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#### **Con-GRAD-ulations!**

It's that time of year: graduation! Get a jump on planning the diploma-getting festivities with these A+ party ideas. They'll lend a degree of fun to any festivity: parentmap.com/graduation.

the answers to those questions and more with Washington State University's Dr. Universe. This curious cat writes a regular column answering kidtastic science

> questions: parentmap. com/dr-universe.





#### Make dad feel rad

Reminder to the busy co-parents out there: Father's Day is right around the corner (June 19). We've rounded up top gift ideas that kids can make all on their own: parentmap.com/ fathers-day.



#### Let's get crafty

Fill your child's empty summer days with easy (and fun!) crafts. We recommend these three ideas for how to make a creative selfportrait. Consider it a lowtech selfie you can hang on the fridge: parentmap.com/ self-portrait.

#### Redmond ready

With our handy visitor's guide, it's easy to learn something new about this fun-filled Eastside city. Get exploring: parentmap.com/redmond.



#### Yikes! Is it too late to find a summer camp?

Wait, school's out when? Figure out what camps and classes are still available to get your little camper ready for break: parentmap.com/camps-classes.









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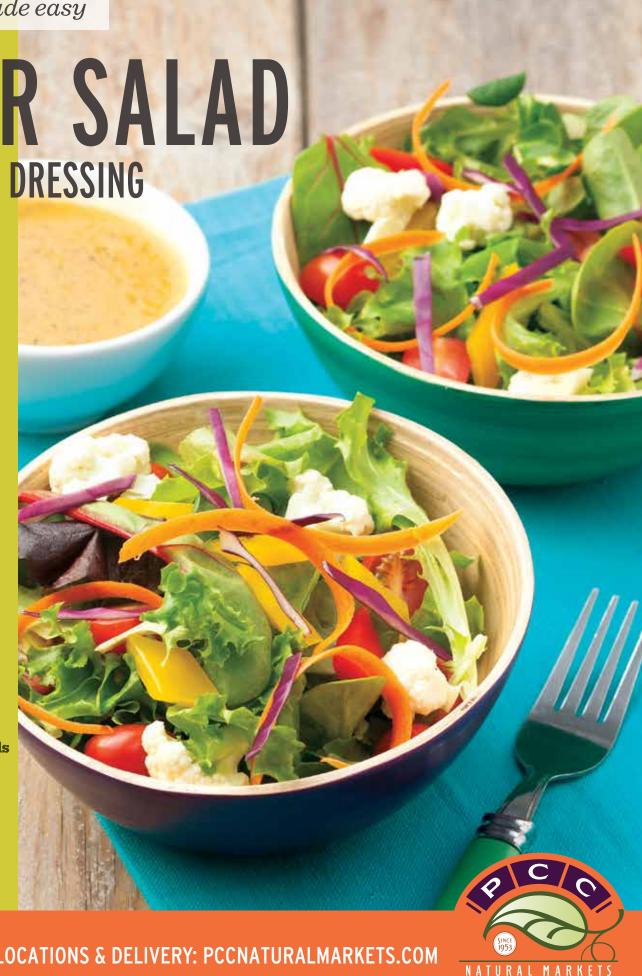




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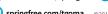


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#### Counter hate with love

"And I said to my child, 'You are beautiful and perfect, and you can be a girl." And she said, 'Really? I can?' And I said, 'Yes, you can, and I will help you." — Vlada Knowlton, mother, filmmaker and activist in opposition to Initiative 1515

o you ever find yourself scratching your head, wondering what year we're living in? The current Republican presidential candidate has the support of white supremacists. Violence against Jews is at an all time post-Holocaust high. Jewish students on American college campuses have come under attack, French Jews are targeted in grocery stores and neo-Nazis shout Hitler slogans in the streets of Europe. Many of my family members perished in the Holocaust and to me, it seems more like 1933 than 2016.

Activism is personal: Our hearts open wider when it is our child or family who is suffering, threatened by hatred, discrimination or bullying.

Enter stage left: Washington state's bathroom battle (p. 13). I-1515 seeks to repeal Washington's decade-old non-discrimination law that, among other things, allows transgender people to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity.

Our friend and filmmaker Vlada Knowlton inspired our reporting. She shares the painful and powerful moment when her 4-year-old said, "I don't want to be born. Please, put me back." Hear how that moment inspired her to became a leader opposing I-1515.

As Vlada shows, we as parents play a pivotal role in our children's lives, in moments of both suffering and joy. Your father may be the greatest on earth, but who wouldn't want to be adopted by Seattle's restaurateur extraordinaire Ethan Stowell (p. 8) or "fish-maniac, food foraging" Dylan Tomine (p. 46)? These dads understand that our kids are expressions of how we raise them, and they make conscious efforts to build their kids' confidence with each new skill, from pancake flipping to mushroom hunting.

Speaking of foraging, my jaw dropped learning about the local families in our

feature, "Off the grid and back to the land" (p. 18). While their lives, though impressive when measured by their carbon footprints (or lack there of), won't change my electricity and car-addicted family, I urge you to consider some unplugged fun for yourself (p. 27). My family had a particularly memorable

and hilarious adventure at Sequim's lavender fields and the Olympic Game Farm, which we will never forget.

Happy Father's Day!









Summer assignment:

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# Restaurateur Ethan Stowell dishes on fatherhood

By Angela Stowell

y husband, Ethan Stowell, has accomplished a lot of things. He opened his first restaurant, Union, to national acclaim when he was 28 years old. He's grown to become a respected entrepreneur and is well-known for the generous amount of time he gives back to the community. He's lost more than 50 pounds in the past year, does all of our family's laundry (because I am terrible at it) and makes breakfast for our sons, Adrian and Franklin, every morning. Major husband brag, right here! In honor of Father's Day, I decided to get the scoop on what being a dad means to this accomplished guy.

## What is your favorite thing about being a dad?

I guess it would be the unconditional love I have for the kids and the look that they give when they see me for the first time in the morning or when I come home from work. There are few feelings better than feeling like your kids really love you.

# What is your favorite food to cook with or for Adrian and Franklin?

My favorite time of day is first thing in the morning. As you know, I'm the one who gets up with the kids and gets breakfast going. It's been fun to get them involved in making breakfast. It's great seeing Adrian be so excited about cracking eggs and mixing pancakes. So I guess my favorite things to cook with them and for them is breakfast food: pancakes, oatmeal, eggs. Adrian also started to help me make polenta, and pizza is always a fun one.

## What are your favorite activities with the kids?

Right now, I'm loving taking them to the Pacific Science Center. Frank's love of dinosaurs is pretty awesome. I'm super excited about Adrian's love of the Mariners. We've been to a few games this



season, and it's been awesome. Other than that, pretty much any activity that we do on "Dad's Day."

#### Talk more about Dad's Day.

Dad's Day consists of myself and a group of friends who happened to all have sons within three months — and in one case — three days of each other. Every Saturday morning, we take the kids out without the moms and go to the zoo, The Museum of Flight, the Science Center, Golden Gardens. It started when the kids were just over a year old, and I think has been really good for all of us. It's nice to see how other dads handle their kids, and it has helped me feel more confident and connected as a dad. Plus, who doesn't love to see six dads wrangling 10 kids who are 4 and younger?

And readers, please note that Dad's Day was started by the dads, with no prodding from the moms. However, I can speak for all the moms when I say that we really love our kid-free Saturday mornings!

What is the hardest thing about being a dad?

#### **EDITOR'S NOTE**

Angela Stowell is CFO and partner at Ethan Stowell Restaurants in Seattle, which encompasses 12 restaurants including Tavolàta and How to Cook a Wolf. Angela also helped found Eat Run Hope, an annual 5K and culinary event that benefits the Fetal Health Foundation. Angela and Ethan have two young sons.

The responsibility. I don't shy away from it, but you're always wondering if the decisions you make for them are the correct ones and how decisions you make in our own life will impact them.

## How do you balance being a busy restaurateur and a dad?

It's really tough. There is a lot of pressure to work at night. I do the best I can to be present in the hours that my job allows. For our family, that means we spend time together over breakfast, and I get home for dinner on the nights that I can. I'd be sugarcoating it if I said that it was easy to be in the restaurant industry and have kids. Then again, I'm sure people with 9-to-5 jobs have their own set of work-life balance issues.

## What lessons do you hope Adrian and Franklin learn from you?

I'm really excited to teach them to cook and be self-sufficient behind the stove. I don't think I want either of them to choose it as a profession, but I want them to appreciate and cook good food for themselves.

# Got any gift recommendations for dads who are into cooking and food?

I'm not a gadget guy, at all. All I want for Father's Day is to hang out with the kids and cook some good food. I think instead of a gadget or cookbook, most dads probably want their wife to plan a date night. Hint, hint.

#### **Grossest dad moment to date?**

Probably having baby barf in my mouth. Luckily, he was still breastfeeding, so it didn't taste terrible. And there was the time that I took the boys to a charity golf tournament and Adrian decided to go poop on the seventh-hole green.

#### Any advice for new dads?

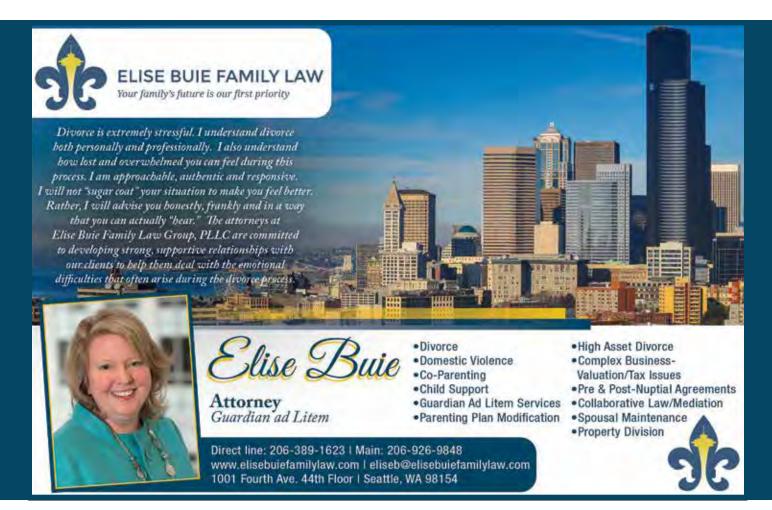
It gets easier.















# PARENT FUEL

family news, snack-sized

#### **Berry sorry**

Just in time for strawberry season, sour news: Strawberries now top the list of produce with

the most pesticide residue. So says the Environmental Working Group (EWG), which every year puts out its Dirty Dozen list to draw attention to the issue. For the first time in six years, strawberries beat out apples, with an average of 5.75 different pesticides per sample. The rest of the Dirty Dozen includes, in order: apples, nectarines, peaches, celery, grapes, cherries, spinach, tomatoes, sweet bell peppers, cherry tomatoes and cucumbers. If you're concerned, consider buying organic, and either

#### **Arsenic and rice**

way, wash your produce!

If you have an infant, you may want to cut way back on the infant rice and rice products you feed her. A large study in the journal *JAMA* 

Pediatrics found that 12-monthold infants who ate brown or white rice had total urinary arsenic concentrations that were twice as high as those who ate no rice. Arsenic has been linked to issues with immunity and neurodevelopment.

