hand in hand with his wife of nearly 60 years, enjoying the time he had left.

What one thing did an adult or mentor do for you as a child that helped you succeed or become the person you are?

My dad died when I was pretty young. The next-door neighbor became my surrogate dad. He took me fishing and camping and to ball games. And he was always there for chats that I might have been having with my father.

How do you balance pursuing your passion with your personal life?

Certainly I was challenged in 2014. I probably learned the true importance of work/life balance. I make sure even if it's three or four months away, to put a vacation day or two or week on my schedule. In my line of work, sometimes it's hard to forget the whole world's not having a disaster.

How can we inspire today's youth to pursue their biggest dreams?

Simply by supporting their biggest dream, whether that is to be a writer, photographer or a rock climber. By making sure we don't inadvertently discourage them. Their dream is what their dream is.

What book did you recently read and how did it impact you?

I reread Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation*. The impact of the sacrifice for family and country of the folks he highlighted was probably even more significant than my first reading. Obviously, even now our men and women in uniform make great sacrifices, but we also know a lot more about how to take care of them than we did previously.

— Nancy Schatz Alton

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The empowerer

Maria Chavez Wilcox

President, Childhaven

Maria Chavez Wilcox was working for United Way in Seattle when she had her first interactions with Childhaven. “I used to love visiting what was then called Seattle Day Nursery. I loved the agency and the people. As a child-abuse survivor, it’s my mission to end child abuse and neglect. I believe becoming the president of Childhaven has brought me back to the path I ultimately needed to end up on,” she says. “Somebody has to do it, and we are going to take it on, one step at a time!” says Chavez Wilcox.

The vivacious leader has been at the helm of Childhaven since 2011, creating a more financially stable \$17.5 million organization. Its three nationally recognized therapeutic child care centers offer parent education programs, as well as health screenings, meals, transportation, home visits, and monitoring of babies and preschoolers identified as neglected or abused.

The impossible always seems possible to Chavez Wilcox. Two years ago, she adopted two dying feral kittens in need of \$1,800 of medical care. “Bailey and Baxter are the best investment I’ve ever made,” she says.

Who is your personal hero?

Amelia Earhart, because she chose to do something never heard of before, and she risked her life to do it. Despite all the naysayers, she had a vision. I admire her fortitude, persistence and courage.

What one thing did an adult or mentor do for you as a child that helped you succeed or become the person you are?

That’s easy: my fourth-grade schoolteacher. When I came to the United States, I was treated very, very badly because I wasn’t blond and I didn’t speak English. This teacher believed in me and spent a lot of extra time after school with me. She showed me that I could have a better life, that I was worthy of care and support. It didn’t matter that I wasn’t like everybody else. Having one person who believes in you, and shows you a different way, is all you need to turn your life around. For a lot of kids, that happens at Childhaven.

How do you balance pursuing your passion with your personal life?

My passion is ingrained in who I am and what I do; it’s in my DNA. This is not a job to me, this is a calling. I didn’t leave the sunny beaches of California — there are 11, 000 nonprofits there — for rainy Seattle. I came to end child abuse. I get energized by the cause and I do whatever it takes.

How can we inspire today’s youth to pursue their biggest dreams?

First of all, we have to make them believe their biggest dreams are possible and let them have bold goals. Second, we must show them the resources to get there. I also think mentoring is important; spending time with young people is huge.

— Nancy Schatz Alton

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family
concerts



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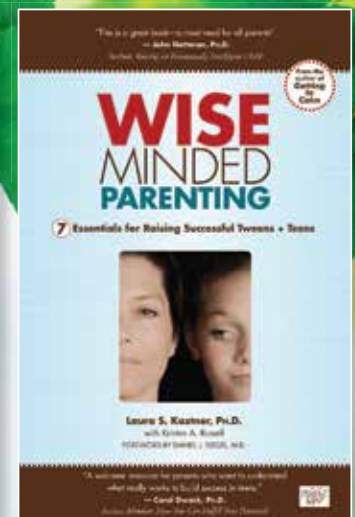
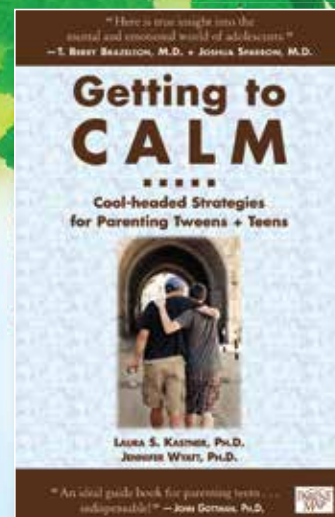
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The defender

Casey Trupin

Coordinating attorney, Children and Youth Project, Columbia Legal Services

Casey Trupin identifies himself as a parent to three young kids, ages 6, 4 and 1, before anything else. His biggest role, according to him, is being a father and supporting his wife in bringing up their children. Having worked most of his career with homeless children and at-risk youth, Trupin knows how critical it is to be an involved and available parent.

Trupin currently directs a statewide team of attorneys and support staff at Columbia Legal Services (CLS), which uses community education, research, policy advocacy and litigation to help some of Washington state's most at-risk youths: those who are low-income, homeless or in foster care.

In 1997, Trupin cofounded Street Youth Legal Advocates of Washington (SYLAW) and went on to direct the program until 2005. He is the former chair of the Children's Rights Litigation Committee of the American Bar Association (ABA), and the current special adviser to the ABA's Commission on Homelessness and Poverty, which he also chaired from 2006 to 2009.

A product of Seattle Public Schools, Trupin says that he came face to face with the wide socioeconomic gap among the youths when he was studying at Garfield High School. "The school had students who came from no income to middle to extremely wealthy families," says Trupin, who graduated from the University of Washington School of Law in 1999.

Trupin and his team at CLS have been instrumental in reforming Washington state's foster care system, within which children have gone months without seeing their caseworker and have often bounced from home to home. Trupin's team has helped initiate more stability for the children in foster care. More kids are now being placed with their siblings and relatives, and are getting better mental health support.

Trupin and CLS worked on the Youth Opportunities Act, signed into law last year, which results in the sealing of 6,000–10,000 young adults' juvenile offense records each year, allowing those youths to receive greater opportunities in housing, education and employment. "The Youth Opportunities Act eliminates a major barrier for many rehabilitated youth who can now contribute fully to their communities," Trupin says.

"But we still have a lot to do" he acknowledges. "There are around 32,000 homeless kids in Washington schools. We need to be able to help these kids, keep them safe."

Who is your personal hero?

Many of my clients are my heroes. Growing up, I was lucky to have both my parents, and I was financially and emotionally secure. But my clients, they grew up with almost nothing, yet they are so resilient and keep pushing themselves to help others in foster care and the juvenile justice system. I am blown away by their grit. Many of my clients have become leaders for movements to make things better for other kids.

What one thing did an adult or mentor do for you as a child that helped you succeed or become the person you are?

My parents played a very big part in my success. As child psychologists, they discussed a lot of social justice topics, particularly surrounding youth. They reminded me of the privileges I had that other kids didn't. They helped me understand human behavior and taught me never to be ashamed of wanting to help others. They helped me stand up for my choices, against people who felt that working on social causes was a waste of time.

— Padmaja Ganeshan-Singh



The filmmaker

Matt Lawrence

Director of the Digital Film Program at Ballard High School

Matt Lawrence has been interested in filmmaking ever since he was a kid who loved movies. He got a Super 8 camera when he was 13, and he started making movies with friends.

When Lawrence was hired to start the digital filmmaking program at Ballard High School in 2001, the school didn't even have equipment.

"Being able to build a program the way it ought to be built is an educator's dream," says Lawrence, who holds a master's degree in educational television. "I took the risk and hoped that more funding and support would follow. The gamble paid off."

Ballard students learn analysis as well as production, and many have graduated to join film and arts programs around the country. Each year Lawrence travels with students to Los Angeles to tour the industry, visit outstanding college programs of film and television production, and meet with program alumni and industry professionals. Since the program started, Ballard High students have won over 460 awards and honors for their work from regional, national and international film festivals as well as organizations such as the YoungArts Foundation and the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

What one thing did an adult or mentor do for you as a child that helped you succeed or become the person you are?

When I was young, teachers recognized that I could play music I had heard by ear, with harmony. As a result of their support and attention, I received private lessons from several gifted musicians and composers. Every week, these people took what I did with my time very seriously. As a result, I began to take myself seriously. This is a critical element to success in anything. I was very fortunate to have people around me notice my abilities and help me develop them. Doing this for students is what I love most about teaching.

How do you balance pursuing your passion with your personal life?

I've reached the conclusion that balance isn't achievable for teachers (at least, not in the U.S.). My mother was a college professor. When I was growing up, I thought she was a workaholic. Later, when I started teaching, I realized what she was up against. In all the data we hear on education, it's seldom reported that teachers in the U.S. spend roughly twice as much time delivering instruction to students in the classroom as teachers in countries with quality education systems. This means most everything else that teaching requires — preparing good lessons or meaningful feedback, conferring with colleagues or parents — must happen outside the school day. It's sad to say but to do even an adequate job as an educator requires sacrificing a significant amount of family time.

How can we inspire today's youth to pursue their biggest dreams?

Research tells us that people are more motivated when they have more control over what they're doing. I require my students to produce the type of project we are studying, but they select and develop the content for their project. If it's a project of their choice, they'll work hard and invest, and their dream will become a reality.

