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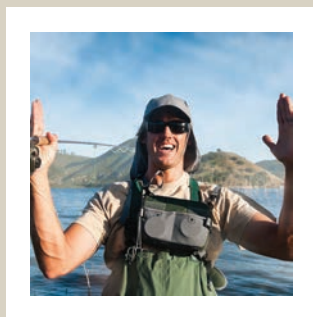
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dear reader

Embracing disruption



Lots of mothers relish the last week of school and the wide-open, sun-filled days that follow. I sort of freak out.

I *do* love summer, don't get me wrong. The late mornings, the long days, the beach, the camping (well, a little of the camping). But the schedule disruption is still crazy-making for me. Suddenly we lose the reliability of the school rhythm: Some weeks, we have camp; other weeks, we have a different camp. There are new carpools to form, babysitting to arrange, vacation details to wrangle.

We need to balance the desire and high expectations for fun with the continuing responsibilities of work and life that don't end in June. *Did you pack the sunscreen?* Oh yeah, we're out of sunscreen — and off to the store we dash.

It's daunting for me to think about the massively disruptive — and ultimately über-rewarding — adventures that the families in this month's feature took on when they left home to live abroad (The family gap year, p. 12). I get a little uncomfortable with just a change of bedtimes. But oh, if I could bottle these families' gumption and willingness to take risks and pack that elixir in my picnic basket! What they discover by leaving their regular life and building a temporary new one in a foreign place are the kinds of lessons we all want our kids to learn.

In that vein, “Embrace disruption” is my theme for this summer. I'll try to take a page out of the gap year families' books, and also heed the sane advice of author and cultural guru Lenore Skenazy, who reminds us that what our kids really need is not fancy tennis lessons or structured soccer camps (What your kids really need this summer to be happy, p. 9), but *freedom*. When kids are allowed free play and unstructured time, they naturally hone their interpersonal skills, develop patience and cultivate empathy. I will try to remember that on the days I'm not rushing my kids onto the camp carpool conveyor belt.

I might not be quite ready to put up the house for rent and pack my trunks for a year in Costa Rica, as most of us likely aren't. But I can, and will, remind myself to unplug and tap into my family, to make use of the time we do have to reconnect and totally enjoy that special brand of fun only summer inspires.

And while I swing in the hammock or relax on the beach, I'll imagine myself jetting off into the sunset on a magical gap year adventure.

A mom can dream, can't she?

— Natalie Singer-Velush, managing editor





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Photo call!

What's that big ball in the sky? A bird, a plane? Oh, right, it's the sun! And if we're lucky, it will even be hot. We love to see your kids enjoying their summer: Tweet or Facebook us [@parentmap](https://twitter.com/parentmap) with pics of your kiddos cooling off with water play using [#waterplay](https://twitter.com/parentmap).

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We've done the research for you with our curated list of kids' summer reading programs in the Puget Sound region (parentmap.com/summerreading); how-to guide to starting a kids' activity book club (parentmap.com/activitybooks); and oxygen-for-moms summer beach reads list of new, must-have mommy memoirs (parentmap.com/beachreads).



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blueberries!



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the video**
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Watch PCC Chef Jackie Freeman work with 12-year-old Dora and her dad, Drew, to make Blueberry Hand Pies with a premade whole wheat crust. Scan the code for the video, Blueberry Hand Pie recipe, and kid-friendly ideas and fun facts.



Fresh and frozen blueberries are particularly popular in our PCC Kid Picks program.

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Blueberry Hand Pies

MAKES ABOUT 8 HAND PIES

- 1 1/2 cups blueberries**
- 3 tablespoons sugar**
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch**
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest**
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice**
- 3 tablespoons cream cheese, at room temperature**
- 1 teaspoon maple syrup**
- 2 prepared pie crusts**
- 1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water, for egg wash**
- Coarse sugar, for topping**

Preheat oven to 400° F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Combine blueberries, sugar, cornstarch, lemon zest and juice; set aside. Mix together cream cheese and maple syrup until smooth; set aside.

Roll out pie crusts until 1/8-inch thick. Cut out as many 5- to 6-inch rounds as you can. Re-roll dough scraps and cut out more rounds.

generous tablespoon blueberry filling in the center of each round, making sure to leave a 1/2-inch border. Brush borders with egg wash and fold dough over to enclose filling. Press shut with your fingers, then use a fork to crimp and seal the edges.

Transfer hand pies to the prepared baking sheet and brush tops with egg wash and sprinkle with coarse sugar. Cut a small vent in the top of each pie. Bake until crust is golden and filling is bubbling, about 20 minutes.

RECIPE BY JACKIE FREEMAN, PCC CHEF
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What your kids really need to be happy this summer

By Lenore Skenazy

Reminiscing about her childhood, one mom wrote, “We had all kinds of games, playing hard every day after school, every weekend and from dawn until our parents made us come in at dark in the summertime. One game was called ‘chase and run,’ which was a kind of complex, team-based hide-and-seek and tag combination.... As with all our games, the rules were elaborate and they were hammered out in long consultations on street corners. It was how we spent countless hours.”