Last month, the FDA

proposed a limit on the

in infant rice cereals.

amount of arsenic allowable

Pods, people

They're convenient, sure, but those colorful little detergent pods are just too interesting to young kids, and that's posing a serious

and that's posing a serious risk. A new study finds that exposure to laundry or dishwasher detergent pods is increasingly sickening kids younger than 6. Between 2013 and 2014, 30 detergent-pod calls a day were made to U.S. poison centers; that's about one call every 45 minutes. Experts say parents with little kids in the house should buy powdered detergents instead — and then keep those out of little kids' reach, too.

#### I feel ya

Motherhood is a messy business, but some ages are tougher than others. So what's the most stressful stage for moms? A new study draws a conclusion that might surprise you: middle school. Researchers surveyed thousands of moms across the country, with children ranging from infants to adults, and then rated their feelings about their lives. Moms with middle school-age kids reported

those with adult children!

the highest levels of stress and loneliness,

and the lowest levels of life satisfaction. With their raging

hormones, peer pressure
and experimentation,
combined with the onset
of eye rolls and other
delightful (and normal)
forms of rejection, middle
schoolers can be tough.
Take comfort — it gets better:
The happiest moms in the study
were the ones with infants and

#### Stop that right now

Seriously, cosmetic ads aimed at older women are backfiring, big time. A British survey of women ages 40 and older finds that, despite

stereotypes in the media, the

vast majority aren't fixated on looking younger. In fact, only 3 percent of women surveyed said they use makeup to look younger; the majority said they do so to look good (52 percent) or feel confident (28 percent). And nearly half of the women said they find ads that feature older women incredibly annoying.



#### Speaking of annoying . . .

Super-fit gym bunnies top the list of reasons women avoid going to the gym, according to a poll by the British Heart Foundation. Thirty-three percent of women surveyed said they stay away from the gym because they feel intimidated by fitter, competitive people; 27 percent said they don't know how to use the machines. Still others stay away because of "people who wear Lycra" (16 percent) and "people grunting" (7 percent). Ugh! In an ironic twist, nearly a quarter of women surveyed — 22 percent — said they're *not fit enough* to go to the gym.

- Kristen Russell

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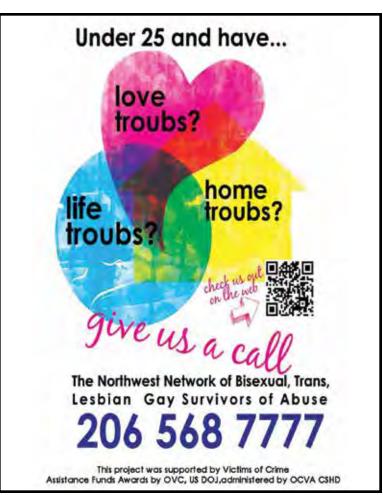
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# Washington's brewing bathroom battle

Families mobilize to support transgender youths and stop Initiative 1515

By Natalie Singer-Velush

ne morning a couple of years ago while driving to preschool, Vlada Knowlton looked back at her child, whose head was pressed against the car window, looking glumly out at the drizzling rain. "What's wrong?" the mother asked.

The answer that came back in a little voice was enough to crack her heart: "I don't want to be born," the 4-year-old said. "Please, put me back."

It was all Knowlton could do to keep her car on the road. She had known for some time that her youngest child was struggling. Born with a body typically regarded as a boy's, the bright preschooler had long coveted all things "girl" — elaborate dresses, fancy ladies' hair. The parents allowed girl clothing at home, but their child was still presenting as a boy in public, dutifully meeting society's expectations but clearly suffering inside.

Now Knowlton could no longer deny how acute her child's suffering had become. Her child had a girl's brain. She *was* a girl.

"I said to myself, *I'm done. That's it.* And I said to my child, 'You are beautiful and perfect, and you can be a girl.' And she said, 'Really? I can?' And I said, 'Yes, you can, and I will help you."

Annabelle's transition was supported by her family, including her parents, older sister and older brother. The teachers at the children's private school were supportive. And although Annabelle was afraid the first day she wore her favorite dress to preschool, her short hair not yet grown out into the golden princess tresses she dreamed of, she insisted on finally going to school as herself. Everyone accepted her. Everyone was relieved.

"The kids have moved on," Knowlton says of today's younger generation. "They understand the gender spectrum. They don't even care."

Annabelle will turn 6 in August. Right after her transition, Annabelle's mother says, "this beautiful, intelligent child came to life."

It's the ideal outcome, experts and advocates say. Research shows that the more accepted transgender and gender-nonconforming youths are by their communities, the less likely they are to fall victim to the well-documented high rates of violence and suicide.



In recent years, social and medical sciences have expanded our understanding of gender identity, and acceptance and awareness of all expressions of the gender spectrum have been growing. But as the conversation about gender identity has gone mainstream, so have threats to the rights that trans people say are essential for their protection and equality.

In Washington state, this is playing out with a current proposal, Initiative 1515, which seeks to repeal Washington's decade-old non-discrimination law that protects transgender people using the bathroom of their choice.

Families like Knowlton's plus educators and advocates who support trans youths are mobilizing in opposition to I-1515. They want to show the voters that the proposal is dangerous for all people, bad for the state financially and claims to solve safety problems that don't really exist.

Go online for another family's intimate story, and more photos: parentmap.com/transyouth

"Anxiety has never been higher. Families and kids are scared," says Aidan Key, founder of Gender Odyssey and a gender educator who works with youths, families and schools across Washington state and nationally. "We haven't lost a kid in our group yet, but [if this initiative passes] I don't believe that fact is going to stay the same. I feel like there will be a body count."

# A national debate, a local conversation

I-1515 would amend the state's discrimination law so that public and private entities could restrict access to "private facilities" to "biologically" male or female individuals regardless of the person's gender identity, according to the ballot measure's summary. If passed, the law would open schools to lawsuits and penalties of \$2,500 every time a transgender person used the bathroom of his or her choice.

About 246,000 valid signatures are needed by July 8 to get I-1515 on the ballot for the November election.

The initiative is part of a wave of recent anti-transgender bills in states that include Texas, Kentucky, Minnesota and Florida, according to a policy brief released earlier

#### Washington's brewing bathroom battle

continued from page 13

this year by The Fenway Institute and the Center for American Progress. The recent House Bill 2 in North Carolina, for example, requires people use public bathrooms that correspond with the sex on their birth certificate rather than their gender identity.

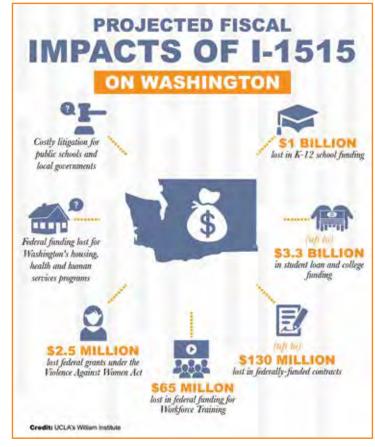
In May, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit against North Carolina. The U.S. Department of Justice also requested the judge prohibit the state from enforcing House Bill 2, which violates federal civil rights protections. And the Obama administration in May directed public schools to allow transgender students to use bathrooms matching their gender identity.

An analysis by the Williams Institute, a UCLA think tank, found that I-1515 would put at risk as much as \$1 billion annually in federal funding to Washington state schools, and might put at risk \$3.5 billion more in annual funding to state and local government entities.

"We're already under court order to properly fund schools," says Kris Hermanns, executive director of Pride Foundation. "With this initiative, we're facing stripping our schools of vital federal funding."

Kaeley Triller Haver, communications director for Just Want Privacy (*justwantprivacy.org*), the group sponsoring the initiative, says the group mainly takes issue with a clarifying state law passed in 2015: WAC 163-32-060, which reads in part: "All covered entities shall allow individuals the use of gender-segregated facilities, such as restrooms, locker rooms, dressing rooms, and homeless or emergency shelters, that are consistent with that individual's gender expression or gender identity."

"A large concern is what statement the current law makes to our daughters about their privacy and safety," Haver says. "Women and girls are physically at risk for all kinds of abuses, especially sexual. I have a 5-year-old daughter, and as someone who has someone experienced trauma it is very important for me that the first time my daughter is exposed to the male form, it is because she's chosen it.



"If you are a high school boy with a penis and you believe that you are a girl, insisting [on showering] after basketball with girls, that's a violation of these girls' privacy."

But opponents say these arguments are red herrings and that I-1515 would not address any existing safety worries.

"They've created this false political movement based on the pretense that the majority of people's civil rights are being trampled by a small percentage of the population. But the crux of their argument, that these people are *deciding* to be a gender they weren't born in, is a myth," Knowlton says. Knowlton, a Seattle-area documentary filmmaker, explores this issue — the science behind gender identity — extensively in her new project, called *The Most Dangerous Year*, now in production.

"We now understand that gender identity has nothing to do with physical appearance. There's a place in the brain that very clearly identifies what your sense of gender will be, and there's no association between that and any other traits," says Dr. Kevin Hatfield, who treats transgender youths at Seattle's Polyclinic, in an interview with Knowlton for her upcoming film. "Because of brain development, we can now clearly identify that chromosomes can be one thing, the genitalia can be something else and the gender identity can very clearly be different from both of those things."

"It's transphobia. Is this about the fear of male violence? No. Any man can put on a dress and sneak into a restroom for a violent purpose. Violence against women is already illegal," Knowlton says. "This is not a substantiated fear. It's the bogeyman. It's exploiting people's fear with no facts behind it."

She puts it another way, bluntly: "You don't have a civil right to always be comfortable."

Think about it this way, says Key: "It might be startling to see a transgender woman in the bathroom. It's a startle

reflex — but then common sense has to kick in. We were able to do this when we integrated bathrooms racially. Now we look back and say that fear was ridiculous."

Key says he has heard from many anguished parents who are afraid that I-1515 would erase the hard-won sense of acceptance and well-being some of their children have achieved.

"These are parents who have already had to roll up their sleeves and do the work to convince families, schools and communities to accept and protect their kids. They are fighting for their child's life."

#### This is about everybody

There are more than 10,000 transgender youths and 15,000 transgender adults in Washington state, the Williams Institute estimates. I-1515 opponents say that kids and adults who are transgender or gender-nonconforming are at risk of being publicly shamed, targeted or endangered simply for using the bathroom that matches their identity.

A survey of transgender people in Washington, D.C., showed that 70 percent of respondents reported being harassed, abused or denied access to public restrooms, and this mistreatment was correlated with negative effects on education, employment and participation in public life, according to the January policy brief from The Fenway Institute and the Center for American Progress. Another survey of transgender people in Massachusetts showed that 65 percent of respondents reported being discriminated against in public accommodations in the past 12 months.

More than one in four trans people has faced a bias-driven assault, and rates are higher for trans women and trans people of color, according to the National Center for Transgender Equality.

And more than 50 percent of transgender youths in Washington state will have attempted suicide at least once by their 20th birthday, according to an estimate by the Youth Suicide Prevention Program, derived from national statistics.