— Natalie Singer-Velush



April PICKS



Rosalind Wiseman: Queen Bees and Masterminds

The author of *Queen Bees & Wannabees* reveals the inner world of teen social dynamics and how to encourage teens to treat one another with dignity. \$25. Tuesday, April 21, 7 p.m. at Annie Wright Schools, Tacoma, and Wednesday, April 22, 7 p.m. at Herzl-Ner Tamid Conservative, Mercer Island. parentmap.com/lectures



Black Wings: American Dreams of Flight

This Smithsonian traveling exhibition highlights the contributions of African-American aviators including the Tuskegee Airmen and Willa Brown, the first African American woman to earn her pilot's license in the U.S. Exhibition open April 3–June 14. Included with admission. Future of Flight Aviation Center, Mukilteo. futureofflight.org



Go Wild for Earth Month

Learn the importance of raising a "wild child" from *Dinosaur Train's* Scott Sampson (Town Hall, April 2); hike the trails and climb the canopy tower at Bainbridge Island's fantastic IslandWood (April 19); volunteer to clean up Lake Sammamish State Park at an Earth Day work party (April 25); and find more ways to go green and give back at parentmap.com/earthday.

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WiggleWorkshop

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Designed for kids 48" and under
find out more at
www.wiggleworkskids.com/wiggleworkshop
registrations begins
April 1, 2015
only at

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5

Spring Egg Hunts at the Children's Museum.

Let your kiddos loose to uncover the 4,000 plastic eggs hidden throughout the Museum; there's also a golden egg scavenger hunt for ages 8 and up. Friday–Sunday, April 3–5; 8:30–10 a.m. Costs vary; preregister. thechildrensmuseum.org

Marine Mammal Mania. Learn about our mammal cousins, like orcas and otters. Saturday–Sunday, April 4–26. Included with admission. All ages. Seattle Aquarium. seattleaquarium.org

6

Skagit Valley Tulip Festival. The tulips are blooming early, head north to see the acres of stunning tulip fields. Daily through April 30 or while blooms last. Skagit County. tulipfestival.org

Short Shakes: Tartuffe. Tables turn on a conman in this student production featuring actors ages 11–17. Saturday–Tuesday, April 4–7. **FREE**; donations appreciated. Ages 8 and up. The Center Theater at Seattle Center. seattleshakespeare.org

7

Passport to Passover. All families welcome for a Passover journey with dinner, singing and new friends. 5:30–7 p.m. \$10; ages 1 and under free. Ages 0–6 with families. Stroum Jewish Community Center, Seattle Campus. sjcc.org
Parenting Workshop with Candye Bollinger. Parenting topics presented every first Tuesday of the month. 6–8 p.m. \$25/family; additional \$10 fee for child care for ages 2 and under. Hands On Children's Museum, Olympia. hocm.org

12

International Children's Friendship Festival. Children perform ethnic dances and music in the spirit of fostering cross-cultural understanding. Saturday–Sunday, April 11–12, 11 a.m.–5:30 p.m. **FREE**. All ages. Fisher Pavilion at Seattle Center. childrensfest.tacawa.org

Earth Day Party. Celebrate the home planet of all animals. Saturday–Sunday, April 11–12, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. Included with admission. All ages. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, Tacoma. pdza.org

13

OmTots Play Gym. Preschoolers bounce around, swing from the ceiling and act like monkeys. Monday–Friday, 9:30–noon. \$10; discounts available. Ages 1–5 with caregiver. OmCulture, Seattle. omculture.com

ONGOING EVENT
Play to Learn. Kids and caregivers gather for community play, songs and circle time. Mondays, 10–11:30 a.m.; additional weekly times/locations. **FREE**. Ages 6 and under with caregiver. Madison Complex, Tacoma. playtacoma.org

14

Earth Day Story Time. Children's author Karen S. Robbins reads from her book *Care for Our World*. 11 a.m. **FREE**. Ages 2–5 with families. Pierce County Library System, Gig Harbor Branch. piercecountylibrary.org
Extraordinary Tales from the Salish Sea. Hear stories about our local marine treasure and see incredible photos of its inhabitants. 7:30 p.m. \$5. Ages 10 and up. Town Hall, Seattle. townhallseattle.org

19

Afternoon on the Trails. Honor Earth Day by hiking the scenic trails and climbing the canopy tower at IslandWood, including an opportunity to find and identify natural treasures. 1–5 p.m. **FREE**; preregister. Bainbridge Island. islandwood.org

Arty Party. Hands-on fun at the Henry, with exploration, art projects, playing and more. 1–4 p.m. \$10/family. All ages. Seattle. henryart.org
FREE Entrance to National Parks. Venture to a spectacular national park for **FREE**. Saturday–Sunday, April 18–19. nps.org

20

Toddler Time. Open-early play gym has bikes, slides and toys. Mondays–Fridays, 8 a.m.–noon. \$2. Ages 3 and under with caregiver. Issaquah Community Center, Issaquah. ci.issaquah.wa.us
The Boy Who Loved Band-aids. Join the humorous, musical, interactive tale of Hank, a 5-year-old boy who, yes, really loves Band-aids. 11 a.m. **FREE**. All ages. King County Library System, Shoreline Branch. kcls.org

21

Rosalind Wiseman: Queen Bees and Masterminds. The charismatic author of books on the social dynamics of teen girls and boys delivers critical information for parents. 7 p.m., Annie Wright Schools, Tacoma. April 22, 7 p.m. Herzl-Ner Tamid Conservative, Mercer Island. \$25. parentmap.com/lectures
Elevated Sportz Hoppy Hour. Cheap jumping at this trampoline center five days a week. Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m. \$8; ages 2 and under \$5. Bothell. elevatedsportz.com

26

Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival. Taiko drumming, artisan craft demos, traditional food and a play about Japanese shipwreck survivors landing on Washington soil. Friday–Sunday, April 24–26. **FREE**. Seattle Center. seattlecenter.com/festival
The Ugly Duckling. An original, 45-minute musical version of the classic tale of a duckling who dared to be different. Saturday–Sunday, April 18–May 16. \$11. Ages 3 and up. Venues in Renton, Kirkland, Everett, Shoreline and Seattle. storybooktheater.org

27

Self-guided Walking Tour at Shadow Lake Bog. Download the guide and embark on a two-mile walk to see and explore the fascinating features of this bog preserve. Daily during daylight hours. **FREE**. Shadow Lake Nature Preserve, Renton. shadowhabitat.org
Indoor Playground. Bounce, balance, roll and play. Sunday–Friday, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. \$6; adults free. Ages 1–5 with caregiver. Seattle Gymnastics Academy Lake City Gym, Seattle. seattlegymnastics.com

28

Open Play at Let's Play. Stop in for free play, inflatables, fun and games. Tuesdays, 10 a.m.–noon; Wednesdays, 3–5 p.m.; Fridays, 9:30–noon. \$7; discount for siblings. Ages 0–6. Let's Play Sammamish. letsplaysammamish.com

ONGOING EVENT
Detective Cookie's Urban Youth Chess Club. Learn and practice chess skills; new members always welcome. Tuesdays, 3:30–5 p.m. **FREE**. Ages 7 and up. Seattle Public Library, Rainier Beach Branch. spl.org

WEDNESDAY

1

Low Sensory Evening. KidsQuest invites kids to play and explore with a little less noise and light, and fewer other guests. 5:30–7:30 p.m. **FREE**; preregister. Ages 1–10 with families. KidsQuest Children's Museum, Bellevue. kidsquestmuseum.org
Spring Break Superstars. Celebrate and support the zoo's "superstar" species — sharks, red wolves, polar bears and more — with special activities. Through Friday, April 4. Included with admission. All ages. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, Tacoma. pdza.org

8

Seattle Center Whirligig! Just in time for spring break, find serious inflatable fun at the Seattle Center Armory, plus balloon artists, face-painting and more. April 3–19, 11 a.m.–6 p.m. (closes at 2 p.m. April 16). \$8/day pass; \$4.50/toddler zone; \$1.50/single ride; Thursdays **FREE**. Ages 12 and under. seattlecenter.com
Student Wednesday at BAM. The museum invites students to visit its collections every second Wednesday of the month. 11 a.m.–6 p.m. **FREE** for grades K–12 with online coupon. Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue. bellevuearts.org

15

Toddler Breakdancing and Movement Class. First class in a new session to get the short set learning cool moves. Wednesdays, 10 a.m. \$15 drop-in plus \$20 registration fee or enroll for the series. Ages 1–5. Cornerstone Café, Seattle. focseattle.com
Movies at the Museum: Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs. Dinner and craft plus what in the world is that raining from the sky? 6–8 p.m. \$5–\$8; \$3 dinner (preregister for dinner). All ages. KidsQuest Children's Museum, Bellevue. kidsquest.org

22

Of a Feather: Artists, Birds and the Northwest. Study local artists' inspired renderings of birds, presented in a variety of mediums. Wednesday–Sunday, noon–4 p.m. Included with admission. All ages. White River Valley Museum, Auburn. wvmuseum.org
Fiddleheads Family Nature Class: Planet Earth. Tromp through the Arboretum with your kiddo on a science-based, fun exploration of the outdoors. 10 a.m.–noon. Ages 4–5. \$18/parent-child pair. UW Botanic Gardens, Seattle. depts.washington.edu/uwbgb