Hammering out elaborate rules in long consultations is also how that little girl spent countless hours as an adult.

Her name is Hillary Rodham Clinton.

If you think back to your own childhood fun, chances are you, too, can see glimpses of the adult you turned into. I was speaking at a convention of early educators recently and asked, “How many of you used to play school?”

It looked like everyone in the auditorium raised her hand. “How many of you played the student?” The hands shot down. They had assumed the teacher role, of course. Still do. (Another story of how free time allows kids to unfurl their imaginations and pursue whatever their hearts desire: I actually spent much of my childhood making pins emblazoned with new words, because I dreamed hard of coining a catchphrase. And guess what? I did: “free-range kids.”)

“The child is father of the man,” wrote William Wordsworth, meaning we pass along the passions and predilections we develop as kids to our adult selves. But Wordsworth was writing long before the era of video games and supervised playdates. Nowadays, between classes, camp, day care, tablets and nannies — which are all fine and good — it’s hard for kids to find the time and space for “free play.” Free play is what kids (or any humans) do for fun when nothing’s riding on it. No one is coaching or keeping score. If they’re lucky, no one is even watching. All we’re doing in free play is what interests us most at that moment — skipping stones, climbing trees, drawing dinosaurs, playing with dolls.

This free play is critical to happiness and even learning. “The drive to play is a basic biological



drive,” writes Peter Gray in his outlook-altering book, *Free to Learn*. Lack of free play doesn’t kill kids, obviously, but quite possibly it “stunts mental growth.” That’s because when kids look like they’re doing nothing — just goofing around with friends or making something without having been assigned a project — they’re really developing all the traits they need to succeed in school and in life.

For instance: When Clinton made those teams for “chase and run,” she was clearly honing her interpersonal skills. But when kids play with other kids, they are also developing their attention to detail (*Where does Ava usually hide?*), their empathy (*I’d better throw the ball softer to little Jacob*), their bravery (*I hope Ollie doesn’t jump out at me!*) and their extremely crucial “executive function” — the ability to control themselves.

Learning self-control is a by-product of free play.

Executive function is what teachers are always wishing kids had more of: “Turn around and do your math packet!” How does a child get that kind of discipline? The hardest way is by sitting still in class. The easiest way is by playing a game. Say that it’s Ella’s turn at bat, and she strikes out. *It’s not fair*, she thinks. The ball was too fast, the sun was in her eyes.

There are a lot of reasons for Ella to feel sorry for herself. She may even be ready to cry or stomp off. But she will often hold herself together for one simple reason: She wants the game to continue. If she leaves, the game is over — for her. And so, because the drive to play is so great, she sucks it up and goes to the back of the line. The word we use for this in the adult world is “self-control.”

Learning self-control is a by-product of free play.

Getting kids to play with each other is something parents usually do by signing them up for a class or program. God knows I spent many hours on the sidelines of kiddie soccer, baseball and basketball “socializing” my kids. But those are sports skills. Missing are all the *life* skills: how to organize a game (otherwise known as leadership); how to create two roughly equal teams; how to deal with a dispute to everyone’s satisfaction, more or less; how to be good sports

without a coach mandating, “Now, everyone shake hands.”

If you can kick your kids outside a fair amount this summer and convince some other nearby parents to do the same, those kids will start to play together. There might be some tears, so do yourself a favor and don’t watch.

Do your *kids* a favor and don’t watch.

Give them free time for this timeless activity, and they just may thank you forever. ■

Lenore Skenazy is a popular speaker, author and founder of Free-Range Kids (freerangekids.com).



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education matters

Why it's important to think

By Alison Krupnick



Now that the end-of-the-school-year frenzy is fading from memory and the classroom supply lists haven't yet arrived, education is probably the last thing on any parent's mind.

But summer offers a great opportunity to calmly reflect on what matters. Two education advocates think that what matters is the greater good.

Frank Ordway is the director of government relations for the League of Education Voters, a Washington state education advocacy organization. He's also the parent of two kids who attend Ferndale public schools and a third child in preschool.

Among the challenges of sustaining parent engagement around education issues is getting parents to take a critical look at schools.

"Parents are naturally inclined to believe that they are sending their kids to a great school," Ordway says. "Otherwise, you have to question your own choices."

Educational inequity is largely hidden, Ordway believes. The school across town or in another district may not have as much to offer as your neighborhood school, but you might not be aware of that. It's easy to assume that the academics and enrichment at your child's school are

"Money impacts teacher quality, curriculum, computers, libraries and glue sticks."

a baseline and that every school, in every district, has similar offerings. But that's not the case.

Educational inequity also goes unacknowledged even when it's visible, Ordway adds. Parents don't want to brag about their school for fear of upsetting other parents whose kids are not reaping the same benefits.