But transgender youths who are accepted by and have early support from their families and communities have better outcomes. "Acceptance is associated with better mental health in transgender people, while rejection of transgender people is associated with worse mental health," says Kristina Olson, assistant professor of psychology at the University of Washington, who is conducting a large-scale, national, longitudinal study of young transgender children.

"Trans youth are vulnerable because this is an initiative that encourages more discrimination," says Seth Kirby, executive director of Tacoma's Oasis Youth Center and director of the Washington Won't Discriminate campaign (*washingtonwontdiscriminate.org*), launched in opposition to I-1515.

The law, if passed, would impact many people beyond Washington's transgender community.

"While the target is transgender people, it actually is about gender policing," says Hermanns. "It's about who gets to define our gender identity and norms."

Proposals for separate bathrooms for transgender people miss the point, say parents who oppose I-1515.

"We don't want there to be a segregated bathroom for transgender individuals for so many reasons, including the fact that my child does not identify as transgender," says Michelle Taylor, the founder of Taproot School in Seattle, whose 12-year-old son, Wilder, transitioned at 11. "Every time my child is made to feel different or afraid of being who he is, it affects his self-confidence and is emotionally painful. Transitioning while going through puberty is frightening. The realities of severe depression and suicide are real. People should be able to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity."

Opponents say they will be rallying against I-1515 through the signature-collection deadline. They urge everyone who supports youths and families to engage in the conversation and oppose 1515.

"Someone doesn't have to understand it all in order to recognize someone's humanity should be respected," Hermanns says. "This is about empathy. This is about compassion."

Says Kirby: "Don't be silent in your support." ■

Natalie Singer-Velush is ParentMap's executive editor.



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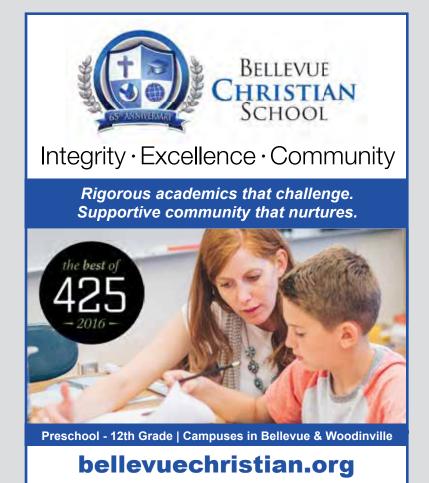








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## SCHOOLS + PRESCHOOLS

# Make math fun this summer

P

Hate math? Palms get sweaty just thinking of times tables? You may suffer from math anxiety and, bad news: You could be passing it along to your child.

In research published last summer, The Journal of Psychological Science reported that children with math-anxious parents who helped them with their math homework learned less math during the school year and were more likely to be anxious about the subject. In other words, if you show your kids you're scared of math, they'll be scared, too.

Hope isn't lost, though. This summer, vow to make math fun for the whole family. Impossible, you say? Not with games like the Kickstarter darlings Prime Climb and Tiny Polka Dot, not to mention coloring books and puzzles devoted to the pursuit of math (not that you'll notice, you'll be having so much fun).

Read more from math bloggers and board game developers at **parentmap.com/math-play**.







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# Off the grid

# **Local families have something to**

Story and photographs by Bryony Angell

odern parenting is so much easier with modern conveniences, isn't it?

The power grid we rely on supplies us with the comforts of heat and electricity, hot water at the turn of a bathtub tap, light at the flick of a switch. Miles of roads make it second nature for us to drive anywhere for any errand, big or small (like when your kiddo needs chocolate chip cookies baked for her class *the very next morning*). The same goes for our supply chain of food and provisions. In the Puget Sound region, we enjoy the global spoils of port-city life at our fingertips: From European cheese to Korean bath salts, whatever you need (or think you need) is a mere car ride away to the market or mall.

But what if we intentionally stepped back and examined the impact of all our energy use on the planet? How many dams impede fish spawning in order to keep our washing machines and Xboxes running full-time? How much fossil fuel do those tanker ships require? On a more personal scale, all that infrastructure isn't free either. Owning a car and heating a home are increasingly expensive. More and more, the decision to opt out of some part of the grid is a financial decision, not just a philosophical one.

Going "off the grid" is not new. In the '60s and '70s, idealistic hippies created the back-to-the-land movement that helped families and communities live self-sufficiently, often immersed in nature and rural places. Abigail Prout's mother raised her and her brother, Chris, in a tepee on Lopez Island. "The choices were not made by fear of environmental collapse, but the challenge of being resourceful," says Prout, who's now raising her own family in an off-the-grid lifestyle. The point, she says, was "saying no to complexity and materialism and yes to creativity."

The families you'll meet here have more in common with the creativity of the hippie movement than the stark retreat of the more recent survivalist movement, whose participants seek grid independence and reject government oversight. These are urban and rural families, some relying on a single income to support households with one or more children. They don't shun technology; in fact, many rely on it to help achieve their sufficiency goals. They all emphasize that their journey to greater energy independence has been gradual and deliberate, and that it takes work and planning, even while increased self-reliance has also simplified their lives.

Can the rest of us learn something from these families to try for ourselves?

# and back to the land

# teach us about self-sufficiency

#### Carla Saulter

Writer and public transit advocate • Seattle

Off the grid for Transportation

In spite of living intentionally car-free for more than 13 years, Carla Saulter shies away from claiming off-the-grid status. "I actually don't think of riding public transit as being 'off the grid," she says. "Rather, I think of transit as an existing

"Mu kids dan't

think cars are

*the* way to get

think of cars as

just one option."

around; they

grid that people can plug into." She and her husband, Adam, and their two young children rely on bus or walking for getting around from their home in central Seattle.

Saulter grew up in Seattle, commuting daily by bus to her elementary school, which was across town,

from the age of 8. Her ease with riding the bus fueled her later decision to go car-free altogether, when as an adult back in Seattle after college, she was shocked by the growth and traffic of her beloved hometown. At the same time, she met her soon-to-be husband (on the bus!), whose own motivation to live without a car was financial. Together they have honed a life that reflects their values regarding community, economy and a low carbon footprint.

Even when kids arrived, the couple already had infrastructure in place that didn't involve a car. "We are privileged to have transit in a city that is expensive to live in," says Saulter. "My family is willing to trade space for access, but I don't want

to be cavalier about this topic. I know that it's not possible for many people."

Their children's elementary school is within walking distance, as is their library, grocery store and the children's clinic. "My kids have walked

since age 2," Saulter says. "I rarely used a stroller commuting, since it is such a hassle on the bus." And not having a car is great for parenting. "The bus ride is the entertainment; the 'going somewhere' is part of the fun and together time.

"Our kids know we make different choices than family and friends, and we have explained why," Saulter says. Many of her children's peers walk to school, and many of the adults they know from the neighborhood and their

church walk and take the bus to get around. "In general, we see lots of people we know on the bus, so it doesn't feel so out of the ordinary for them. My kids don't think cars are *the* way to get around; they think of cars as just one option."

Saulter says there are times when her family relies on conventional car and plane travel. They occasionally rent a car for the day to go farther afield, and they fly once a year to the Midwest, where her husband's family lives. "It's hard to do community without a car or plane these days," Saulter says. "You either choose not to see people or you compromise. Even people who are conscious of their carbon footprint still have to compromise."

# Resources recommended or written by the families

**Recommended by Carla Saulter**Saulter's blog **Bus Chick**, buschick.com

**Familybike**, a Seattle resource for cycling families, *familybike.org* 

Recommended by the Eells How to Live Well Without Owning a Car by Chris Balish

Recommended by the Apgar/Wallas and the Merles Folks, This Ain't Normal by Joel Salatin, influential farmer for sustainable practice, folksthisaintnormal.com

Recommended by the Apgar/Wallas Urban Homesteading by Rachel Kaplan

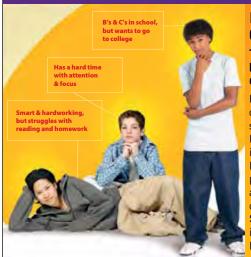
Additional sources for information about urban homesteading, solar power and sustainable living

Mother Earth News, motherearthnews.com

Solar Washington, solarwa.org

**Urban Homesteading for Sustainable Living**, *urban-homesteading.org* 

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## feature

# Off the grid

continued from page 19

### Rachel and Michael Eells\*

High school teachers • Seattle

Off the grid for Transportation and some electricity

"Cycling is

being a part of

where you are

going, feeling

connected to

the weather

and geography."

Eight years ago, the Eells' one family car conked out, and they never replaced it. Rachel and Michael were already thinking seriously about climate change now that they were parents of Oliver, an infant at the time, and they both desired a smaller footprint. They had slowly been working toward minimizing before the demise of the car: living in a 700-square-foot home in Seattle's Columbia City neighborhood,

growing much of their own produce, cycling to their teaching jobs and shopping locally. So taking the leap to being carfree seemed preordained.

Since that day in 2007, the Eells have added another

family member, Abbey, now 6, along with several hens to the backyard, a huge vegetable garden, and solar panels to their roof. But most significantly, they are an exclusively bike-riding family. "In the city, cycling is a fabulous way to parent and to travel. We all get exercise and fresh air, have family talks while biking," says Rachel Eells. The kids attend the local elementary, the family walks to the nearby grocery store, and they purposely select after-school

activities that are within a cycling radius of their home. "If you end up with a smaller sphere of movement, there's more overlap and depth in community," she says. Adds Michael Eells, "Relying on a bicycle also puts a check on overbooking."

The family owns two tandem bikes in addition to other cycling gear, and they bike no matter the conditions outside. "Cycling is being a part of where you are

> going, feeling connected to the weather and geography," says Michael Eells. They even vacation on bicycle, cycling as far as Glacier National Park last summer and taking the train back. Part of

the family's

motivation is to instill a global mindset. "I want to be aware of the broader lens and not make it seem like we're either crazy or remarkable by not owning a car," says Rachel Eells. "I don't mind being unusual in certain circles — the one family cycling across the city to our soccer games, etc. — but I want to do honor to people who have gone generations without cars and not make it sound like we're trailblazers."

\*The Eells family is pictured on the cover (photograph by Will Austin)

### Abigail and Clive Prout

Professional coaches • San Juan County Off the grid for Heat and most electricity

Growing up on Lopez Island as a child with a back-to-the-land mother, Abigail Prout yearned for something similar for her own kids. "I grew up in nature, with beauty over function," she says of her childhood spent without electricity or running water until age 10. "Nature is still important, but so is creating physical community." She and her husband, Clive, decided to return to San Juan County to raise their two daughters, Nonie and Sophie, at the same time that the local land trust was building a sustainable community development.

"We were drawn to this planned community for its proximity to town and other families," says Abigail Prout. "It's easy to romanticize the isolation of a rural setting, but people need engagement." That the land trust community was also purposely built to be energy efficient made the decision even more attractive to the Prouts. What made it affordable was their participation in their home's construction: Clive put in 32 hours a week building, along with other volunteers from the island.

The houses in the community (on an island with a population of just over 2,000) feature energy-efficient design: Each home faces south, is built on a concrete pad and boasts a metal roof to take advantage of heat gain; windows open and close for cross-ventilation; exterior walls are of straw-bale construction to offer insulation in the winter and heat protection in the summer; each roof

is equipped with solar panels; and all energy produced by the panels is shared among the homes. Some families manage to achieve net zero exclusively with the power provided by

"So many people

who choose to

live here do so for

the simplicity and

for the nature. But

you have to drive.