29

Wild Wednesdays at PlayDateSEA. On the last Wednesday of every month, earn one free admission to this fun playspace for every two cans of food donated. Seattle. **FREE**. Ages 14 and under. playdatesea.com
Discover Art – Grandma Moses. Study a famous artist, then work on your own masterpiece. (Check website for more Discover Art workshops.) 4 p.m. **FREE**; preregister. Ages 6–10. Pierce County Library System, University Place Branch. piercecountylibrary.org

THURSDAY

2

FREE First Thursday at Lake Union Park. Build a toy boat at the Center for Wooden Boats (3–5 p.m.), climb aboard tugboat Arthur Foss and steamship Virginia V (noon–5 p.m.) and explore MOHA's new exhibit, *American Spirits* (10 a.m.–8 p.m.). **FREE**. All ages. cwb.org
Connecting Kids to Nature in a Technological World. Scott Sampson, host of PBS's *Dinosaur Train*, discusses the importance of getting kids engaged in nature and ideas for how to do it. 7:30 p.m. \$5. Adults. Town Hall, Seattle. townhallseattle.org

9

Moisture Festival Comedy/Variété. Last weekend to catch a true variety show, featuring comedy, music, magic, juggling and/or acrobatics. Through April 12. \$10–\$20. Most shows all ages. Hale's Palladium and Broadway Performance Hall, Seattle. moisturefestival.com
Create a Nature Scavenger Hunt. Workshop for parents to build a fun outdoor activity for their kids, using an app; bring phone. 6–8 p.m. \$25; preregister. Adults. Tacoma Nature Center. tacomanaturecenter.org

16

Washington State Spring Fair. Get a head start on summer fair fun with rides, music, pig racing, Motorsport Mayhem and more. Thursday–Sunday, April 16–19. \$6.50–\$10; ages 5 and under free; all kids free Thursday with food bank donation. Washington State Fair Events Center, Puyallup. thefair.com
What the Griot Said - Storytelling at NAAM. Griot is another name for storyteller; all are invited to hear the tales the Griot tells. 11 a.m.–noon. **FREE**. All ages. Northwest African American Museum. naamnw.org

23

PEPS Lecture: From Diaper to Diploma. Guidance on opening doors to success for your child at every stage of education, from preschool through college. 7 p.m. \$15 or pay-what-you-can. Adults. Verity Credit Union, Seattle. peps.org
Mommy & Me Movie. Crying, breastfeeding, it's all just fine at this special bring-along-your-bundle morning show time. Thursdays, 10 a.m. \$8.40. Lincoln Square Cinemas, Bellevue. cinemark.com
ONGOING EVENT

30

Music with Marco. Marco Cortes shares songs and stories in English and Spanish. Thursdays, 1 p.m. and Sundays, 2 p.m. Included with admission. Ages 1–10 with families. Imagine Children's Museum, Everett. imaginecm.org
Thursday Night at the Museums – Movie Night. Select Tacoma museums now stay open 'til 8 p.m. Thursdays. Special activities include a showing of *The Brave Little Toaster* tonight. 6 p.m. Washington State History Museum, Tacoma. washingtonhistory.org

FRIDAY

3

Kruckeberg Easter Egg Hunt. Enjoy a low-key, self-guided egg hunt in this lovely, almost-secret garden. Friday–Sunday, April 3–5, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. **FREE**; donations appreciated. Ages 2–8 with families. Kruckeberg Botanic Garden, Shoreline. kruckeberg.org
Family Bingo Night. Bring your family and your own marker or dauber and get in on some great prizes. 6:30–9 p.m. \$5 includes 6 bingo sheets; preregister. All ages. Chambers Creek Regional Park, University Place. piercecountywa.org

10

Musical Magik with Betsy Dischel. Prolific local singer and storyteller leads kids in songs, signs, and a smidge of Hebrew; all welcome. Fridays, 9:30 a.m. **FREE**. All ages. Jewish Day School, Bellevue. musicalmagik.org
ONGOING EVENT
Owl Prowl. Head out in the dark to listen for owl hoots and other signs of nocturnal life. 7:30–9 p.m. \$5–\$6; preregister. Ages 5 and up. Lewis Creek Visitor Center, Bellevue. bellevuewa.gov

17

Hour of Code. Learn to think like a computer programmer and write real code. 3:30 p.m. **FREE**; preregister. Ages 8 and up. Pierce County Library, University Place Branch. piercecountylibrary.org
Rapunzel. This comic interpretation of the tale of the golden hair promises laughs and surprises, playing at BYT's new theater. Friday–Sunday, April 17–26. \$5–\$12. All ages. Bellevue Youth Theatre–Crossroads. bellevuewa.gov

24

Spring Carnival. Kids love carnival rides in any season, get them their spring time dose. Friday–Sunday, April 24–26. Check website for prices. Evergreen State Fairgrounds, Monroe. evergreenfair.org
Side by Side Concert with the University of Washington Orchestra and Seattle Symphony. Musicians from these groups present a program of Beethoven, Stravinsky, Debussy and Ravel. 7:30 p.m. **FREE**; preregister for tickets. Meany Hall, Seattle. artsuw.org

SATURDAY

4

Bunny Bounce at Woodland Park Zoo. Egg hunts for children ages 1–8, crafts, bunny encounters and Easter enrichment for animals. 9:30 a.m.–3 p.m. Included with admission. Seattle. zoo.org
State Park FREE Day. Get out and explore a Washington State Park with no Discover Pass required. April 4, 22. discoverpass.wa.gov
The Onlies CD Release Party. Teen fiddle band sensation celebrates its new CD, *Long Before Light*, with a concert at Town Hall Seattle. 7:30 p.m. \$5–\$10. theonlies.com

11

Soyaya. Get up and dance, and learn about another culture, with this group's energetic African and world music rhythms. 11 a.m. \$5; ages 12 and under free. All ages. Town Hall, Seattle. townhallseattle.org
2nd Saturday presents Johnny Bregar. Whether you're a regular or a tourist at Crossroads, the original tunes of Johnny Bregar on the Market Stage make it extra fun tonight. 6–7 p.m. **FREE**. All ages. Crossroads, Bellevue. crossroadsbellevue.com

18

Robin Hood. One of SCT's most popular shows ever is back for swashbuckling, comic fun. April 16–May 17. \$20–\$36. Ages 8 and up. Seattle Children's Theatre. sct.org
Sewing to Sowing. Plant seeds, learn to hand-sew, churn butter and experience springtime life of the 1850s. 11 a.m.–4 p.m. \$5–\$8; ages 4 and under free. Fort Nisqually Living History Museum, Tacoma. fortnisqually.org

25

Kelsey Creek Sheep Shearing. Watch as the sheep get their winter wool shorn, plus wagon rides, kids' activities, farm animals and more. 11 a.m.–4 p.m. **FREE**. Kelsey Creek Farm, Bellevue. bellevuewa.gov
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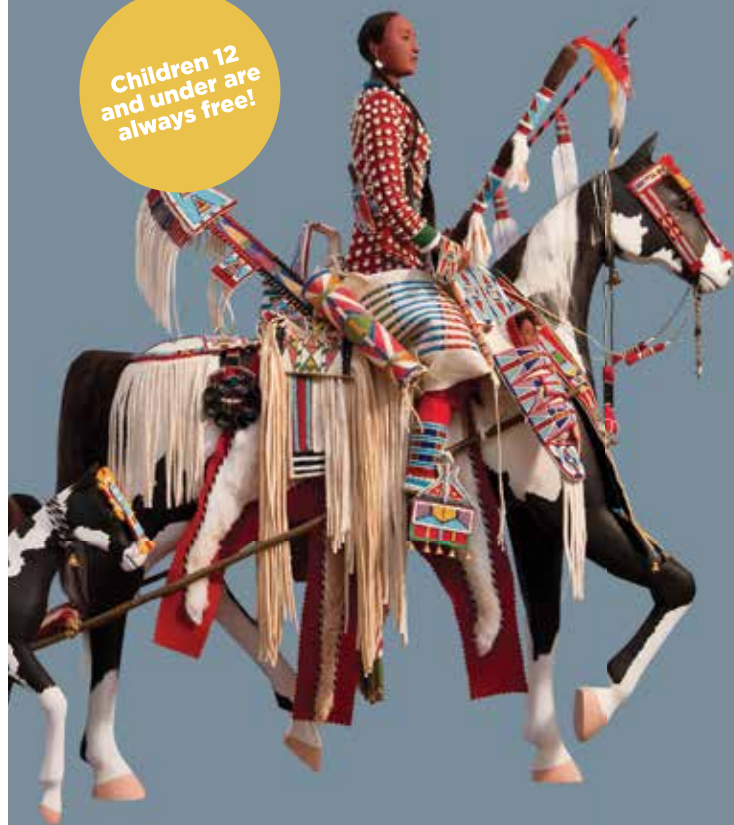
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Indigenous Beauty: Masterworks of American Indian Art from the Diker Collection is organized by the American Federation of Arts. This exhibition was made possible by the generosity of an anonymous donor, the JFM Foundation, and Mrs. Donald M. Cox.

The Seattle presentation is made possible through support from

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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 x 42 in., Diker no. 816, Courtesy American Federation of Arts.