It's natural for us to worry, first and foremost, about our own kids, the schools they attend and the school district that manages these schools. And, Ordway says, national politics have devolved to partisan "trench warfare," which saps the public's belief and trust in public institutions, making it hard to advocate for change within these institutions.

"Nobody is willing to give up a little bit to get more," he says. "We ask school districts to set priorities, but when they do, [such as closing schools], the public doesn't support it."

about the greater good

What does Ordway believe families should be thinking about over the summer? Educating ourselves, and being prepared to have an honest and productive community-wide conversation about school quality and inequity.

"How a school treats all kids is a reflection of how it treats yours. It is incumbent on you as a parent to care about other kids. Your children will be living and working alongside them, and they will contribute to the health of your kids' communities."

As the state Legislature grapples with how to fulfill the requirements of the *McCleary* decision (the Supreme Court mandate to fully fund education in Washington state), Ordway says parents should be ready to weigh in on how the money should be spent.

"Money impacts teacher quality, curriculum, computers, libraries and glue sticks. The educational environment we'll face in 2015 will be impacted by what the Legislature decides to do."

Focus on the forest and the trees

Ask Washington State Sen. Christine Rolfes to define the Legislature's role in educating kids, and she'll tell you that it is responsible for every aspect of public education.

The Legislature sets the budget for schools, monitors teacher quality, oversees the professional standards board and pedagogical programs, sets salaries and recruits new teachers.

But it has absolutely no control over how these things are implemented at the district level.

Rolfes, a Democrat and parent of two children in Bainbridge Island schools, represents the 23rd District, which includes four medium-size school districts. These districts serve military families, Native American

families and families with a wide range of income levels.

Rolfes says that, although her district provides a snapshot of the broad range of education needs in Washington, she understands the difficulty in relating to parents who are having a completely different experience from your own. An added challenge is remaining engaged in education issues when your kids have moved on.

"When you drive through a forest and you see clear-cuts, you get angry and you want to do something. But when you know there are kids who aren't reading, you don't tend to feel that you can fix that. We are missing a critical link in that people feel that other people's kids are not their problem. We don't get worked up when other people's kids can't read or don't know math."

Rolfes wants parents to know that they have more power than they think to solve these problems.

Know which candidates "walk the talk," she recommends, and elect those who support public education. It's important for citizens to communicate with their legislators and alert them to strengths and weaknesses within the system.

"As engaged parents, it's really important for us to use what we learned with our kids' classes and teachers and pass that along to other families coming up," says Rolfes.

"We all can take responsibility for improving the system from within. I know my kids have benefited from other parents doing that." ■

Alison Krupnick is ParentMap's education editor and a former world-traveling diplomat. Have a question or education issue you'd like to see explored? Connect with her at alison@parentmap.com.

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Just say go: Chris Eastland, Dianne Fruit and their two sons spent six months traveling and volunteering in Latin America and Europe. "Our family is even more unified now," says Fruit.

The family gap year

What happens when you drop it all and move abroad?



BY MARGOT PAGE

We all know a family that's done it — packed their bags, pulled up stakes, pressed “pause” on regular life and . . . left. Perhaps for Ecuador. France. Thailand. Maybe bringing jobs with them, maybe volunteering, maybe dedicating the time wholly to cultural exploration and family bonding. More than a vacation, less than a permanent move — let's borrow the language of the pre-college adventurer and call it the “family gap year.”

Families that have taken a gap year (or two years, or six months) get used to a standard reaction:

“Man, I'd love to do something like that.” But that first, wistful sentence is almost always followed by a litany of what makes the adventure too hard: houses, jobs, money, school, social commitments. Life. *How can we just leave?*

It's daunting, to be sure. But every year, a subset of determined families turn the “too hard” idea on its head and set out — and off — to change their lives. My family of five was among them; we spent a year in Costa Rica a decade ago, and it changed us forever. For this story, I sought out other families who also left the U.S. on a leap-of-a-lifetime to explore the common threads of our experiences: What was harder (or easier) than expected? What was the impact on families two, five, even 10 years out? And

the biggie: Did the time-out give us — especially kids — the kind of perspective on our complicated First World culture that many parents long for?

Too hard? As it turns out, for many parents and their kids, a gap year proved to be the quickest path to the stuff — values, family time, real-life experience — that matters most.

All that packing and planning? Those are just logistics.

INDEPENDENCE DAYS

Many families who take a gap year want their kids to see the world as a place of thrilling potential, a wonderland to be explored. In other countries, kids are given more freedom and autonomy at a younger age than here in the hovermom culture in which many of us live. Such cultural support for kid independence makes it easier for parents to loosen the reins.

Sherry Smith and Matt Huston of Seattle moved to Cajamarca, Peru, for six months when their children, Sam and Sally, were 14 and 10. They immersed themselves in Peruvian culture — the kids were the only non-Peruvians at their school — and the parents found themselves letting Sam and Sally do things by themselves “that we'd be reluctant to let them do here,” says Huston, a middle-school teacher who was able to take a sabbatical.