Then there are the

ferries ..."

the solar panels.

community is not really off the grid. "Our local \$40 a month to be connected," explains Chris Prout's brother, the community. "We need to be

But the utility charges us Greacen, Abigail who also lives in

connected because, through net metering, we treat our utility as a big battery, storing summergenerated electricity for wintertime usage." Whatever energy surplus is generated by the community's solar panels is consumed within the community well before it makes it back into the island's greater grid, he says.

Even so, on the day of my visit in late November, the Prouts' home was toasty warm, thanks entirely to their wood-burning stove. We drank tea in the dazzling morning light coming through windows overlooking the meadow between the community and the nearby village. The placement and structure of their home were clearly paying off.

"It feels really good living in an efficient home; I feel like I'm doing my part," says Abigail Prout. But she admits that by living in

> a rural setting, she and her husband are forced to drive more for both



# Off the grid

continued from page 21

### Rachelle and Ryan Merle

lefferson County

Off the grid for Most building materials and some food

What does the process of making the switch from conventional to off the grid look like? This family is living this process, currently midway toward creating a sustainable homestead. Rachelle Merle, a fifth-generation islander (from the San Juans and, more recently, Whidbey), has rural living in her genes. She and her husband, Ryan Merle, live outside Port Townsend in a home they're building, designed to be totally self-sufficient once completed.

"Starting two years ago, we knew we wanted to do something like this," says Rachelle Merle. They were intrigued with the idea of building something themselves and being independent from the power grid. "We want to live closer to the actual land, to be able to hear what's going on outside." The family of five (the couple has three children, ages 6, 4 and 2) relies solely on Ryan Merle's income working for the government. They determined that they could get by on one salary if they proceeded toward self-sufficiency, with the aim of long-term reduction of both their carbon footprint and their expenses.

They collected salvaged windows, cabinetry, a woodstove and appliances, and even upcycled the trailer frame on which they built their home so that it is portable. "Ninety percent of our windows and appliances came from the local salvage store," says Rachelle Merle. The need for a portable house arose from timing: "Our intent was to buy land and build the structure there, but the right parcel just wasn't coming up," explains Ryan Merle. So they dove in, constructing the house on wheels last summer on rented land instead.



They built the majority of their 52-by-13-foot home in four months with the help of friends and family during work parties, and now live there. But it isn't ideal living in a partially finished home over the winter. "I wish we were further along," says Ryan Merle. "It's been hard."

Even as we stand in the rain outside their home, tarps over the unfinished siding flapping in the wind, I feel the "We want to live closer to the actual land, to be able to hear what's going on outside."

family's determination. Their outgoing expenses (such as rent, phone line, food and car insurance) are minimal, and once the house is finished, they can cross building materials off the list. And to ensure their departure from the electrical grid, they are planning for solar electricity with storage capacity once they are permanently settled.

Currently, they are already halfway to their goal. While they are hooked up to water and electricity, much like a mobile home, they have a composting toilet and reuse all of their gray water. They grow 60 percent of their vegetables in containers, and they keep chickens.

"Eventually we want to raise animals pasture-fed," says Rachelle Merle. "You really can't do livestock sustainably unless it's pastured. A lot of farm feed is made of densely packed nutrients and grains that are grown elsewhere."

Her steely blue eyes and confidence give her the air of a countrified Katharine Hepburn; she exudes the conviction and assurance of someone

who gets things done. I could imagine myself getting discouraged at the halfway point to building a dream, when the rain is coming down, the house is unfinished, and the children are young. But those same conditions can also be viewed as the glass half full: Nature is audible from outside, the home has potential and the children are full of wonder. This family will finish their homestead.

### Keeth Apgar and Nala Walla

Musicians • East Jefferson County

Off the grid for Heat, electricity, plumbing, drinking water, some building materials and much of their food

"Everything

we've built

by hand and

maintained

by hand."

**UDN** 266

On the morning I visited Keeth Apgar and Nala Walla and their son, Montana, they were drying apples (from their own trees) over their woodstove and drinking tea (filtered rainwater heated on a propane stove) in their beautifully crafted one-room main house. The image was of bucolic self-sufficiency: a picturesque property of little buildings, each serving a purpose; a garden surrounded by a fence and hand-hewn gates; a covered and neatly stacked woodpile; a child's playhouse; and an outdoor entertaining

area. "Everything you see we've built by hand and maintained by hand," says Apgar. So don't romanticize this too much is how I interpret his statement.

All the same, one cannot help but be charmed by the setting and impressed by the systems the family has established on their 5 acres in the woods outside Port Townsend. Since 2004, the couple has planted 40 fruit and nut trees and countless

other edibles, built their main house, a recording studio, an apartment/barn, a yurt for one of their land partners (they also rent out space in the barn to another friend), and most recently have constructed a duck and hen house from cob and rammed earth. They process their own waste, produce their own electricity through solar panels, heat their home with wood, cook food and heat shower water with propane, harvest rainwater for bathing and drinking and create their own internet hot spot by turning Apgar's phone into a modem.

The pair are musicians and songwriters, the founders of the band Harmonica Pocket, which is regionally known for its music geared toward young audiences. They cherish the flexibility and economy their home affords them: "This is a deliberate choice to live a creative life we are in

control of," says Keeth Apgar. "I need to work at home, to be able to record music when I'm feeling it."

Likewise, Walla has developed her expertise in homesteading into a consultancy business, and their home is a learning lab for the larger community. "It's a huge investment of time to create and maintain this infrastructure and the systems we have," she says. "There's no way

the three of us could raise all this food and keep our systems going." The family travels frequently for performances and they rely on their two renters to help with harvest and production. "Ideally, we'll have a larger community here someday," Walla says. "Fifteen or so people;

by then, we'll have animal systems, too. It's slow going, but that is what we are building toward."

I visited the Merle family and the Apgar/ Wallas on the same unendingly rainy day in November, an occasion when the challenges and advantages of self-sufficient living were most evocatively on display. The Apgar/Wallas' tidy, zipped-up utopia belied the tremendous amount of work that had gone into creating it, let alone maintaining it. The Merles' halfway point is the better example of the sheer will needed to tough it out through the hard parts or rather, live within them until the season changes. These families are all united in how hard they work: As I left that day, Apgar was already at work chopping wood — nothing romantic about it.

In meeting these local families, it became obvious to me that no one can do this



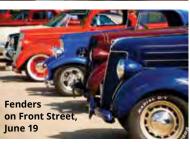
off-the-grid life alone — that having your own grid is tremendous work, and that for those who choose to do it, the choice involves both independence and reliance on others. Even though "off the grid" suggests self-sustainability, as Rachel Eells put it, "There is a level of connectedness that is good for the world. Being totally self-sustainable is removed from the world. Interconnections such as shopping at farmers markets and supporting local farmers are ultimately what is sustainable for all."

Bryony Angell loves nature, art and mid-century architecture, and can find a way to connect all three to parenting. You can see more of her writing at bryonyangell.com and follow her on Twitter @bryonyangell. She lives in North Seattle with her family.

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY











LARA KAPPLEMAN





www.seattlechildrens.org

Seattle Children's Car Seat Checks June 18, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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Maritime Gig Festival. Grand parade, family fun run, music, classic yachts, car show, kids' activities and more seaside fun. Saturday–Sunday, June 4–5. FREE. Skansie Brothers Park and environs, Gig Harbor. gigharborchamber.net

**The Music Man.** Experience the enchantment of live theater in the woods. Saturday-Sunday through June 19, 2 p.m. \$10-\$20; ages 5 and under free. Kitsap Forest Theater, Bremerton. foresttheater.com



**Canoe Mercer Slough.** Ply the waters of the amazing Mercer Slough with a guide; prior canoeing experience required. Select weekends through Sept. 4, 8:30 a.m.-noon. \$16-\$18; preregister. Ages 5 and up. Enatai Beach Park, Bellevue.

myparksandrecreation.com

**Second Sunday at Morse Wildlife Preserve.** Explore the preserve's remarkable diversity of habitats on one of a handful of open dates per year. 10 a.m.–5 p.m. **FREE.** Graham. *tahomaaudubon.org* 



Fenders on Front Street. Lots of dads are car guys; bring yours to admire cool vintage cars, listen to music and enjoy family activities. 8 a.m.–3 p.m. FREE. Front Street, Issaquah. fendersonfrontstreet.com
Bicycle Sunday. Take Dad out for a Father's Day ride along the lake; helmets required. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. FREE. Lake Washington Boulevard, Seattle. seattle.gov/parks/bicyclesunday



**Pride Parade and PrideFest.** Celebrate all people and families with a joyous parade and festivities. 11 a.m.–8 p.m. **FREE.** Fourth and Union (11 a.m. parade start) and Seattle Center (noon–8 p.m.), Seattle. *seattlepridefest.org* 

**Slug Fest.** Celebrate our slimy, silly, slow-moving, Northwest co-habitants with games and crafts. Saturday–Sunday, June 25–26. Included with admission. Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, Eatonville. *nwtrek.org* 



Let's Play: Chicken Little. Giggles guaranteed at these fun, short shows designed for the preschool crowd. June 6, 8, 10 and 11; 10:30 a.m. \$5. Ages 0–5 with caregiver. Olympia Family Theater. olyft.org

Explore the Shore at Owen Beach. Stroll the beach with a naturalist to search for limpets, hermit crabs and other sea life at low tide. 11:45 a.m.—1:45 p.m. (also June 22, 12:15–2:15 p.m.). FREE. Ages 5 and up. Owen Beach at Point Defiance Park,



Tacoma. pdza.org

Hike It Baby Cowen Park Hike. Join with other parents and tots for a trek down the trail. Mondays, 10–11:30 a.m. FREE; preregister. Toddlers with caregiver. Cowen Park, Seattle. hikeitbaby.com ONGOING EVENT Maker Monday. Experiment with 3D modeling and try out the 3D printer. Mondays, 3–8 p.m. \$5; printing material extra; preregister. Ages 11–18, under 15 with adult. Future of Flight Aviation Center, Mukilteo. futureofflight.org ONGOING EVENT



Meet-up Monday. Meet up with friends to receive \$3 off admission plus free coffee for adults, while it lasts. Mondays, 9 a.m.–9 p.m. \$7 with discount; adults and under age 1 free. WiggleWorks Kids, Bellevue. wiggleworkskids.com ONGOING EVENT Luke's Kids Drop-in Play Time. Meet up to play at this Ballard church. Mondays, 10 a.m.–noon. \$5 suggested donation. Ages 0–5 with caregiver. St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Seattle. stlukesseattle.org ONGOING EVENT



Colman Pool Public Swim. Take a dip in Seattle's most scenic outdoor pool; corkscrew slide open. Daily, June 20–Sept. 5, 1:45–4:45 p.m. \$3.75–\$5.25 (\$1 extra for slide); under age 1 free. Colman Pool, West Seattle. seattle. gov/parks/aquatics ONGOING EVENT Blood and Guts Exhibit. Learn about biology by checking out real animal and human organs and bones. 1–4 p.m. (Check website for additional dates/branches.) FREE. Ages 5 and up. King County Library System, Black Diamond Branch. kcls.org