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Camping in the round, no tent required

The yurt is a 3,000-year-old structure designed for familial bliss

BY EMILY GROSVENOR

Before I discovered yurts, camping with my kids seemed like one of those untenable dreams — just another family activity we'd put off until the kids got older. My older son, 4, snored sweetly but powerfully; my younger son, 1, was still prone to getting up in the night; and I was enough of a light sleeper that the prospect of staying in such close quarters was anything but appealing.

But then my friend Stephanie, whose kids are the same age as mine, invited us to go yurt camping with them on the Oregon Coast along with five other families.

"You'll love it — it's like camping light," Stephanie said.

The success of the yurt as a structure for familial bliss is well proven by now. Yurts originated as circular dwellings used by the nomadic peoples of central Asia roughly 3,000 years ago and now pop up worldwide. In the Pacific Northwest, they

have found a particularly strong following among travelers who value them for their high level of comfort, thin-walled access to the great outdoors and affordability (more expensive than tent camping but cheaper than cabins).

Yurts' round structures are created by forming a latticework of wooden wall sections and strapping material such as cloth or canvas over the top and sides. The structure is held together by the weight of the covering and can be dismantled easily for portability elsewhere. A skylight in the middle of the roof lets in sunlight and moonlight. These are the same houses that nomads valued, but for families in the Pacific Northwest, yurts no longer go with us — we go to the yurts. You can rent a yurt per night at state parks around Washington and Oregon, as well as at private resorts and properties that rent them to visitors during the year. >>



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out + about

Family bonding in the round

continued from page 35

Yurts 101: No pitching required

It seems categorically wrong to use “yurt” as a verb, especially considering what a passive experience it is. There is no pitching a yurt, no work needed beyond driving up to your prebooked dwelling, turning the lock and throwing your bags down on the beds (yurts usually sleep up to six in a combo of bunk beds and futon couches). But yurting does require nearly as much on the front end as camping, depending on how isolated the yurt site is and how you want to accommodate hungry stomachs.

Because yurts are extremely popular — in many of the most sought-after, high-season locations around, such as state parks on beachfront property — it's wise to take advantage of the fact that you can reserve in advance — up to nine months for Washington state parks, for example. The greatest challenge is therefore not necessarily how to yurt, but where and when to yurt. Note: During the high season, you may be required to book for at least two nights.

Deluxe vs. rustic yurts

There's yurt camping and then there's yurt glamping — in a deluxe yurt. A rustic yurt will provide basic accommodations for four–five people, and are relatively affordable (\$49–\$89 a night). Deluxe yurts, even those found in generally bare-bones state parks, will provide you with the extra perks that lean toward glamping, including everything a rustic yurt has, plus a stand-alone kitchen, bathroom and showers right inside the yurt. They can cost quite a bit more.

TIPS FOR PLANNING YOUR YURT ADVENTURE:

- **Early birds win.** You can make yurt reservations at state parks as far as nine months in advance. Beyond that, it's first-come, first-served.
- **Check the location.** Some yurts are better positioned than others for privacy and ambiance. You can call and ask or check a map of the site online (as you would for tent camping).



Explore Mount St. Helens and Silver Lake from your yurt at Sequest State Park

FRANK FUJIMOTO / FLICKR CC

- **Bring a blanket.** If your children need absolute dark to go to sleep, bring something to cover the skylight so they're not up until 10 and wide awake at dawn.

- **Make a food plan.** Many parks with yurts are located near small towns, in case you don't want to cook everything on site. You may not cook on burners inside the yurts, but many have outside outlets.

- **Plan for pets.** Most yurt sites are pet-friendly, but many require an additional fee per night and limit pets to certain yurts.

- **Close your door.** Even the most well-trafficked site can be home to wildlife scrounging for crumbs, just like camping.

- **Try the off season.** Prices are cheaper in the shoulder season and off season, and yurts are even more cozy when it is storming outside.

BEST FAMILY YURT SITES IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

• Kayak Point County Park, Washington

Just 40 minutes north of Seattle, Kayak County Park is home to a village of 10 yurts, a great home base for exploring the 3,300-foot shoreline of Port Susan. Enjoy activities such as fishing, windsurfing, picnicking, hiking, camping and boat launching; access to a saltwater beach makes it a fisherman's heaven. Bring your crab pot. Cost: \$55–\$73

• Kanaskat-Palmer State Park, Washington

An hour and 40 minutes southeast of Seattle, this 320-acre camping park, set on a low plateau, is a favorite for exploring the Green River Gorge. Boat and raft launches provide access to the river for expert kayakers and rafters,



MICHAEL MARTIN / FLICKR CC

while two miles of shore set the stage for wandering in the woods, fishing and exploration. Cost: \$40–\$59

• Cape Disappointment State Park, Washington

A 1,882-acre camping park on Long Beach Peninsula, Cape Disappointment offers dramatic scenery of steep cliffs overlooking the spot where the Columbia River meets the Pacific Ocean. Draws include long stretches of sandy beaches and rough seaside forests, an historic coastal fort, two lighthouses and the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center. Cost: \$59–\$69

• Seaquest State Park, Washington

Ideally placed near Mount St. Helens, this park has more than a mile of shoreline directly on Silver Lake as well as a one-mile wetland trail and six miles of woodland trail fit for hiking and biking. Cost: \$49–\$69

• Grayland Beach State Park, Washington

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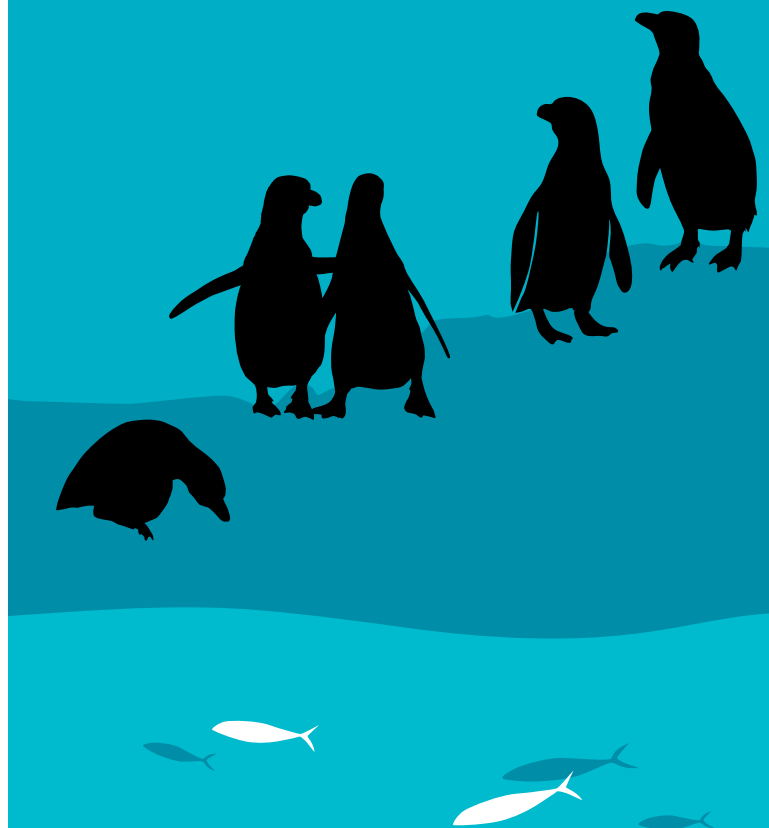


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CAMPING LIGHT

continued from page 37

Nehalem Bay State Park is home to 18 yurts, 2 miles of biking trails and stunning coastline



Grayland Beach is a must for bird watchers, kite fanatics, beachcombers and others who like to beach it by day and retreat to stable camping by night. Cost: \$59–\$89

• Nehalem Bay State Park, Oregon

This beach park, near the family-friendly town of Manzanita, is home to 18 yurts and two miles of biking trails, and offers great access to fishing and crabbing sites. In July, the park's interpretive site provides Junior Ranger programs for kids 6–12. Cost: \$44 year-round

• South Beach State Park, Oregon

South Beach boasts the largest collection of yurts in one place in Oregon, as well as great accommodations within walking distance of pristine beach, a bike trail to the Rogue Ales brewery and the Oregon Coast Aquarium, and an on-site playground. Cost: \$44–\$54 (higher price for a pet-friendly yurt)

• William Tugman State Park, Oregon

A lesser-known state park on the Oregon coast, William Tugman is near Lakeside on Eel Lake, about three hours from Portland, a site with outstanding fishing, swimming,

canoeing, sailing and boating set amid a forest with many smaller lakes and inlets. Fauna such as osprey, crane, eagle and deer are highlights, and the Oregon Dunes Recreation area is less than a mile away. \$43 year-round.

• Private yurts and resorts

Is your favorite yurt site in the Pacific Northwest booked already? AirBnB offers access to a variety of yurt properties. A quick search of “resorts with yurts” should yield other options online.

If the point of camping is time spent in fresh air and the incomparable closeness that comes from taking a break from routines, then yurting offers the best of camping without the vulnerability of tent camping. You can still wake up to the sound of birds, the crisp crackle of logs burning on a fire and the sweet feeling of the full day ahead. And you can rest assured that your tent won't blow over. ■

Emily Grosvenor is a travel writer, essayist and teacher who writes for Sunset, Portland Monthly, Salon and Brain, Child. You can find her at emilygrosvenor.com or follow her on Twitter @emilygrosvenor.