In Cajamarca, Sam would ride a *moto* to explore the next town over, or take a couple of buses to a soccer game. “Or I could say, ‘Sally, could you run out and get some powdered sugar?’” Smith says, an exhibit writer. “And she'd come back 35 minutes later, and I'd be fine.” Adds Huston, “At that age, would we have sent her into Ballard to run errands? No, we wouldn't have done that.”

PASSPORT TO PROBLEM-SOLVING

Hand in hand with independence come the ownership and creativity required for solving problems. We all want to raise kids who are problem solvers — but first, something has to go wrong. Travel has a way of flinging glitches in our paths. Family after family talked about their kids' ability to rise to — and resolve — the unexpected.

Three years ago, Dianne Fruit, a Spanish instructor, spent six months traveling and volunteering in Central America, South America and Europe with her family: Chris Eastland, an engineer, and sons Ridley and Rory. “Our kids got this great ability to roll with the punches,” says Fruit.

“I don't get as frantic now when something goes wrong,” says Ridley, who was 13 during the trip. “Instead, I just think ‘OK, what can I make happen?’ Back home,




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The family gap year continued from page 13

every day could be an adventure, but the likelihood that something unique is going to happen is just a lot less.”

We parents can handle (or prevent) much of the trouble that crops up on our home turf. Outside it, the kids get to step up in ways we’d never have dreamed.

During my own family’s year in Costa Rica, our kids — ages 5, 9 and 12 at the time — had myriad opportunities to problem-solve, most notably during a weeklong trip to Panama.

We’d spent 12 hours on an assortment of steaming buses to get to the Panamanian border, only to be denied entry for reasons I wasn’t able to understand. The bus was long gone, we were exhausted — and our side of the border offered no services and nowhere to sleep. I was used to being the grown-up, but my Spanish was not up to this task.

As I choked back tears, our eldest daughter stepped up to the counter. Twelve-year-old Hannah spoke to the immigration official with a fluency that dropped my jaw. In Seattle she was still a little girl; at the border, she talked us into Panama and out of disaster.

TRAVELING FAR TO BE CLOSE

There’s nothing like facing the same problems at the same time, whether they’re tiny glitches or near calamities, to bring members closer. A gap year makes the whole family strangers in a strange land together. Many families report newfound closeness between their kids as one of the most lasting and tangible effects of their time away.

Ashley Steel and Bill Richards, professional ecologists from Bellevue, Wash., moved to Vienna for six

months when their daughters, Zoey and Logan, were 8 and 5. As they traveled through Europe, they “built a little lexicon of misunderstood words and private jokes that has lasted more than six years since we returned,” says Steel. She cites the

time she confused the German word for “chaos” with “cows” in a conversation with an Austrian administrator. “Now whenever a situation dissolves

into a chaotic mess, someone in our family will cry out, ‘It’s all cows!’”

“Definitely the two of us are closer,” says Zoey of herself and younger sister Logan. “Now that we’re back, we have our separate friends and lives, like before, but . . . there’s definitely something about having only had each other for all that time.”

Fruit says of her family’s year away: “Our family is even more unified now. We learned more about one another and have a shared narrative that is common to just the four of us.”

OPENING KIDS’ EYES TO #PRIVILEGE

And of course, the big question: What happens to us, to our kids, when we get perspective on an issue so large it has its own hashtag: #FirstWorldProblems?

“One of the most lasting effects of our travel is our kids’ increased awareness of the difference between needs and wants,” says Chris Eastland, Fruit’s husband. A gap year can be anywhere, but families that traveled in the developing world report that everyone’s sense of what’s required was recalibrated: Smartphone? *Want*. Food and clean water? *Need*.

Parents want to help their children understand that they don’t live on the “have-nots” end of the

socioeconomic spectrum, and most of us have a really good lecture about that. Mine used to begin, “You have no idea how lucky we are . . .,” and I pulled it out whenever my kids even hinted at a complaint about sharing a bedroom or not having an Xbox.

Surprisingly, this lecture never made my children feel particularly lucky.

But our family had to think, hard, about the meaning and responsibility of our own privilege when a pair of Nicaraguan children stood silently, 3

continued on page 22

How’d they do it?

The Eastland-Fruit family

Chris Eastland, Dianne Fruit, Ridley and Rory



Home: Kenmore, Wash.

Where did they go? Costa Rica (two and a half months) and shorter stints in various places in South America and Europe. The whole family volunteered at a sea turtle conservation camp, and Fruit and Eastland also volunteered at the school Ridley and Rory attended in Costa Rica.

For how long? Six months total

How old were the kids? Ridley, 13; Rory, 10

How did they manage school? Two months at a dual-language school in Costa Rica; other than that, learning on the go

How did they manage work/money? Fruit had a paid sabbatical from her job as a community college instructor; Eastland took unpaid leave from his job as an engineer. Both were able to return to their jobs.

Most surprising aspect? Fruit: “When we returned, I found it hard to adequately summarize the trip when others asked about it. We had experienced so much! Even though I’m well versed in reentry shock, I was bewildered about how to return to our ‘normal’ lives and at the same time incorporate how I had changed and grown.”