Seattle Aquarium Beach Naturalist Program. Explore tidal life at area beaches on low-tide days. 10 a.m.–2 p.m. FREE. Check website for beaches and additional dates and locations. seattleaquarium.org ONGOING EVENT

**Game Night.** Stop by to play board games, both old favorites and new arrivals.
Tuesdays, 4–5 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 3 and up.
Top Ten Toys Greenwood, Seattle.
toptentoys.com **ONGOING EVENT** 



**Pool Playland.** It's swim time for parents and tots in Mounger's warm pool. Daily, 11 a.m.-noon through summer. \$3.75-\$5.25; under 1 free. Ages 0-5 with caregiver. Pop Mounger Pool, Seattle. seattle.gov/parks/aquatics **ONGOING EVENT** 

Happy Babies Educational Support Group. New parents come together for support. Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.-noon. \$10-\$16. Babies to 12 months with caregiver. Center for Birth, Seattle. happybabiesparenteducation



**Make Music Seattle.** It's an all-comers jam session and live performances in 20 city parks for International Make Music Day. **FREE.** Check website for times and locations. *makemusicseattle.com* 

**Tacoma Spraygrounds Open.** Kids won't care if it's a June-uary day; they want to play in the water. Daily through Sept. 5, 10 a.m.–8 p.m. Ten park locations. **FREE.** *metroparkstacoma.org* 



Summer Sounds at Skansie. Nick Drummond and The New Senate Band enchant listeners on this first night of the series. Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m., June 28–Aug. 16. FREE. Skansie Brothers Park, Gig Harbor. cityofgigharbor.net ONGOING EVENT Art and History Adventure. Visitors engage in activities relating to Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space. 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Included with admission. Ages 1–10 with families. Imagine Children's Museum, Everett. imaginecm.org

#### WEDNESDAY

#### **THURSDAY**

#### SATURDAY



Billy Elliott. A young man switches from boxing to ballet in this inspirational musical with a fantastic score by Elton John and wonderful singing and dancing. Through July 3 (July 8–31 in Everett). \$44–\$72. Ages 10 and up. Village Theatre, Issaquah. villagetheatre.org

Story Time for Kids. Settle in for new and classic kids' books, plus activities and refreshments. Wednesdays, 11 a.m. FREE. Ages 2–5 with caregiver. University Bookstore, Mill Creek. bookstore.washington.edu



ONGOING EVENT

Paint Your Wagon. Lerner and Loew musical follows Gold Rush-era fortune seekers. June 2–25. \$23 and up. Ages 13 and up. The 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle. *5thavenue.org*Family Nature Class. Explore the natural world with learning stations and a trail walk. Wednesday–Saturday, 9:30–11:30 a.m. \$18 per adult/child pair; preregister. Ages 2–5 with caregiver. Washington Park Arboretum, Seattle. *depts.washington.edu/uwbg* ONGOING EVENT



**Tot Trek – Froggy Frolic.** Little ones and their grown-ups look for critters in the woods. 10:30–11:45 a.m. **FREE**; preregister. Ages 2–3 with caregiver. Discovery Park, Seattle. *seattle.gov/parks* 

**Little Bookworms Story Time.** Stop by for stories, songs and a special treat. Wednesdays, 11 a.m.–noon. **FREE.** Ages 0–5 with caregiver. The Shops at the Bravern, Bellevue. *thebravern.com* **ONGOING EVENT** 



The Art of the Brick. Artist Nathan Sawaya amazes with his remarkable Lego sculpture. Daily through Sept. 11. \$20.75-\$28.75; ages 2 and under free. Pacific Science Center, Seattle

Remlinger Farms Family Fun Park. Pick berries, then have a blast on the mini roller coaster, hay maze, pony rides and more. Daily, June 13–Sept. 5, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. \$11.75–\$12.75; under age 1 free. Carnation. remlingerfarms.com ONGOING EVENT



**Summer Story Time.** Meet up at this historic cabin site for pioneer-themed stories and crafts. Wednesdays, 1–2 p.m. through Aug. 31. Pay-what-you-can. Ages 3–8 with families. Job Carr Cabin Museum, Tacoma. *jobcarrmuseum.org* 

Above and Beyond. Temporary exhibit at The Museum of Flight features flying simulations and design challenges for the future of air travel. Daily through Sept. 10. Included with admission. Seattle. museumofflight.org



**Preschool Playtime.** Last day of spring season to bring your little one; summer session starts June 28. 9–11 a.m. or noon-2 p.m. \$10; call to reserve spot. Ages 3–6. Lynnwood Recreation Center. *ci.lynnwood.wa.us* 

Nordic Stories. Listen to a story about a pirate, a Viking and a scientist and do a creative craft project. 10 a.m. FREE. Ages 3–6 with caregiver. Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle. nordicmuseum.org



Vashon Sheepdog Classic. Watch skilled, hard-working pups directing sheep traffic. Thursday-Sunday, June 9–12. \$10; ages 10 and under free; Thursday is pay-whatyou-can. Misty Isle Farms, Vashon Island. vashonsheepdogclassic.com

**Kaleidoscope Play and Learn.** Meet and play with other families. Thursdays, 10:30–noon. **FREE.** Ages 0–5 with caregiver. Third Place Commons, Lake Forest Park. *thirdplacecommons.org* **ONGOING EVENT** 



Marysville Strawberry Festival. The carnival opens today for this community celebration, which includes Kiddie and Grand Parades (Saturday, June 18) among other activities. June 11–19. FREE. Various venues, Marysville. maryfest.org
Dusty Strings Presents Birch Pereira.
Terrific live music from friends of Dusty Strings acoustic music for a family night out. 6:30–8 p.m. FREE. Crossroads Market

Stage, Bellevue. crossroadsbellevue.com



PJ Library Neighborhood Song and Storytime. Jewish storytelling, dancing, egg-shaking and musical fun. Thursdays, 9:15 a.m. at Congregation Beth Shalom; 10 a.m. at Temple Beth Am. FREE. Ages 0-5 with caregiver. Seattle. jewishinseattle.org ONGOING EVENT

Community Kite Painting. Stop by to help paint a kite for the park's art-kite installation. Thursdays, June 2-July 28, noon-2 p.m. FREE. All ages. Freeway Park, Seattle. seattle. gov/parks/downtown ONGOING EVENT



Mommy & Me Movie. Crying, breastfeeding, burping; it's all just fine at this special bring-along-your-bundle morning show time. Thursdays, 10 a.m. \$8.50. Adults with infants. Lincoln Square Cinemas, Bellevue. cinemark.com ONGOING EVENT

**Drop-in Introduction to Archery.** Try out this engaging individual sport; safety orientation first. Most Thursdays, 6 and 7:30 p.m. sessions. \$5. Ages 8 and up with adult. Skookum Archers, Puyallup. skookumarchery.com **ONGOING EVENT** 



**FRIDAY** 

**The Marvelous Land of Oz.** Studio East presents this world premiere based on Frank Baum's sequel to *The Wizard of Oz*, featuring the adventures of a boy named Tip. Through June 19. \$17. Ages 4 and up. Kirkland. *studio-east.org* 

**FREE Friday Night at HOCM.** Turn up for the Dragon Parade and a look at the traveling exhibit on China. 3–9 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 0–10 with families. Hands On Children's Museum, Olympia. *hocm.org* 



**Pay-What-You-Can Friday at Sound-bridge.** Explore music through games, song and dance plus musical storytelling (10:30 a.m.). Fridays, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Pay-what-you-can. Ages 1–5 with caregiver. Soundbridge Music Discovery Center, Seattle.

seattlesymphony.org ONGOING EVENT
Mary Poppins. A clever nanny employs a
spoonful of sugar and other tricks to help
a family. Through June 18. \$13-\$15. Ages 4
and up. Auburn Avenue Theater.
auburnwa.gov



**Family Concert: Recess Monkey.** Charles Wright hosts popular, high-energy kindie band for free family concert. 6–7 p.m. **FREE**; preregister. All ages. Charles Wright Academy, Tacoma. *charleswright.org* 

**Skippyjon Jones.** Delight in the antics of this Siamese kitten with a big personality, based on the popular books. Friday-Saturday, June 17–25. \$8. Ages 6 and up. Green River College Performing Arts Building, Auburn. *heavierthanair.com* 



**Kids Day!** Kick off summer with a day of kid-focused fun — obstacle course, inflatables, face-painting, mini golf and more. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. **FREE**; some activities have fee. All ages. Les Gove Park, Auburn. *auburnwa.gov* 

**Taste of Tacoma.** Bring your appetite for tasty creations and live music, plus a kids' stage and carnival rides. Friday–Sunday, June 24–26. Free entry; food and activities for purchase. Point Defiance Park, Tacoma. *tasteoftacoma.com* 





**South King County MathFest 2016.** Carnival-style math games, prizes and discovery. 1–4 p.m. **FREE**; preregister. Ages 3–11 with families. Kent Commons Community Center. *zenomath.org* 

Youth Fishing Events. Kids can try fishing for FREE in spots from Gene Coulon Park in Renton to Tracy Owen Station in Kenmore and beyond. wdfw.wa.gov/fishing
State Parks FREE Day. Visit one of our scenic

**State Parks FREE Day.** Visit one of our scenic Washington State parks with no Discover Pass required. June 4, 11. *discoverpass.wa.gov* 



Lake to Lake Bike Ride. Get moving with a two-wheeled family tour of the Eastside; choose a 9- or 22-mile route. 9 a.m. \$15-\$20. Ages 8 and up. Lake Hills Community Park, Bellevue. bellevuewa.gov/lake-to-lake-ride.htm

**Festival Sundiata presents Black Arts Fest.** Live music and dance, activities, workshops, food and more showcase African-American culture and its roots. Saturday–Sunday, June 11–12. **FREE.** Seattle Center. *seattlecenter.com/festal* 



Biringer Farm Strawberry Fest. Berry-licious treats plus pony rides, pig bowling and more fun. Saturday–Sunday, June 18–19, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Free entry; fee for food and activities. Arlington. biringerfarm.com Fremont Solstice. Anything goes at this center-of-the-universe party with live music, kids' activities, dog parade (Sunday, 2:30 p.m.) and the memorable Solstice Parade (Saturday, 3 p.m.). Friday–Sunday, June 17–19. FREE. N. 34th and Fremont Ave. N., Seattle. fremontsolstice.com