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APRIL
play list

6 ways to rock early spring

Hurray for blooming trees and longer days! Here are ideas for reveling in the green loveliness of Puget Sound spring.

BY ELISA MURRAY

RAMBLE TO A WATERFALL Even the most hiking-averse kid can't resist the lure of one of our roaring cascades, which are most dramatic in the spring. We've just added three hikes to one of our most popular hiking articles, which outlines **nine waterfall outings for a range of ages**, from a pioneer-track hike to a stunning waterfall near Snoqualmie Pass to a stroller-friendly stroll against a backdrop of Mount Rainier. parentmap.com/waterfall

PLAN A SUMMER ADVENTURE Nothing wrong with lazy beach days, but how about planning a summer vacation that'll keep your kids talking for months? At parentmap.com/adventurevacations, get inspired by **10 thrilling trips that any Northwest family can pull off**: Ride the rails, backpack, raft, lodge in a treehouse, bike camp, trek through history and more.

GO BACK TO OLD SCHOOL Pinball, putt-putt, roller skating, milkshakes: Spring break is an ideal time to dust off your bowling shoes and introduce your kiddos to the unplugged joys of old-school fun. Find **15 favorite spots for a proudly retro good time** — from Tiffany's Skate Inn in Puyallup to Husky Deli in West Seattle — at parentmap.com/old-school.

SKIP THROUGH THE TULIPS Dreaming of a family photo against the Technicolor tulip fields of Skagit Valley but wary of the crowds? Our newly published **insider's guide to the Skagit Tulip Festival** shares reader-tested strategies for avoiding crowds, best play and nosh stops (ice cream!), where to fuel up and how to snag a tulip-tastic photo. P.S.: Tulips are early this year; go now. parentmap.com/tuliptips

FIND A NEW PLAY SPOT On the days when April showers keep you from the flowers, find a new favorite play spot on our epic rainy-day list (parentmap.com/rain). New additions include **Seattle ReCreative**, a new-old spot with recycled art supplies aplenty and cool workshops; **Let's Play Sammamish**, a welcome addition to Eastside wiggles-out spots; and **Umbrella Tree**, a new spot in Twirl's digs on Queen Anne with creative classes to spare.

SEATTLE STAYCATION? No plan for spring break? Why not save on gas, book a hotel and play hometown tourist instead? Try the **Maxwell Hotel** near the Seattle Center, which offers loaner bikes, an indoor pool and complimentary shuttle service to many of the city's best attractions; **Hotel Ballard**, a beautifully appointed hotel smack in one of Seattle's trendiest neighborhoods; or the **Westin Bellevue**, with a heated indoor pool, plenty of luxe touches and access to all the fun of downtown Bellevue. Find more kid-friendly hotels that can serve as staycation central at parentmap.com/staycation.



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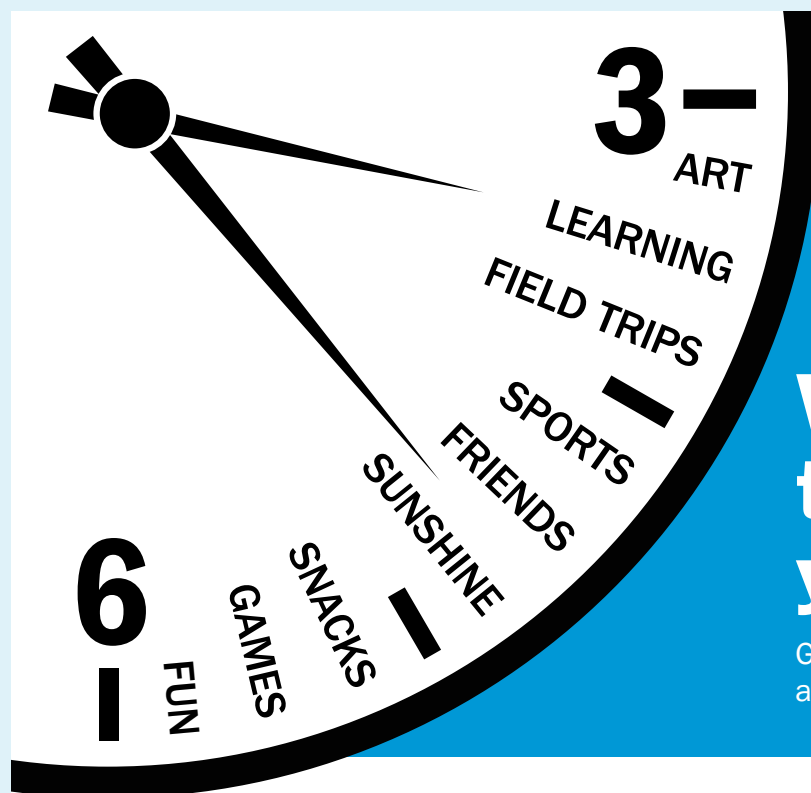
DIY summer camp

Perhaps summer camp isn't in your budget. Or your kids have special needs or are not ready for longer periods away from home. One solution: Design a summer camp experience at home, which can be affordable, fun, and easier than it sounds to pull off — especially if you have enough parents who can take turns leading and providing snacks and activities. Here are four ideas for DIY summer camps.



- **A theater camp** could be a great way to introduce your kid to the thespian experience without the pressure of performing for strangers. One local mom puts on a Reader's Theater camp every summer for a range of kids. Kids write their own scripts and build sets and costumes from supplies such as curtains, clothing and jewelry from thrift stores. The final day is the performance.
- **Art camp:** Start gathering recycled materials now for an art camp. Camp organizers should bring a love of art and a willingness to get messy. Tip: Try the projects with your own children first to see if they work.
- **Day camp at a park:** Don't have a space to run a camp? Head to a park! You can intersperse free-play time with guided activities like a bug hunt, berry picking, gathering shells or hiking. Other classic outdoor camp activities include flower pressing, sun prints or rock rubbings. Tip: Use the natural environment of the park to guide the events you choose.
- **Science-loving kids** will enjoy a chance to run experiments and learn about the natural world. You could choose a theme for each day and do activities such as making UV bracelets, constructing models of molecules, or creating and testing boats, rockets or paper airplanes.

— Jennifer Johnson



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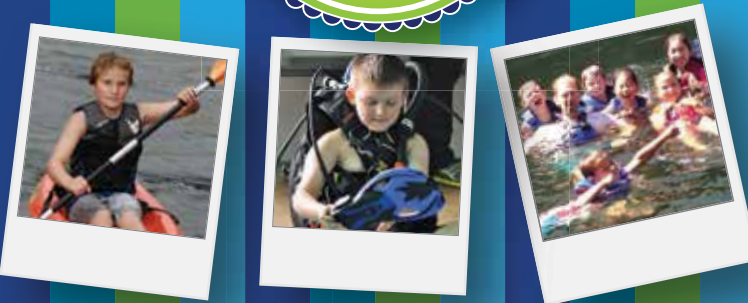
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Elevating art, elevating youth

By Hilary Benson

In a brightly colored exhibit hall, visitors to Seattle Art Museum's "Indigenous Beauty" exhibition see striking works of native art. Spanning a period of 2,000 years, items include intricately beaded children's clothing, woven Tlingit baskets and carved, colorful katsina dolls that depict spiritual beings in Hopi and Zuni cultures.

On a recent afternoon, about two dozen teenagers embark on their first tour of the exhibit. Their curiosity in the native pieces is genuine, but it's also mission-driven: On May 8, this group of teen arts ambassadors will throw a Teen Night Out party at Seattle Art Museum (SAM) for hundreds of their peers in hopes of sparking an interest in art. These teen leaders will be docents for the evening, plan the food and drinks, organize and lead activities, such as papier-mâché mask making, and even line up top local DJs and live musical performers.

"A lot of places teach fine art. We're about more than that; we're also about youth development," says Sarah Bloom, manager of SAM's Teen, Family and Community Engagement Programs. The high school students are part of an after-school program at SAM called Teen Arts Group (TAG). As part of the curriculum, the students meet weekly all year long and plan two of these elaborate events on their own.

"We've seen kids who are super quiet when they start, [and] within six months they are giving a tour, giving a nuanced take on a social justice issue in an exhibit or gender roles through the works of art — it's a great vehicle for them to see their place in the world," Bloom says.

"I thought of myself as a leader, but I had struggled with the confidence part, which is an important part of being a leader,"



COURTESY SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

says Sophia Orlando, a senior at Garfield High School in Seattle. Orlando says that since starting the program three years ago, she understands that she doesn't need to be an art expert in order to comfortably lead peers in discussions about the meaning of the pieces and motivations of the artists. "I see that it's really about questions, knowing how to ask something that will get them talking, and getting other people involved in seeing art from a different perspective."

SAM was one of 15 organizations in King, Pierce and Spokane counties recognized last fall by the Raikes Foundation for excellence in providing out-of-school-time programs. The museum and hundreds of other organizations have invested in School's Out Washington's Youth Program Quality (YPQ) Initiative, a voluntary tool kit of self-evaluation and outside assessments aimed at raising the caliber of after-school programs. SAM's teens also lead monthly art labs and, through various social media, promote art appreciation among young people.