Most lasting effect: Languages; willingness to try new things; new awareness of need versus want; new friends

Any advice? Rory: “Don’t take everything so seriously.”

Ridley: “Pack light. Be willing to go with the flow when necessary. Record everything (write stuff down, take videos and audio recordings to capture how things were at the time).”

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feature

The family gap year continued from page 15

feet from our lunch table, hoping we might leave something on our plates when we left.

As parents living in one of the richest regions of one of the richest nations on the planet, raising kids who truly understand the truth and responsibility of their privilege is hard. But when we see, live and feel the situation of so many who share our world, we live the lesson.

And we learn, tritely but truly, that less really can be more. "I loved the people so much," says Huston of his family's community in Cajamarca. "We would go to the *mercado*, and

everyone was friendly, and they knew me. Here, you go to the grocery store, and there probably won't even be a checker anymore — just a machine."

It's also important to note: Far-flung lands do not exist for the edification of traveling families. In taking ourselves to other countries and cultures, both visitors and citizens have the opportunity to edify each other. The question is not just, "What can this kind of travel do for my family?" but, "What can my family do for the world, by being in it more?"

How'd they do it?

The Richards-Steel family

Bill Richards, Ashley Steel, Zoey and Logan



Home: Bellevue, Wash.

Where did they go? Vienna, Austria

For how long? Six months

How old were the kids? Zoey, 8; Logan, 5

How did they manage school? The girls went to an international school in Vienna.

How did they manage work/money? Steel's Fulbright Fellowship took them to Vienna, where they both continued working as professional ecologists.

Most surprising aspect? Steel: "How much family time there is when you take away your regular routines. The kids still had playdates, homework and after-school classes, but we ended up with special time together in the apartment, waiting in restaurants, visiting museums, navigating public transportation, getting lost or exploring on purpose."

Most lasting effect: "The two biggest are: a family identity built on multicultural exploration, and a set of friends in other countries that continue to enrich our lives."

Any advice? "Go slow! Traveling fast, you can skim the surface of a large number of places as a tourist. Slowing down, you can see things through new eyes, be open to the unexpected and start to understand other world views."

Of course, a year in Paris is less likely to highlight the inequality of privilege than a year in Peru. But whether it's economic privilege or cultural consciousness, living elsewhere teaches our kids that the way we do things at home is not the only way.

IT'S NOT ALL ROSY

And what about the downsides? Or is the family gap year just months on end of rosy togetherness?

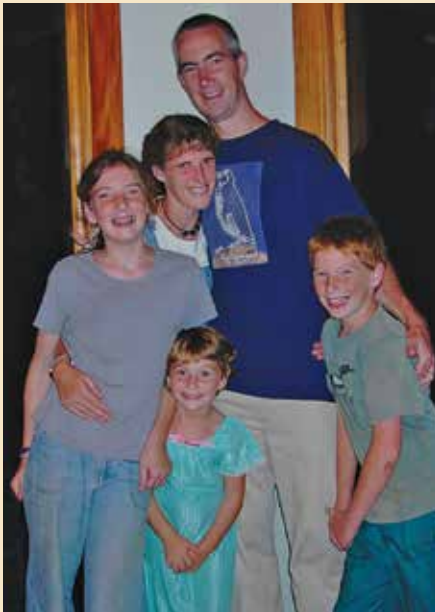
Everyone agrees: Extended travel has its challenges.

For one thing, when you move to a different culture, you *get* a different

How'd they do it?

The Page-Salisbury family

Margot Page, Anthony Salisbury, Hannah, Harry and Ivy



Home: Seattle, Wash.

Where did they go? Monteverde, Costa Rica

For how long? 12 months

How old were the kids? Hannah, 12; Harry, 9; Ivy, 5

How did they manage school? Inexpensive (by U.S. terms) private school that draws students from the local community, but welcomes international kids

How did they manage work/money? Salisbury and Page both quit their jobs. With no salary income, they lived on the

\$800 difference between the mortgage payment on their Seattle house and the amount they were able to rent it for. Leaving wasn't scary at all, but the idea of coming back with no jobs and no rental income was. Both are again employed.

Most surprising aspect? Salisbury: "Life takes longer without U.S. efficiencies: making breakfast, shopping, making dinner, etc. And efficiency is overvalued."

Most lasting effect: Salisbury: "Rich is a state of mind. And a realization that cars are nearly unnecessary in an urban setting." Harry: "I learned Spanish and kept it. :) Everyone else is jealous. :)" Ivy: "I feel way closer to my siblings than I think a lot of my friends feel, and I think we have that year to thank."

Any advice? Page: "If your kids are old enough to have opinions, get their buy-in. Every hard moment is made better when everyone wants to be here."

Salisbury, Hannah and Ivy: "Why are you still sitting there? Go. Stop considering, start packing."