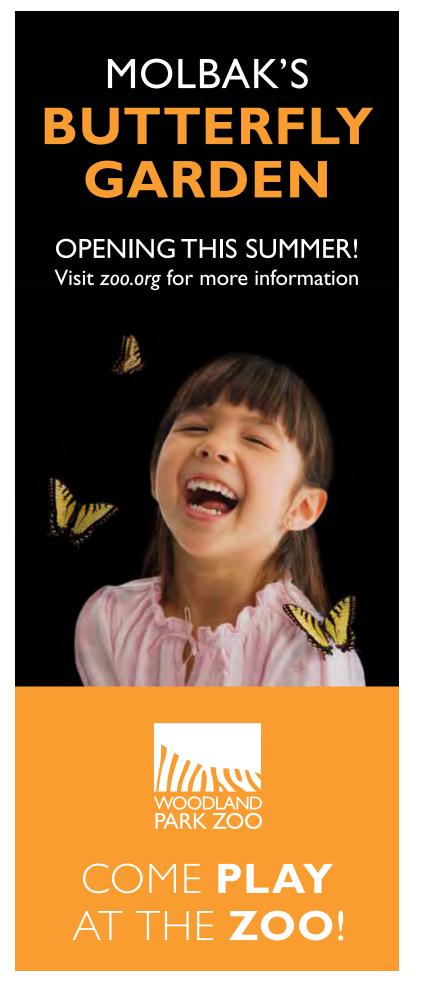


**Bellevue Strawberry Festival.** Scrumptious strawberry shortcake, family fun area, live entertainment and more. Saturday–Sunday, June 25–26. **FREE**; select activities have fee. Crossroads Park, Bellevue. *bellevuestrawberryfestival.org* 

Seafair Pirates Landing. Ahoy, the famous pirates come ashore amid a beachside festival including live music, a pirate look-a-like contest and more family fun. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. (pirates land about 1:30 p.m.). FREE. Alki Beach, Seattle. seafair.com









Unplugged summer fun on the

# Olympic Peninsula

Camping, hiking, biking, kayaking, beachcombing and more low-tech adventures

BY TIFFANY PITTS

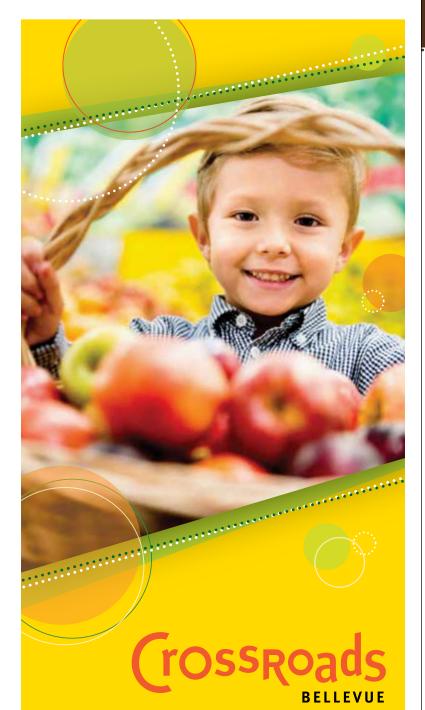
irvana did it. Jay Z did it. Even Alicia Keys did it. So why is it that every time I ask my kids to unplug themselves from a screen, they turn into a pack of wolves? It's as if they don't know how to be human without some sort of electrical outlet.

If the thought of enduring another summer filled with beeps, boops and the theme song from Animal Crossing makes you cringe, fear not! For there is a magical place where electronic gadgets will be forgotten, a place where your wolves can howl at the moon and run from vampires. It's the Olympic Peninsula and it's amazing.

Camping, fishing, hiking, bird watching, swimming,

crabbing, rockhounding, digging huge holes in the sand — you can do all these activities and more on the peninsula. The one thing you might not be able to do is update your social media every two minutes. Not only is Wi-Fi close to nonexistent when you're deep in the woods, but life moves at a different speed. There simply isn't enough time in the day to enjoy everything *and* be glued to a screen.

Tucked away in the northwest corner of the state, the Olympic Peninsula is often overlooked by families because getting there usually involves a ferryboat. But the ferry is a great marker. Once you're on the other side, you are truly on vacation. Here are three areas to consider for your next unplugged getaway.



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# Olympic Peninsula continued from page 27

**For Olympic Peninsula novices** 

# Hood Canal

For a weekend adventure, the west side of Hood Canal is easy to access. Technically a fjord, Hood Canal is the body of water that separates the Kitsap and Olympic peninsulas. With calmer waters and millions of tiny inlets, it's also home to breathtaking views and incredible wildlife.

You can reach Hood Canal in several ways. We usually take the Edmonds/ Kingston ferry out to the Kitsap Peninsula, heading west on State Route 104. This will take you across the Hood Canal Bridge and from there, you can connect to U.S. Highway 101 — the famous Olympic Loop Highway.

Heading south on Highway 101, you'll weave in and out of national forestland. Several Olympic National Forest campgrounds along this stretch (campsites are first come, first served; you can't reserve sites) can serve as home base for a weekend full of nature. Try Falls View Campground, with a loop trail to the cascading waterfall on the Big Quilcene River; Collins Campground, located in Olympic National Forest on the shores of the Duckabush River; or Seal Rock Campground, located right on Hood Canal.

If you're looking to reserve a site before you go, try **Dosewallips State Park**, where you can rent cabins as well as camp right along the river. The day-use park area has a wide, flat beach along the Dosewallips River, perfect for skipping rocks or playing in the sand. Pro tip: Bring a towel and some sandwiches because a short trip down to the beach is never short, or clean. (Nothing says "vacationing with the kids" quite like 37 pounds of sand on the floor of the car.)

Up for more adventure? Go kayaking! Just off Highway 101 in Brinnon, find the little turquoise shack that is home to **Kayak Brinnon** (*kayakbrinnon.com*). Owner Christina Maloney has eight years of experience leading kayak tours. Rent by the hour or go on her educational wildlife tour; either way, be prepared to get blown away by sights of bald eagles, rock crabs in tidal inlets and fish of all sorts — your kids will be talking about it for days.



**Next stop** 

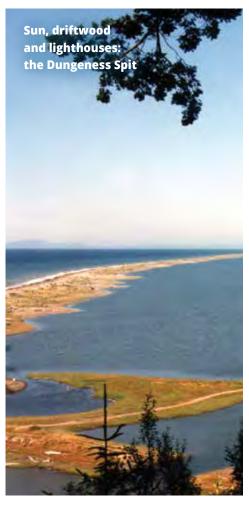
Sequim

Want to get farther out? Head northwest on Highway 101; about 45 miles from Dosewallips you'll be in **Sequim**. Located in what is known as the Olympic rain shadow, Sequim enjoys a drier, brighter climate than the rest of the peninsula. Lavender and U-pick berry farms are plentiful out here and offer a great way to spend a lazy day.

For camping, we love

Sequim Bay State Park,
a prime spot to hop on
the Olympic Discovery

Trail (olympicdiscoverytrail.
com), a 130-mile bike
path stretching from Port
Townsend all the way to the
Pacific Ocean. Construction
on the trail started in the
1990s and to date, 69 miles



of it have been paved. A great starter ride is to cycle 5.9 miles on a section of the trail from Sequim Bay to **Railroad Bridge Park** on the Dungeness River, where you can skip rocks all afternoon.

A few miles north of Sequim, the **Dungeness Recreation Area** is a 216-acre county park on the Sound with a popular campsite (you can reserve some sites ahead, some are first-come, first served). Spend a day hiking the world-famous **Dungeness Spit**, a 5.5-mile stretch of driftwood-strewn beach that "spits" out from the mainland. If you make it all the way to the end, you'll be rewarded with a free lighthouse tour and very tired children.

Another Sequim highlight is the **Olympic Game Farm** (*olygamefarm*. *com*). A little like a zoo, a little like Disneyland's Autopia, the game farm is basically a driving tour of animals. Buy a loaf of wheat bread (or three) with your admission and drive (slowly) though herds of llama, elk, bison and other intimidatingly fragrant animals. Watch sibling bonding skyrocket as friendly llamas stick their heads through the backseat windows in search of a tasty treat. You may have to wash bison slobber off the car, but this is one adventure your kids will never forget. >>



# Olympic Peninsula continued from page 29

# Into the wild Coast and rainforest



For an even more unplugged vacation, keep heading west on Highway 101, circling Olympic National Park. Eventually, you will end up in Forks. Yes, that Forks. More than the fictional home of vampires and Native American werewolves, Forks is a great place to outfit you and your family for a few days of hiking, fishing, whale watching, beachcombing or just hanging out in nature.

Low-tech lodging is plentiful. **Bogachiel State Park**, 5 miles south of Forks, is a riverside campground at the tip of the Hoh Rain Forest. Fifteen miles northwest of Forks, in the La Push area, Olympic National Park's Mora **Campground** is close to stunning **Rialto Beach**, where you'll see pelicans swooping and diving over the water. Nearby attractions include **Ruby Beach** and its millions of stacking stones; **First Beach**, along the town of La Push; and our favorite, **Second Beach**. The trailhead for Second Beach can be

found off La Push Road, on the Quileute Indian Reservation. It's about a mile long, well maintained and enchanting.

South of Forks, also within Olympic National Park, the historic **Kalaloch Lodge** (thekalalochlodge.com) has cabins for rent (with no TV or Wi-Fi), so you can stay on the bluff and wander the stunning beach below (watch out for logs and riptides). There is also an adjacent national park campground.

It's difficult to imagine anything living up to the beauty of the Washington coast, but that's because you're not in Olympic National Park's Hoh Rain Forest yet (nps.gov/olym/planyourvisit/ visiting-the-hoh.htm). Twenty miles south of Forks on Highway 101, turn down the Upper Hoh Road and start driving back in time to prehistory. Stop at the national park entrance kiosk to purchase a pass (\$20 per car, no fee from Aug. 25–28 for the National Park Service's centennial) and then head to the **Hoh Rain Forest** visitor center

Start your exploration in the **Hall of Mosses**, a short loop trail that introduces you to mammoth spruce trees, sheets of lichen and ferns so large, it's almost a letdown not to see dinosaurs crashing around. A small detour from the trail will bring you to the banks of the Hoh River, a perfect stop for lunch and more mucking about.

You won't find any Creepers or Zombie Pigmen in the Hoh. And texting is difficult when you're busy making sandcastles. But whether it's for a night or for a week, exploring the Olympic Peninsula is guaranteed to make memories that last forever, no charging cable required.

Tiffany Pitts is the author of Double Blind, a humorous sci-fi-ish adventure. Follow more of her adventures at snickerpants.com.





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# Eating your way around the Peninsula

The Halfway House diner, Brinnon: Diner food and delicious pies.

**Geoduck Restaurant and Lounge, Brinnon:** Burgers and beer star at this friendly spot, which is technically a "biker bar," but children are allowed in the restaurant and on the deck overlooking Hood Canal.

**Gear Head Deli, Quilcene:** Fill up on freshly made sandwiches and other tasty eats at this new spot in Quilcene; there's a small park across the street where wiggly children can run their energy off..

**Adagio Bean and Leaf, Sequim:** Find premade sandwiches, coffee and ice cream in a space that looks like Hogwarts.

**Thriftway, Forks:** Pick up last-minute groceries and don't miss the delicious fried chicken at the deli counter.

**Three Rivers Resort Restaurant, La Push:** The resort also has a rustic lodge and campground; the restaurant's shakes and burgers are tasty (try the Werewolf Burger), and no vampires are allowed.