According to the quality standards, programs can get stronger by encouraging youth leadership

"After-school programs can offer much-needed support and provide students with an additional outlet to participate in the arts."

and engagement: They promote a sense of purpose and individual empowerment, support youth decision making, and give young people a sense of belonging and ownership. "I've worked four Teen Nights Out," says 17-year-old Kaeley Pilichowski. "We are the ones that have to be creative in how we engage



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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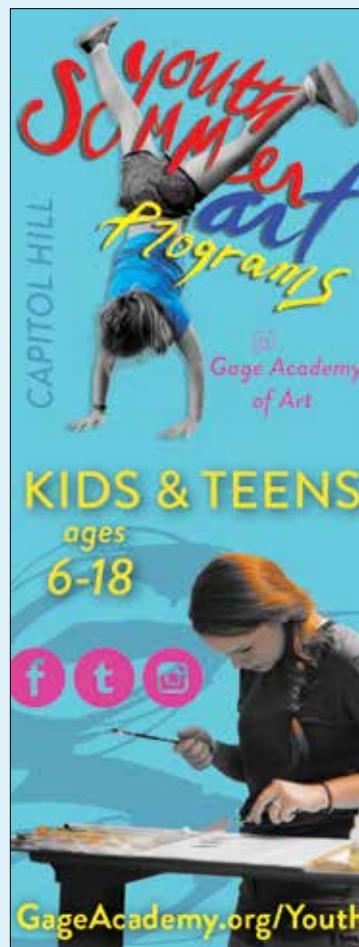
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Art and youth

continued from page 45

all kinds of other teens, recognizing that most people aren't like yourself."

Quality training for staff spills over into other SAM offerings, too; for instance, free weekend workshops at the Olympic Sculpture Park on Seattle's waterfront, where, on one recent winter day, kids make recycled rainsticks out of plastic water bottles or construct cardboard boats. "Even though I'm a teaching artist, I'm more facilitator than instructor," says YPQ-trained artist Janet Fagan. "We provide the starting point, and then leave space for things to happen, where families can work on something together."

According to a report by the Afterschool Alliance, "At a time when arts education often loses the battle for classroom time in schools, after-school programs can offer much-needed support and provide students with an additional outlet to participate in the arts."

Two years ago, Jo Nordhoff-Beard, a senior at University Prep, was going through a difficult time. The TAG program brought the right opportunity at just the right time. "It helped me get through some hard things, some bad things. This is a safe space, we're all accepting of where we are, everyone feels welcome," she says.

After May's Teen Night Out, when hundreds of young people will have streamed through the "Indigenous Beauty" exhibit experiencing the native artifacts in ways they hadn't before, this TAG team will be able to reflect on its achievement. "It's huge when they see everything they've planned come together," Bloom says. "It's an extreme sense of accomplishment; there's a lot of pride." ■

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

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4–9

Party peeves

Your primer for a zero-drama birthday bash

By Malia Jacobson

It happens all too fast: One minute, you're wiping up the crumbs from the first-birthday cake smash. A few whirlwind years later, your precocious preschooler brings home a stack of birthday party invitations penned by parents you've never met. Party-invitation emails invade your in-box, and group texts detailing last-minute party plans zip back and forth with the urgency of national security missives. Your child has hit the birthday party scene, and it's hoppin'.

Given that kids' birthday parties are big business — the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions reports the kids' party venues charge an average of \$370 per party; add in decorations, food and favors, and costs can easily top \$500 — it's understandable that parents want to get it right. That's easier said than done, though. In preschool and kindergarten, kids begin socializing with children outside the family circle, setting the stage for misunderstandings (do parents drop off the kids or do parents stay?) and gaffes (forgetting to buy enough cake for parents to have a slice, too — sorry!).

Parents bring different expectations, cultural norms, communication styles and budgets to the party-planning process, and etiquette can fall through the cracks, says Jacqueline Whitmore, an internationally recognized etiquette expert, author and founder of The Protocol School of Palm Beach. And the increasingly paperless world of party communications leaves room for etiquette missteps; per online stationer Punchbowl, 73 percent of parents prefer to send online invitations.

While there's no formula for the "perfect" party, avoiding these party-planning pitfalls keeps the focus where it belongs — celebrating your not-so-little one's big day.

RSVP reframe

In today's uberconnected world, responding to party invites has never been easier; emailing, texting or simply checking a box on a Web-based invitation takes all of 30 seconds. But these days, many guests mistakenly consider RSVPs optional, says Whitmore. This leaves the party-planning parents to estimate the number of guests attending or track down and recontact all invited guests'



parents about whether they'll attend. And nobody has time for that.

"It gets frustrating when people don't reply at all, or respond 'maybe' but don't update as to whether they'll come or not," says Raina Johnson, a Tacoma mom of three boys.

"If you're fortunate enough to be invited to a party, respond as quickly as possible," Whitmore says. Whether you can or can't attend, respond to invites — including online and text invitations — within a week at the longest. And if plans change and your child can't attend, contact the host ASAP so that food, activities and party favors earmarked for your child can be repurposed.

Tiny glitterati

A top parental pet peeve: supersize (or super-spendy) soirees that make your casual neighborhood cupcake-and-juice fete look ho-hum by comparison. "I'm tired of over-the-top parties that make my kiddos wonder why we don't spend \$5,000 on their birthday," says Lynne Williams, an Eagle, Idaho, mom of three. "We went to one a few years ago that had two bouncy houses, hired entertainment, catered food, full bar, craft projects . . . all for a 3-year-old."

While the size of the budget and guest list are

One way to dial down the crazy is to only include activities and entertainment that can reasonably fit into a 90-minute party.

personal preferences, you can skip some stress (and save some green) by focusing on party details your child will notice and remember. And consider this: It will be hard to impress a teenager who's been given mega-parties since babyhood. One way to dial down the crazy is to only include activities and entertainment that can reasonably fit into a 90-minute party — roughly the party attention span of a kindergartner — with enough scheduled time for cake and relaxed socializing. That means you don't need the bounce house, band, backyard waterslide, pizza-making station and petting zoo. One or two "main event" activities, with a quieter option such as crafting or coloring for overstimulated kiddos, is festive without feeling forced.

Scale back on decorations, too, says Yin Chang, a mom of two and co-owner of L3 Academy, a Montclair, New Jersey, learning center that hosts STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) birthday parties. "Kids either completely ignore decorations, or they look at them for five seconds."

Skip the sibs

As soon as invitations go out, the "Siblings welcome?" queries come in. And some parents will show up with their entire brood in tow. This stressful scenario stretches party budgets and hosts' patience,

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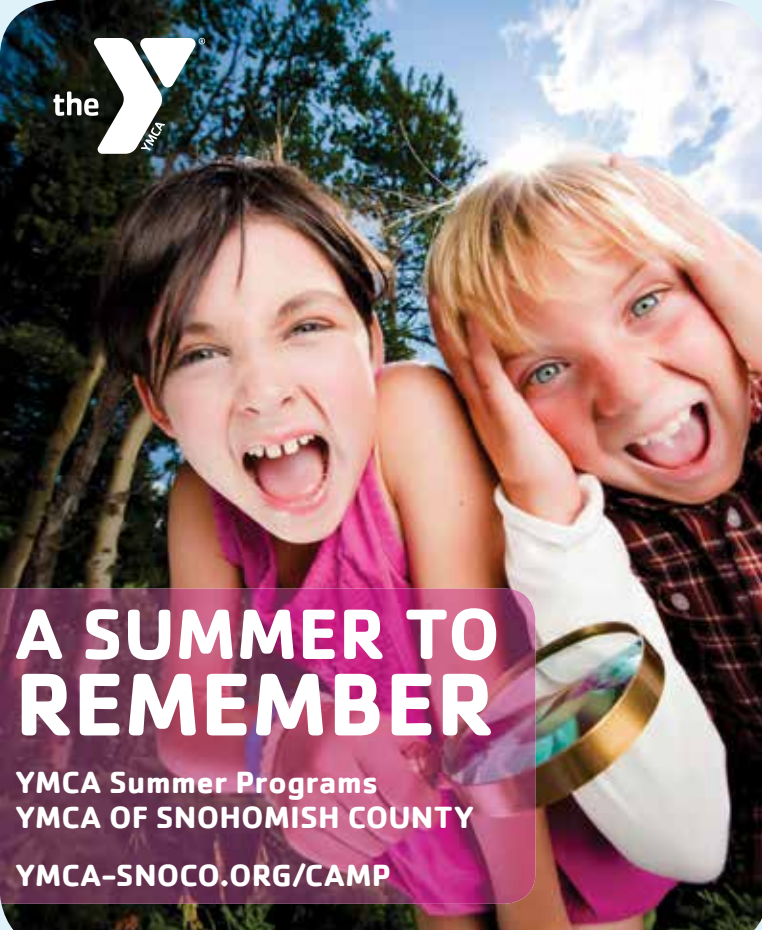
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ages + stages

Party peeves

continued from page 48

because some parties are simply more enjoyable on a smaller scale.

"We do small birthday parties at our house, and if child comes with a sibling or two and both parents, the party triples in size for food, gift bags and activities," says Gretchen Coulson Smith, a Tacoma mom of two.

Party activities aren't always well-suited to younger sibs, says Chang. Her parties can involve experiments with chemicals; although not toxic or dangerous, they're not designed for toddlers.