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feature

The family gap year *continued from page 23*

culture. The Kardashians notwithstanding, the USA does not have a lock on cultural bummers. Just ask Sally and Sam. The local Peruvian culture had a harsh surprise for athletic Sally, who attended fifth grade in a town where only the boys played organized sports — girls sat on the sidelines, watching.

And Sam found that it wasn't just the Spanish that made the math completely foreign.

"We knew school would be all in Spanish, but we didn't think how

different the rest would be," Sam recalls. In addition to the lack of sports at recess, "The kids all spent the day in one room and didn't move around," says Huston, Sam's dad.

Unmoored abroad, couples can also find themselves disconnected, especially when one parent is working while the other isn't. Sharon Chen and Peter Carlin moved their family to Taiwan when Carlin, a software developer, convinced his company to relocate him for two years. With kids ages 5 and 3, Chen, a stay-at-home

How'd they do it?

The Smith-Huston family

Sherry Smith, Matt Huston, Sam and Sally



Home: Seattle, Wash.

Where did they go?
 Cajamarca, Peru

For how long? Six months

How old were the kids?
 Sam, 12; Sally, 10

How did they manage school? Inexpensive (by U.S. terms) private school that drew from the local community. Sam and Sally were the only non-Peruvian kids in their school.

How did they manage work/money? Huston, a middle-school teacher, was granted a paid sabbatical with a "deliverable" to complete a study of Peruvian cookery. Smith quit her job as an exhibit writer at a design firm. "That was six months of stress," says Huston of Smith's job search on their return.

Most surprising aspect? Huston: "Not missing other Americans. We chose an out-of-the-way, not touristy place and never regretted it."

Most lasting effect: Smith: "A sense from the kids that they can handle a lot. They've been through some challenging situations, and it was hard and interesting. And they want to go back."

Any advice? "It's more work than you think to get out the door."

How'd they do it?

The Chen-Carlin family

Sharon Chen, Peter Carlin, Lucy and Leo



Home: Seattle, Wash.

Where did they go? Taipei, Taiwan

For how long? Two years

How old were the kids? Lucy, 5; Leo, 3

How did they manage school? Both attended a private school with classes taught completely in Mandarin.

How did they manage work/money? Carlin, a manager in high tech, was able to get a job that moved him to Taipei. Chen was an at-home mom, as in the states.

Most surprising aspect? Chen: "One thing that surprised me was the anxiety around second-guessing myself in the early weeks. There was a difference between the intellectual plan of moving for intangible benefits and the reality of staring it in the face. I remember walking around the city after dropping my kids off, thinking, *Is this just me being selfish, wanting to travel and being 'worldly,' whatever that means? What if my daughter doesn't learn the language quickly?*"

Most lasting effect: "Besides the obvious lasting effect of facility in a language besides English, the increased flexibility in palate."

Any advice? "Make sure both partners are excited and willing to do it."

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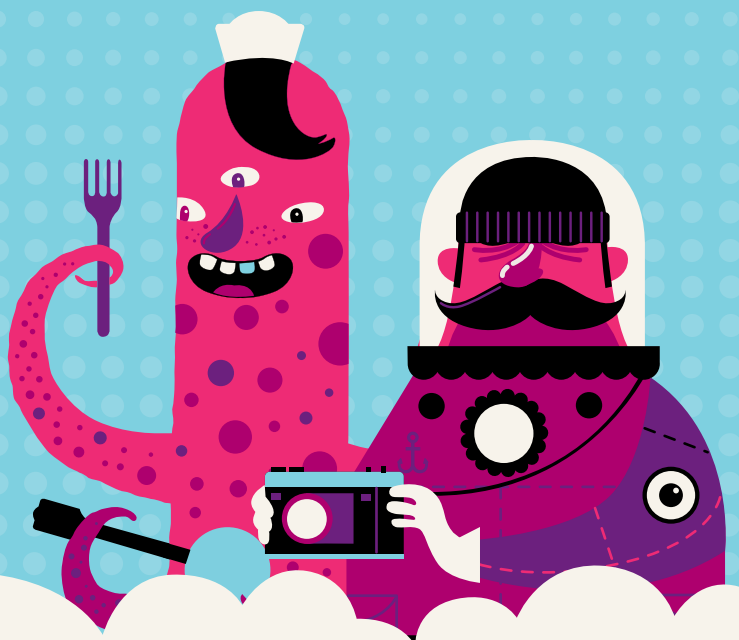
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ParentMap

feature

The family gap year continued from page 25

mom, was suddenly functioning without the support network she'd built at home. "Peter traveled for work a lot," she says, "and that part was really hard."

Missing school in the states can pose academic challenges, too. Lucy Carlin was 5 when her family left. In Taiwan, she learned how to read and write in Chinese — but not in English.

"Coming back, Lucy was significantly behind her age group in reading," says Chen. "For probably two years that was something we had to manage with teachers."

And social lives can suffer. Returning from our family's gap year, our newly bilingual oldest daughter, Hannah, whose peers couldn't fathom how she had spent seventh grade, spent eighth grade lonely and isolated.