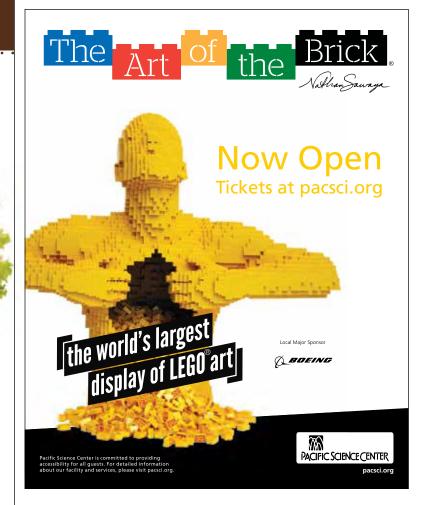
**Hard Rain Cafe, Forks:** This quirky gift shop cafe at the entrance to the Hoh Rain Forest serves terrific salmon burgers.

# More adventures at parentmap.com

**The 101 on KOA:** OK, so KOA campgrounds do typically have Wi-Fi, as well as other amenities such as hot showers and laundry facilities — some even boast swimming pools and hot tubs! But this makes them ideal for a starter low-tech vacation. Find our new guide at *parentmap.com/koa*.

**Glamping:** If camping is just a little too rustic (as in, you really need a bed), no worries: Cabin-like options abound in some of our state's prettiest places. Book an unplugged getaway in a yurt on the coast, platform tent in the woods, or cabin near a roaring waterfall. *parentmap.com/rustic*.

**Big river fun:** For the ultimate unplugged summer adventure that young kids and teens alike will adore, book a one-day rafting adventure on rivers such as the Wenatchee (a wide eastern Washington classic) or the Methow (with stunning desert scenery). Find your guide at *parentmap.com/epicraft*.





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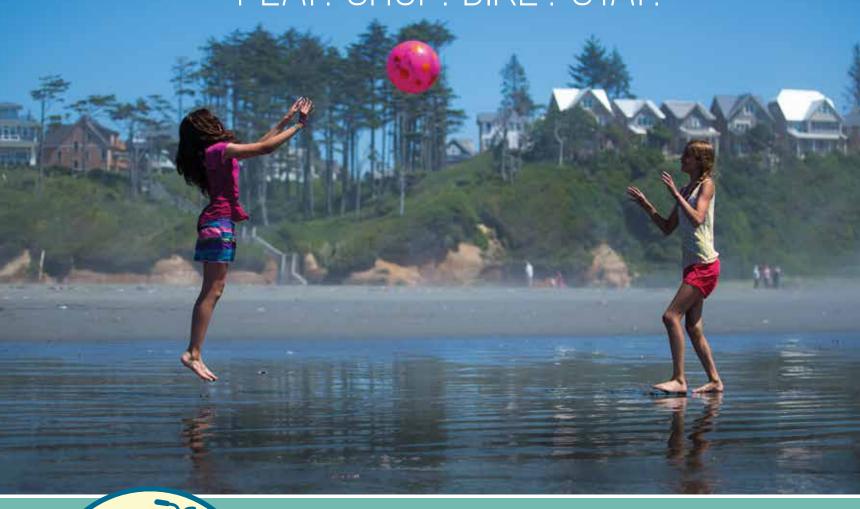
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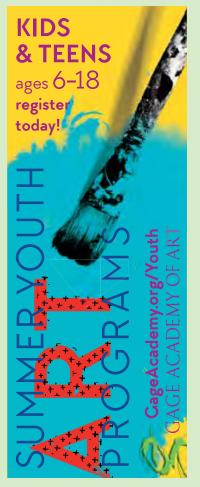
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## CAMPS + ACTIVITIES

# Splish splash all summer long

P

Think outside the kiddie pool this summer with these cool suggestions. Read more at *parentmap.com/water-play*.



**SPONGE BALLS** You read right: a ball made of sponge. Grab a handful or two of sponges at your local dollar store, cut each rectangle into four pieces lengthwise and then sandwich them together with a rubber band. A quick dunk and these babies are ready for action! Tag, target practice or monkey in the middle — all make for a quick way to chill out.



**PLASTIC-BAG WATER PIÑATA** No need to wait for a birthday to break out a piñata. Making this festive toy couldn't be easier: Take a plastic grocery sack, fill it halfway with water and tie it by the handles around a nearby tree branch. No need to seal it; the whole point is to get wet as you and the kids hit the bag from below. Pro tip: Have several bags handy. They don't last long!



**COLORED ICE CUBES** This one is as easy as water meets food coloring. Add a few drops of dye to the bottom of each section in an ice tray, fill with water and freeze. The result will be a frozen rainbow your little ones will love. They're even safe to eat (for the more curious kiddio). Just make sure and suit up with clothes you don't mind getting messy.

— Tiffany Doerr Guerzon









## CAMPS + ACTIVITIES



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Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park

#### Week Three: July 25-28

**Earth Defenders: Saving the planet**Olympic Sculpture Park

#### visitsam.org/samcamp

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## CAMPS + ACTIVITIES















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## Don't let dementia close the door

How to preserve the bond between kids and grandparents

By Brad Broberg

rom tender and thoughtful to forgetful and agitated — Alzheimer's disease creates an emotional roller coaster that's difficult for adults, let alone children, to understand. But finding a comfort zone for kids to hug Grandma or talk baseball with Grandpa is a challenge that millions of families are facing.

An estimated 5.4 million Americans live with Alzheimer's — 100,000 in Washington state alone. Barring a cure, the number of people 65 and older with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia may climb to 7.1 million by 2025 and 13.8 million by 2050, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

Five years ago, Mary Devlin-Cooley, 65, joined those numbers. Her Alzheimer's symptoms, mild now, will progress, and she fears losing her connection with her grandchildren.

"Seeing them is huge," says the Lake Stevens resident. "Even if for some reason I couldn't remember their names, I would still know who they are in my heart."

That's one of the reasons why Devlin-Cooley's son, Jarrod Cooper, and his wife, Lori Cooper, are committed to maintaining the connection between Devlin-Cooley and their five children, who range in age from 4 to 17. Their first step: Educate the family.

"They say knowledge is power, so if the children understand, they're going to be less uncomfortable around Grandma," says Cooper. As the disease progresses, the Lake Stevens family will talk more about "where Grandma's headed and what we as a family can do to love and help her."

## Understanding the incomprehensible

The first step toward helping children comprehend the change is for parents to reconcile their own feelings — loss, fear, frustration — about a loved one's dementia. "Children will notice if parents haven't dealt with their own stuff first," says Janelle Jensen, a care consultant with the Washington state chapter of the Alzheimer's Association.



"You can't pretend there's not something happening. Kids are smart.
They'll pick up on it"

Talk with friends in similar situations, join a support group or call the Alzheimer's Association's 24/7 help line if you feel overwhelmed, she says.

Honesty also matters. "You can't pretend there's not something happening. Kids are smart. They'll pick up on it," Jensen says. "Be honest about it, but in an age-appropriate way."

Start by keeping things simple. "The parent can just explain that Grandma or Grandpa may forget things . . . but they still need our love and our hugs and our visits," says Wendy Gardner, vice president of quality services for Merrill Gardens, which operates senior living communities in Washington and five other states. Take your cue about discussing the disease's science and progression based on the questions a child asks, she says.

Also, prepare children. Coach them on how to respond when Grandma mixes up names or repeats herself. One strategy: Go along with it, says Jensen. Respect the person, she says, by respecting the illness. "The disease can't handle a lot of pushback. The disease can't handle being corrected. But the disease can handle positive, in-the-moment experiences," she says. "It's a great lesson for everyone [because] all any of us really have is the moment."

And if that moment is in the past, go there, too, says Dr. John Addison, director of Mercer Island's Northwest Geriatrics. If, for example, Grandpa likes to talk about growing up in Kansas, encourage your child to read about Kansas to help Grandpa expand on his stories.

#### Living in the moment

People with Alzheimer's often struggle to make decisions, Jensen adds, so anticipate what activities they might like to share with a child — painting, listening to music, taking a walk — and then just do them. "A lot of it might be trial and error," she says. "You have to be flexible."

Parents also need to be sensitive to any fear or anxiety children may feel. "Don't force [things]," Jensen says. "Let them guide the

interaction as a way to respect their boundaries."

Alzheimer's shuts many doors, but one of the last to close is the door to a person's heart, Jensen continues. "People connect emotionally for a very long time with this disease, longer than they're able to talk or react in a way that we understand," she says. "It's one of those diseases where a smile goes a long way."

That's especially true when the smile belongs to a child.

"Young children have a general joy for life that seniors with Alzheimer's pick up on," Gardner says. "Adults are more concerned with how the person was versus how they are now. Children tend to live in the moment and that's very similar to someone with Alzheimer's."

#### Learning what you can

Some parents may want to preserve positive memories by shielding their children from a loved one with Alzheimer's, but that only increases the isolating power of the disease, Addison says.

"The child has something to offer the person with Alzheimer's," he says. It might be as simple as sharing a coloring book or talking about school, but it matters. "I would even call it therapeutic."

The loved one with Alzheimer's also has something to give: a life lesson in how to love no matter what.

Brad Broberg is an Auburn-based freelance writer.

## signs and symptoms of dementia

**INCREASED MEMORY LOSS** Difficulty remembering recurring activities such as weekly appointments or monthly bills may indicate something more than typical forgetfulness. You may find the person frequently repeats himself or forgets critical information, such as the dosage for a medication or when to take it.

**CHANGE IN HYGIENE** Is a loved one's hair uncombed? Is she constantly forgetting to brush her teeth? These are indications that a person's memory may be negatively changing.

**PERSONALITY SHIFT** If a person's mood fluctuates depending on the time of day or he displays odd behaviors, such as inaccurately accusing others, there may be more significant medical concerns at play.

**SUNDOWNING** This term refers to when the elderly become confused, anxious and aggressive toward the end of the day. In this state, they often ignore directions or pace and wander.

A serious memory diagnosis involves the entire family. By identifying signs early on and finding the right medical team, you can help ensure that a loved one's twilight years are as fulfilling and comfortable as possible.

— Dr. Connie J. Smith, medical director, EvergreenHealth Geriatric Care



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## What I learned at dad school

Don't worry about hormones and periods: Just be a dad

By Lukas Velush

Summer reading: 'Spare Me the Talk' parentmap.com /books

here I was, thinking I would hear all about how to play it cool when my soon-to-be teenage daughter has her first period, her first sign of boobs and her first boyfriend.

Not even close.

"Dads of Daughters" class instructor Julie Metzger had one clear message for me and all the dads who had fanned out across the auditorium, building the biggest empty-seat buffers possible around ourselves (the opposite, we would soon learn, of the way our daughters will clump together so they can meld into group think).

Don't worry about what's happening to them, Metzger told us in her frank but supportive style. Just make sure, she said, to keep being dads to your daughters as they head off to middle school and the hormones of puberty take over their minds and bodies. *Just be there*, she said.

I let out a little breath and started to relax. That sounded doable. Advice I could use. That was exactly why I came.

#### Their brains break

When I was growing up, there was no playbook for fathers and certainly no coaching classes for dads. Now there's a plethora of resources for dads who want to learn to be the best they can be for their kids. With two girls who are around the corner from puberty (9 and almost 11), and a fiery wife who already tends to jump into the hormonal fray



right along with our kids, I thought I could learn something helpful about what's ahead and how to manage it by attending Dads of Daughters.