Avoid this sticky subject by clearly addressing paper invitations to the invited child, says Whitmore. This gets trickier for online invites, which may not allow senders to specify an invitee. In those cases, a quick email or text with "We hope Amelia can attend Jake's party!" can spare the awkwardness later on.

On the other hand, "the more the merrier" parents can let guests know that sibs can attend with a simple "Siblings welcome!" note on the invitation. When you're not sure — because of limited space at your venue, for example — write "Please inquire about siblings." And if sibs aren't on

the guest list, consider making the party a "drop-off" celebration (also, of course, indicated on the invitation).

Goodie bags gone bad

Goodie bags filled with dollar-store junk irk Amy Hussey, a Tenino mom of two. "Keep it consumable so it doesn't add to the clutter," she says. Or skip goodie bags entirely — most families won't miss them.

If you just cannot bear to abandon giveaways, consider a copy of the birthday child's favorite book, a packet of seeds or a bulb to plant, a single can of Play-Doh, crayons and a small notepad, or a take-home craft kit such as for a hair barrette or a bookmark. A party favor that fosters family time or quiet play after the excitement of a party will be welcomed by guests' parents — who may be inspired to reciprocate when their child's party rolls around. ■

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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- **Parents of children with restricted diets** often assume that party food will be off-limits to their child and may bring their own; if party fare will be allergen-free, let parents know on the invitation. Ask parents of children with special needs how you can make their child more comfortable. Party locales that tend to be accessible for guests with mobility limitations include children's museums, bookstores (some have party rooms or meeting rooms), libraries, craft stores, and accessible parks and playgrounds.
- Most classroom teachers nowadays prefer not to have **party invitations** distributed at school, especially if not every child in the class is invited. Some schools even have policies about this. There are many ways to circulate invites — prevent hurt feelings and distractions from learning by avoiding classroom distribution.

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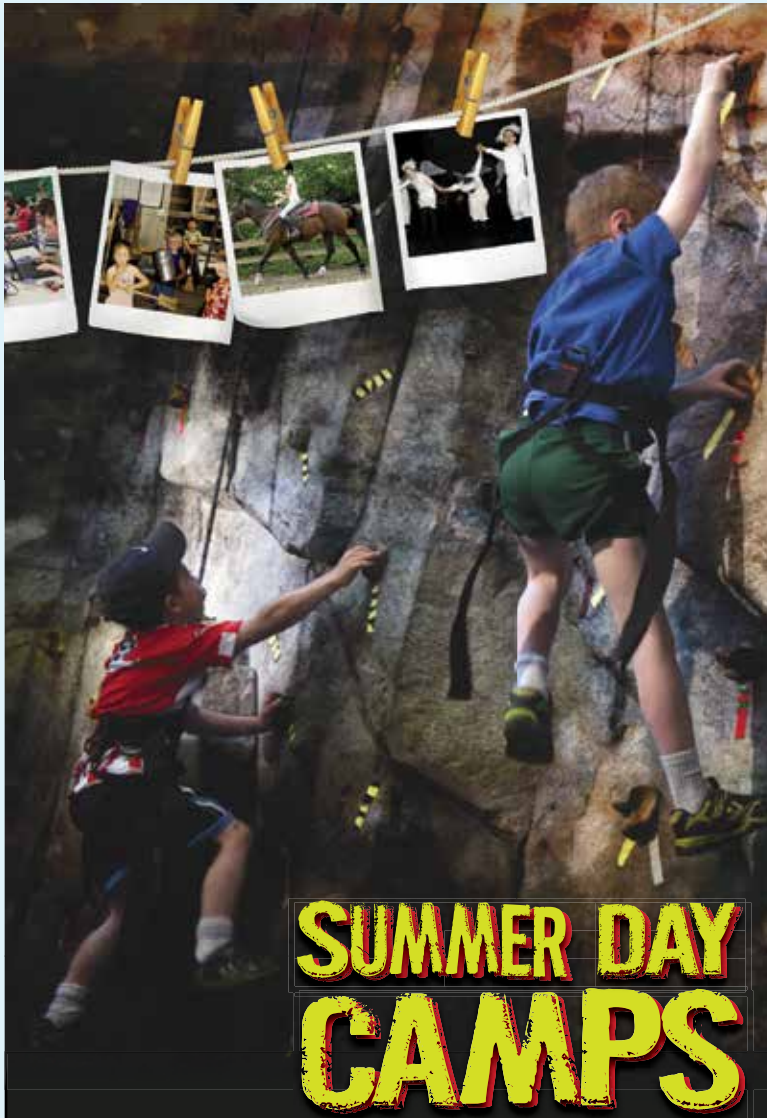
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- You and your child should decide whether you're looking for an **immersive language experience** or more of a **cross-cultural experience** and then look for a camp that fits the bill. (Some will do both.)
- **Will the camp cater to your student's level?** That's what you're looking for. If a camper is already proficient in Spanish, they'll be spoken to in Spanish. If they are new to the language, the camp will adjust.
- To decide whether a language camp is right for your child, first, **visit with camps staff**. Ask them about their curriculum and what aspects of the languages' culture they'll explore. If you're fluent in a language yourself, speak to the staff in that language to see if they know the language well.
- Make sure you **ask about the cultural aspects** of camps, which are as important as the language — to expose kids the wonders of other cultures and show them that there and countless people striving to learn more about the world.

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Inviting girls to STEM

At a critical time, middle-school girls offered mentors and programs

By Shawna De La Rosa

Spa days, social gatherings and BFFs are not the first thoughts that come to mind when discussing the professions of science, math, technology and engineering.

These fields, known collectively as STEM, sometimes conjure more masculine, maybe even tech-nerdy, images of pocket protectors and late nights in an isolated lab. That's not exactly the kind of life a girl in middle school might dream of.

STEM has an image problem: Such stereotypes are causing women to shy away from these professions. But educators and advocates behind a new trend in mentorship and targeted programming are pushing to change that.

Numbers game

For girls, middle school is the time when career plans begin to form. During these preteen years, 74 percent of girls are still interested in the magic of science, still believe they are as good as boys in math and figure they can make a robotic Lego vehicle move by way of technical applications. That statistic, which comes from the organization Girls Who Code, also states that only .3 percent of girls go on to choose computer science as a major.

Unfortunately, somewhere after the stage of giggly slumber parties and before college applications, most girls lose interest in pursuing a career in one of the four STEM disciplines.

Statistics from numerous organizations dedicated to fighting the trend all ultimately point to these problems:

- 1. Women make up roughly half the workforce, but only about 26 percent of STEM jobs are held by women.**
- 2. Job growth in the STEM sector is so fast that there are not enough qualified workers to fill such positions.**
- 3. Salaries in these fields are more equitable but still not equal. Typically, women earn about 92 cents per dollar to their male counterparts in STEM positions. The rest of the female workers in other industries earn an average of 77 cents for every dollar earned by men.**



So, what are the solutions? Bolstering a girl's confidence in math and science? Introducing her to STEM field mentors with whom she can identify? Changing the STEM field culture to include more women? Getting preteens hooked early? Personally inviting girls to sign up for STEM-related classes?

The answer lies in a mix of all of the above, experts say. Adding women to the STEM workforce has become

a national effort, with branches that reach into the local education systems.

Mentorship moves

Million Women Mentors, a New York-based organization, connects mentors to young girls interested in these fields. Julie Kantor, director of Million Women Mentors, explains that the goal is to "move the needle" of young girls pursuing STEM careers.

Kantor and her organization are trying to change the image of the STEM workforce by demonstrating through mentorship that STEM careers do have a supportive feminine side. Kantor, who felt isolated while working in a STEM job and credits a weekly lunch date with female coworkers with getting her through it, says there is a need for other women in STEM, so that the females who are in those fields don't feel so isolated.

Patti Hearn, the head of school at Seattle-based Lake Washington Girls Middle School, backs this push for mentors. She sees her students connect and identify with the school's "enthusiastic" female science and math teachers.

"I think mentorship is especially important in math and science," Hearn says. "If there is a critical mass of women, there is a feeling of membership, the idea that 'I'm supposed to be here.' It's that feeling of community identity." >>

Somewhere after the stage of giggly slumber parties and before college applications, most girls lose interest in one of the four STEM disciplines.

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10–13 Inviting girls to STEM

continued from page 55

The important thing is to provide role models in which young girls see themselves reflected, Hearn says.

Joy Giovanini, curriculum facilitator for career and college readiness at the Peninsula School District in Gig Harbor, is also helping to expose young girls to mentors in math and sciences.

This spring, Giovanini and the Peninsula School District will host an all-girl STEM class and career workshop for 150 middle schoolers. It's called Career and Pathway Expo, or CAPE. Though some of the classes will be run by men, Giovanini will put an emphasis on female mentors with whom the attendees can identify. Her hope is to break down the fields' stereotype of being dominated by males.

"It gives the girls an opportunity to see people like themselves in these fields," she says.

Greg Bianchi, STEM curriculum coordinator for the Bellevue School District, says that mentors don't necessarily have to be in the STEM field to have an impact on a girl.

"Female adults, regardless of professional experience, can have a strong impact if they convey enthusiasm and are willing to learn robotics or coding alongside students," he says. "In doing so, they model the mindset."

Personal invitations are another way Giovanini, a former middle school robotics teacher, nudges young girls down these paths.

When she was in the classroom, she noticed that a girl was more likely to sign up for a

male-dominated robotics class if she or another teacher personally asked her.