But downsides can lead to upsides. Hannah says of all that pain, "I pay a lot more attention now to people who are on the outskirts. I would never have learned that if I hadn't spent time on the outskirts myself."

Parents also report that in their gap-year lives, they had time and freedom to mitigate issues such as homesickness. Huston notes, "Because Sherry and I weren't working, we had tons of time to scheme to make the kids' non-school hours really wonderful."

And Sally feels like the challenges of her time in Peru have given her a giant new appreciation of home. When asked what she and her brother were most thankful for on their return, Sally and Sam chime at once, "Hot showers!"

Gratitude is another lesson that's hard to lecture our kids about; it's unlikely that any of us could talk our kids into being grateful for the hot-water heater. But when they live somewhere without one? No reminder required.

Deciding to quit that job or take a leave, renting the house on Craigslist, signing kids up for school and figuring out the money: Taking your family out and away presents honest-to-goodness, sometimes scary challenges.

But here's another challenge: living in an American city in a house that has more people than bedrooms and trying to convince the children that this fact alone does not make us underprivileged.

Stamps in a passport are hardly requirements for growing qualities such as independence, problem solving and awareness of our place in the world, or for an unshakeable closeness within the family. But when the families in this story took themselves away to another life, another culture, they found that many of those gifts just kind of happened.

Who would have guessed that this kind of adventure, this time out of time, would turn out to be the easiest, most direct way to teach some of the values and life skills we desperately want to give our kids?

In a new life, in an unfamiliar culture, families live the lectures instead of having to speak them. That part, it turns out, is not hard at all. ■

Margot Page's work has appeared in The New York Times, Brain, Child and The Huffington Post. She is the creator of the popular Dear Drudgery column on the Brain, Mother blog and writes about Pope Francis, among other topics, for the Mamalode website. Her memoir, Paradise Imperfect: An American Family Moves to the Costa Rican Mountains (Yellow House Press) was published in 2013, and an excerpt was nominated for the 2013 Pushcart Prize. Read more of Margot's work at margot-page.com. Margot lives, works and writes in Seattle.

Mind the gap

Resources for planning

Getting away can be as simple as renting out your house and buying some airplane tickets. But for help with the pesky logistics, check out:



- **The Career Break Traveler's Handbook** and website (careerbreaksecrets.com). Jeff Jung offers practical advice on dreaming and planning extended travel.
- **Family on the Loose** book and website (familyontheloose.com). Ashley Steel and Bill Richards share what they've learned in their years of traveling with their kids.
- **Wandermom** (wandermom.com). Inspiration for where to travel with children
- **Transitions Abroad** (transitionsabroad.com). A travel resource for meaningful work, living and study abroad
- **Paradise Imperfect: An American Family Moves to the Costa Rican Mountains**. Margot Page's unvarnished chronicle of what happened to her own family (and marriage and attitude) when they took a gap-year adventure. margot-page.com
- **Expat websites worth checking out** include The Displaced Nation (thedisplacednation.com), Overseas Radio (overseasradio.com) and The Emotionally Resilient Expat (theemotionallyresilientexpat.com).



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Lions and Dragons and Seafair

Seafair festivals abound in July, but one of the most unique is the Chinatown/International District's **Dragon Fest**, featuring **lion and dragon dances**, a super-cool **recycling fashion contest and parade** for kids (Saturday, 1 p.m.) and a **Food Walk** with \$2 tasting plates. Seattle. **Saturday–Sunday, July 12–13.** cidbia.org



May the Fourth be With You

Why not try something new this Independence Day? March in a **down-home parade** (Bainbridge, Edmonds or Auburn); see an **airshow** (Tacoma); watch chainsaw carving at a **lumberjack show** (Port Gamble); or compete for prizes on a **history-themed scavenger hunt** around Lake Union (Cheshiahud Challenge). Find more inspired Fourth ideas at parentmap.com/fourth

SUNDAY

Explore, create and connect at
The Seattle Public Library
this summer.

June 23 – Aug. 31
www.spl.org/zonein

6

Westlake Family Fun Day. Westlake becomes kiddie fun headquarters, with a bouncy house, music and games for kiddos. 11 a.m.–1 p.m. **FREE.** Westlake Park, Seattle. seattle.gov/parks/downtown
Bicycle Sunday. Take your family's two-wheelers out for a leisurely, car-free ride along the lake; helmets required. 10 a.m.–6 p.m. select Sundays through Sept. 21. **FREE.** Lake Washington Boulevard, Seattle. seattle.gov/parks/bicyclesunday

13

Wildcat Weekend. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium celebrate its tigers and clouded leopards with special treats and cat conservation projects. Included in paid admission. July 12–13. Tacoma. pdza.org
Seattle Outdoor Theater Festival. Greenstage, Theater Schmeater and other companies present 14 **FREE** shows in one weekend. Saturday and Sunday, July 12–13. Volunteer Park, Seattle. greenstage.org/sof