"Dads outweigh moms in a lot of ways," Metzger said to the room full of more than 50 intent, nervous dads. "It's super important that you are positive."

Really, what it seemed like she was saying to me was that my two daughters will want someone to listen as they figure things out.

Metzger's exact words were: "Dad's eyes need to light up when you see your hormonal daughter coming at you." Cool.

Left unsaid, though, was the implication that while using me as a sounding board, my daughters also will have an endless litany of Titanic-size, "I have to work through this" clashes with their mom.

My oldest daughter is going into middle school this fall, and when she does, she will be exactly one year away from becoming a teenager. Not to be left behind, my younger daughter already *thinks* she is a teenager, despite the fact that she will be going into fourth grade. (She has no problem starting early — she takes cues from her sister and multiplies them by 10.) >>

## Y O U T H R E S O U R C E S



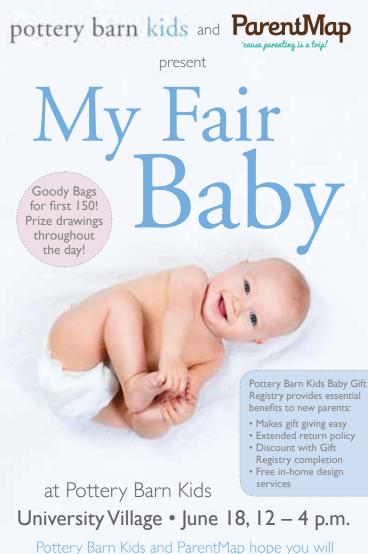




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#### 10-14 What I learned at dad school

continued from page 41

Slightly terrified and somewhat mystified, I signed up for Metzger's course at Seattle Children's Hospital, along with the dads of one daughter's friends, who were mostly stoic about the class before and after. I took notes furiously, occasionally stealing looks down the rows of seats toward the other soccer-team dads I knew and observing their carefully neutral faces.

Yes, Metzger covered the "oh shit" stuff, including the fact that between ages 8 and 15 our girls will gain 15–55 pounds (better increase the food budget, but never, *never* talk about their weight), grow breasts (yep), start emitting body odor (yup), grow underarm and pubic hair (uh-huh) and start having periods (yikes!).

She also shared that our daughters' brains will stop working when it comes to decision-making. Questions like "Should I do the right thing, or do the bad thing my friends want me to do?" suddenly will become legitimate struggles for them to answer. I find it hard to imagine my rule-following, always-do-the-right-thing fifth-grader transforming into a middle schooler who would lie about going to a party or trying alcohol, or, unimaginable now, chase boys.

But it will happen, sometime around age 12 or 13, Metzger told us. Be prepared, she said, because it's almost like a switch in their head being shut off.

#### Just say yes

Dads need to be dads, Metzger emphasized. Think of yourself as a coach who listens and compliments your daughters in authentic ways about the work they're putting in and not the results, and you'll be there, she told us.

"When she has a problem, don't fix it," Metzger said. "Let her cry. Don't tell her that life is good or what to do. She wants to be heard and understood. Say 'When you're ready, I want to hear more."

When you're ready, I want to hear more. I can do that.

The goal, she said, is to be a steadying force your daughter can turn to when things get difficult or confusing.

"You want her to think, 'I don't know what to do, but I could ask my dad — he gets me."

Yes! I want them to think I get them. I want to get them!

No pressure, dads, but you need to be her rock, the person who accepts her no matter what emotional state she's in — even when she directs the fray squarely at you.

And don't you dare do the man thing, which is to fight or run when tempers fly. Your biology may tell you that's what you should do, but it's the last thing your daughter needs. "Neither is effective," Metzger said. "Nothing is more scary than a dad who walks away."

Don't walk away. Got it. Never.
The physical changes may not be here yet, but puberty has arrived at our house. A sign of the times: Out of nowhere, my daughter recently jumped on an emotional roller coaster, hitting first outrage, then crying and then puzzlement.

I sat down with her and asked what was wrong, and her answer was telling: "I don't know."

My answer was: "Well, I'm here for you."

Hopefully, she thinks I get her. ■

Lukas Velush became a dad when his first daughter was born in 2005, and again when his second daughter was born in 2007. He has worked as a journalist at newspapers around the West and is currently an editor at Microsoft. He cycles, gardens and plays basketball in his spare time.









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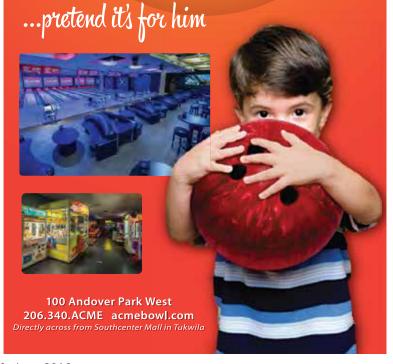
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Summer means slumber parties, BBQs and birthday parties galore. But when your kids don't get an invite, it hurts — you and them. It's natural to feel slighted — "Why did they leave out my kids?" — but if we're not careful, it's easy to pass that negativity along.

Instead, throw a party of your own because you know what? Parties are fun and your family

deserves to have fun. It doesn't have to be fancy. Sometimes, just a coloring book, music and popcorn are enough to have a good time.

Playing host accomplishes two important goals: First, it shows your kids that they can



make their own fun and second, it allows them to get to know other children outside of school while introducing you to the adults in their lives. Before you know it, your family won't have enough time for all of the playdates rolling in!

Read more on what to do if your kid feels left out at parentmap.com/left-out.

- Alicia Walters







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## **Dylan Tomine**

By Jennifer Johnson • Photograph by Will Austin

Dylan Tomine is a man on a mission. He's looking for the juiciest blackberries, the choicest mushrooms, the fishiest waters, the driest firewood — and he's bringing his kids with him. The second edition of his book, *Closer to the Ground*, was released in September and shares stories of his family's experiences in nature.

#### When did your interest in fishing and foraging start?

I was pretty much born obsessed with fish and fishing. All my earliest memories — and most of the subsequent ones as well — revolve around fish. I'm almost as obsessed with food, particularly the flavors of wild food. So the progression from fish-maniac kid to foraging adult was pretty natural.

#### How did you learn the necessary skills?

I learned to fish starting with my dad when I was very young, and ever since, I've had a succession of invaluable mentors in all of these outdoor pursuits. In fact, one of the great benefits of fishing, foraging, hunting and gardening is the friendships that grow out of the process. That's a long way of saying that I think if you really want to learn how to do anything in the outdoors and you let people know, someone will step up and help.

## What are your biggest challenges in fishing and foraging with your children (Skyla, 12, and Weston, 9)?

Early on, when the kids were small, the biggest challenge was maintaining my own patience. For a type-A, goal-oriented person like me, dealing with all the little issues that crop up when involving kids in your pursuits can be, at times, pretty frustrating.

The beauty of it, though, is that kids force you to slow down and notice the things a hurried adult often misses — just the fun of sitting on a log in the woods eating a sandwich or the color of salmonberry flowers or throwing maple seeds in the air and watching them twirl down. Kids really renew our sense of wonder and teach us lessons about what's important.

Now, as the kids have grown older, the challenges are more logistical. It's tougher to find time amid the tighter schedules of school, sports and other activities. We can't just drop everything to take advantage of a good clam tide or perfect conditions for chanterelle picking. But we do our best to pick our spots and make it work.

## What benefits have you noticed from being outside so much with your kids?

For me, it's really about time spent with the kids doing something fun and the memories we make. For the kids, I think there is a confidence that comes from learning the skills to be comfortable doing outdoor activities. There's also the fact that these activities y See an
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— fishing, foraging — help humans tune into the rhythms of nature, whether it's the significance of weather or season, or other clues you need to be aware of if you're going to be successful.

The other benefit, of course, is the food itself. The flavors of fresh wild food can't be beat, especially when you've been part of the process from start to finish. In a larger sense, the experience of gathering, preparing and sitting down to shared meals is an essential part of human culture and something we really savor in our family.

#### What inspired Closer to the Ground?

Truth is, I wrote the book because I'm a lousy camcorder guy. I would look at other people's home movies and feel jealous that we didn't have any. I realized, if I wanted to record what the kids were like, what we were doing when they were at a certain age, I had to fall back on a much older technology. For me, that's words. So the book is really just a verbal home movie that covers the four seasons of a single year.

## What do you recommend for families that want to provide more of their own food? Where do they start?

I think it can be as simple as growing carrots or tomatoes in pots on the porch. Kids love the whole concept. The 'pride of ownership' at harvest time is similar whether you're farming 5 acres or five pots. If you don't have a yard and want to grow more vegetables, research P-Patches in your area.

For fishing and foraging, there are lots of opportunities in and around urban areas. Most bodies of water in North America, even the ones in cities, have some kind of recreational fishery available. If

you're on the coast, shellfish-gathering information is readily available from most state Department of Fish and Wildlife websites, while regional mycological society chapters often lead guided mushroom-picking hikes.

The main thing is to remember that you don't have to be an expert to teach your kids these things. You can learn together, and that's often even more fun than just showing the kids what you already know.





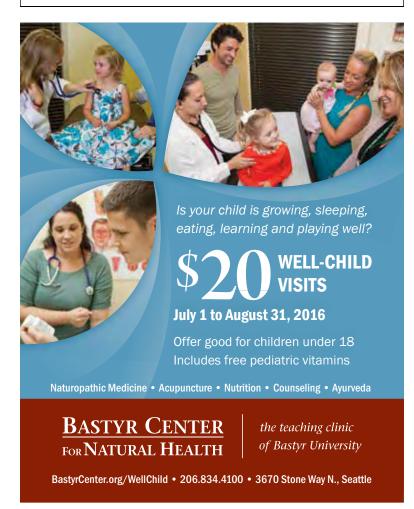
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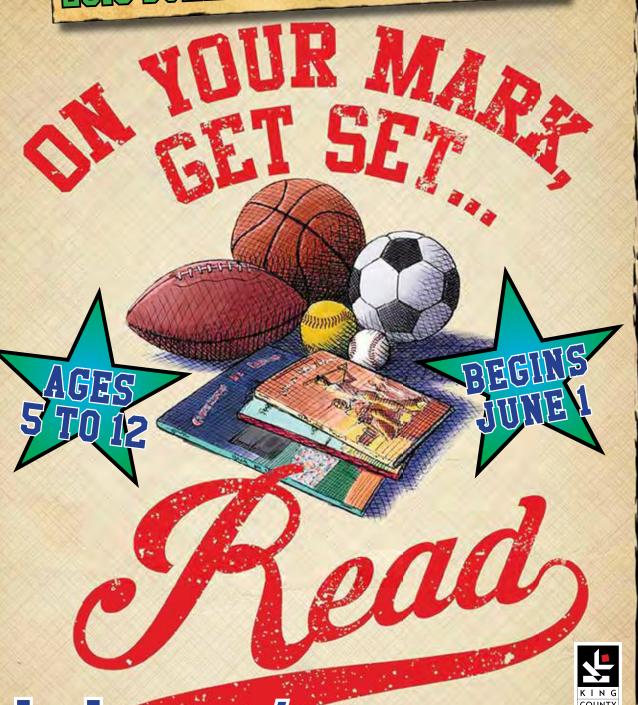
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