"And she would often bring friends," Giovanini says.

As a result, 20 percent of the Peninsula School District's robotics students are female, about one-third more than before invitations were used.

Boosting confidence

Perhaps one of the reasons personal invitations are important is that girls lack confidence in these fields.

Linda Ott, a professor of computer science at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan, agrees.

"I can't tell you how many times I've heard a female student say, 'But I only got a B-plus' or even, 'But it wasn't a strong A,'" Ott says. "When girls are invited by a teacher to join a technology-related class or pursue a technology-related activity, it gives them the message that they really can do it."

This, Ott says, is where the mentors come in.

"It's hard for a girl to pursue a career in fields like computing when they haven't seen anyone else who looks like them in the field."

One of the solutions may also be a matter of timing, says Joanie Block, the founder and director of Kids In Medicine, a Seattle Science Foundation program.

"Middle school is when we want to hook

them," she says. Kids in Medicine works to "expose" elementary school children, "hook" the middle schoolers and "mentor" the high schoolers.

Classes like forensics really interest the middle schoolers, Block says.

Block also notes that classes geared to "girls only" allow them to "check their cool card at the door."

Giving girls the opportunity to thrive among other girls is a key to success in these fields. "Everyone around them is a girl, and it's cool to be smart," Hearn says.

The approach to STEM at Lake Washington Girls Middle School has been successful. About 50 percent of the school's alumnae go on to study advanced math and science in high school and college, Hearn says.

That's well above the average number of women in those fields.

The school's success in this area may prove that bringing women together with female mentors, building STEM confidence in girls, and exposing them to the thrilling and lucrative careers available in STEM may be the answer to ending the dearth of women in these field. ■

Shawna De La Rosa is a mother of three boys. When she's not driving one — or all — of them to a practice, she writes about everything from education to the economy, the stock market to small business.

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Getting a running start

How high school students are earning college credits for free

By Jenna Vandenberg

In his most recent State of the Union address, Barack Obama claimed to be sending Congress “a bold new plan to lower the cost of community college — to zero.” It’s a bold plan indeed, but one that many community college students in our state won’t need to wait or hope for. Their tuition is already free.

Since 1990, Washington state has offered a screaming-good deal to high school juniors and seniors: Through a program called Running Start they can take community college classes to fulfill their high school graduation requirements, and they’ll get college credit. For free. Students can jump-start their post-secondary education and even earn their associate’s degree at virtually no cost.

“We had about 200 students finish both their AA and their high school diploma in 2013–14,” says Bernita Bontrager, the high school relations coordinator at Everett Community College (EvCC). Last year, EvCC had more than 1,000 16- and 17-year-olds sitting in lecture halls and chemistry labs alongside the more typical community college students. Some students take all of their classes on campus; others take a mix of classes at both college and high school.

Kevin Mach is one of those part-time students. The 11th-grader begins his day at Mariner High School for a “zero period” leadership class. Then, he heads to Edmonds Community College for U.S. history and English 101, and returns to Mariner for precalculus.

Mach cites his family as the biggest factor in his decision to enroll in the state’s Running Start program. “My mom struggles financially,” he says. “She’s a single parent, and I have other siblings to worry about. This saves a lot of money.” He’s right. A full-time student at Edmonds Community College pays \$1,333 a quarter; those who earn their associate’s degree while in high school are saving around \$8,000. High school students only pay for their textbooks, placement tests and class fees.

More choices, more freedom

Financial incentives aside, Mach appreciates how he’ll be able to continue studying calculus



Running Start students are encouraged to stay involved in high school activities.

at Edmonds after he taps out the available math classes at high school. For students interested in accounting, Arabic or aviation, flipping through that community college catalog is when education ceases to be “school” and instead becomes an opportunity to learn desired skills.

Freedom is another big draw. “I can motivate myself,” Mach says. “I don’t need someone telling me what to do all of the time. I take initiative. It’s something I always have done, but once I got to college, it got a lot more serious.” For students who are sick of teachers stamping their planners, grading study notes and assigning endless practice problems, college is a relief.

“I do have a lot of moments when I miss high school,” Mach admits. “The college life is independent and it suites me, but I do have

moments where I just want to come back. Next year, I might come back to Mariner to experience my senior year.”

High school counselor Maureen Fortney notes that this is a concern. “For students looking for a challenging course load, I typically recommend AP [Advanced Placement] classes rather than Running Start,” Fortney says, explaining how high school is an important life experience that Running Start students miss out on. But some students are dying to miss out on this particular life experience, especially those who have matured faster than their peers or who are dealing with some of the negative social aspects of high school.

For Mach, who enjoys high school yet still feels the pull of higher education, attending college part-time helps. Running Start students are encouraged to stay involved in high school activities. Athletes remain eligible to play for their high school teams. Students are encouraged to participate in student leadership and clubs at the collegiate level as well.

Chelsea Good, the Running Start student success specialist at North Seattle Community College, always recruits someone from student leadership to speak to incoming Running Start students during orientation. “I have about eight Running Start students active in student leadership,” she says. “Many more than [“than”? Or does she mean “who”?] do general clubs.”

Moving on to university

Student involvement coupled with a rigorous course schedule is what universities look for when admitting students. Most Running Start students have aspirations to move a university, so high-level classes are crucial. Running Start is not the only option. Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes in high school are viewed as equally challenging, and students who score well enough on AP or IB tests can also receive college credit. Good says, “Universities are not necessarily looking at whether a class is IB or AP or Running Start.



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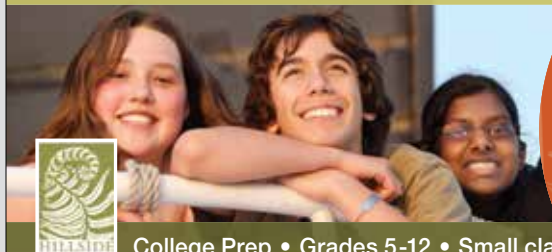
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Get a running start

continued from page 59

They are looking at the types of classes, the rigor of courses and how well students did."

Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that universities will accept every transfer credit. (This is also the case for community college students who are not in Running Start.) Public universities in Washington will accept associate's degrees, but students need to educate themselves about the transferability of credits, especially for all private and out-of-state universities.

The process

Students who are interested in Running Start should contact their high school counselor. Homeschool and private school students can participate in Running Start, but they must enroll in a public school first. Counselors will take a look at each student's schedule and discuss which Running Start classes will fit in with high school graduation requirements. This varies from district to district, so creating a personalized schedule is important. For each quarter, the college sends transcripts to counselors, who then translate numerical grades into letter grades. Students still need to take high school proficiency tests and complete any non-credit

graduation requirements, such as a High School and Beyond plan or a senior project.

The Running Start application includes a form that allows student information to be released to parents. If not signed, parents will be denied access to their child's grades and information (even for children younger than 18). Even if the form is signed, it is worth remembering that college instructors will not respond to parent concerns with the same forthrightness that high school teachers do.

The next step is college placement tests. Although there is no grade point average requirement, students do need to demonstrate college-level math and English skills. Once those steps are completed, students are ready to sign up for classes and begin their journey through higher education, free of debt. ■

In the space between convincing sophomores to analyze the French Revolution and convincing her toddler to eat veggies, Jenna Vandenberg writes and runs. She can usually be found behind a double jogging stroller just north of Seattle, where she teaches and lives with her daughters and husband.

online parent resources

OPSI

k12.wa.us/SecondaryEducation/CareerCollegeReadiness/RunningStart.aspx

Everett Community College

everettcc.edu/enrollment/hs-programs/running-start

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The charming app "**Word Grab Phonetics**" emphasizes phonics and rhyming skills with the help of a good-natured monster. Preschoolers and kindergartners identify letter sounds, including long vowels and hard and soft letters, and feed them to the enthusiastic monster waiting below.



A cast of colorful characters in "**Endless Reader**" introduces new sight words to preschoolers and kindergartners. As young kids complete animated letter and sentence puzzles, the sounds are repeated to support phonics skills. Additional word packs can be purchased.



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— Kelly Knox

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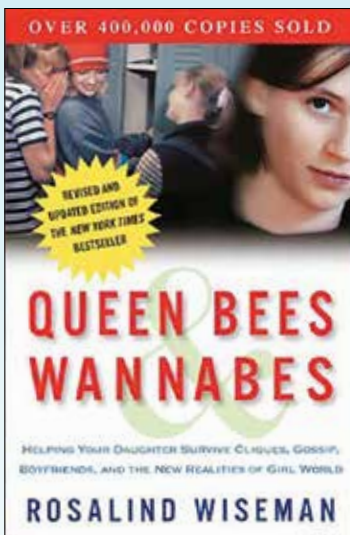
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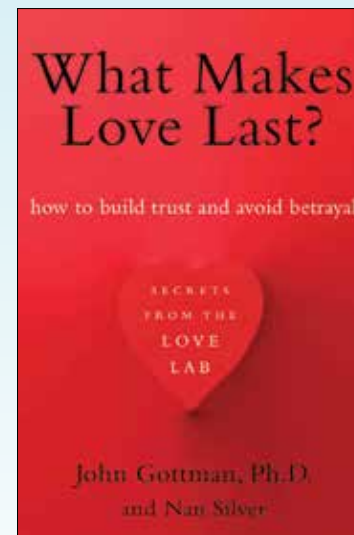
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