20

Capital Lakefair. Celebrate our state's capital with a parade, fireworks and more. Wednesday–Sunday, July 16–20. **FREE;** some activities have fee. Various venues, Olympia. lakefair.org
The Not-Its! in Concert. Kindie sensation rocks locals and tourist families alike. 11 a.m. **FREE.** Westlake Park, Seattle. seattle.gov/parks/downtown
Tacoma Food Truck Fest. Noon–5 p.m. Free entry; food for purchase. Wright Park, Tacoma. metroparkstacoma.org

27

Annie. Make it a family outing to enjoy this popular musical, live in the woods. 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through Aug. 17. \$10–\$20; ages 5 and under free. Kitsap Forest Theater, Bremerton. foresttheater.com
Letter Carriers Band at the Locks. Relax on a blanket or stroll the lovely gardens while you listen to the summer concert series. 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through Aug. 31. **FREE.** Hiram M. Chittenden Locks, Seattle. nws.usace.army.mil **ONGOING EVENT**

MONDAY

7

Jetty Island Puppet Show. Take a break from sandy fun to watch and meet puppet pals like Olivia Octopus. 2:15 p.m. Mondays through Sept. 1. **FREE;** \$1–\$2 donation for ferry. Jetty Island, Everett. ci.everett.wa.us **ONGOING EVENT**
SPY: The Secret World of Espionage. See the tools of real secret agents. Daily except Tuesday through Sept. 1. \$16–\$29; under age 2 free (includes regular exhibits). Pacific Science Center, Seattle. pacificsciencecenter.org

14

Low-Tide exploration. Beachcomb on one of the lowest-tide days of the year and learn. **FREE.** Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium naturalists will be at Tacoma's Owen Beach (12:15 p.m., pdza.org). Seattle Aquarium volunteer naturalists will be at beaches around the Sound (10:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. seattleaquarium.org).

21

Island of Lemurs: Madagascar 3D. This IMAX documentary examines the delightful — and endangered — lemur in its wild home. Multiple show times daily. \$6–\$9; ages 2 and under free. Pacific Science Center, Seattle. pacificsciencecenter.org
Spectacle: The Music Video. A first-ever museum exhibition exploring the music video art form, from Madonna to Macklemore. 10 a.m.–5 p.m. daily. Included with admission. EMP Museum. empmuseum.org

28

Seattle Public Library Used Book Sale. Stop by to browse a selection of books for sale from the library. Noon–2 p.m. Monday–Friday through Oct. 31. Freeway Park, Seattle. seattle.gov/parks/downtown
Zip Wild Adventure Courses. Climb, jump, swing, balance and zip on wildly fun and exciting challenge courses. Daily through Sept. 1; reservations required. \$20–\$60 (does not include park admission). Ages 5 and up. Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, Eatonville. nwtrek.org

TUESDAY

1

LEGO Workshop. LEGO guru Dan Parker returns to the museum to share tips and techniques with fellow fans; kids create on their own, too. 10 a.m.–noon. \$25–\$35. Ages 5–12. Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle. nordicmuseum.org
Summer Sounds at Skanskie. The 133rd Army Band plays its best patriotic tunes in anticipation of Independence Day. 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays through Aug. 19. **FREE.** Skanskie Brothers Park, Gig Harbor. cityofgigharbor.net **ONGOING EVENT**

8

One World Taiko. The rhythms of Japan kick off Shoreline's super summer lunch-time concert series. Noon–1 p.m. Tuesdays through Aug. 12. **FREE.** Richmond Beach Saltwater Park (some shows at Hamlin Park), Shoreline. shorelinewa.gov
World Cup Nord Alley. Gather with Seattle's soccer fans from all over the world for al fresco viewing of a semi-final match. 1 p.m. **FREE.** Nord Alley in Pioneer Square, Seattle. allevnetworkproject.com

15

Seattle Storm Kids Day. Seattle's WNBA team invites kids for pre-game fun and a daytime match-up against the Connecticut Sun. Doors open 10:30 a.m.; game at noon. \$19 and up (\$10 for group tickets). All ages. Key Arena, Seattle. stormbasketball.com
Summer Movie Express. Regal theaters offer up family movies for summer — at a very nice price. 10 a.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays through Aug. 20. \$1. Multiple locations. regmovies.com **ONGOING EVENT**

22

Adventure Playground. Awesome, old-school play with building materials and tools. 1–4 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays through Aug. 28. Admission by donation. All ages; under age 12 with adult. Deane's Children's Park, Mercer Island. mercergov.org
Mr. Peabody and Sherman. Part of the Summer Outdoor Movies in the Park series. Films shown at dusk, Tuesdays through Aug. 19. Bellevue Downtown Park, Bellevue. inome.com/summervideos **ONGOING EVENT**

29

Brian Vogan and his Good Buddies. Take the tots to dance in the park at the Kirkland Summer Concert series for kids. 10–11 a.m. Tuesdays through Aug. 19. **FREE.** Juanita Beach Park, Kirkland. kirklandsummerconcerts.weebly.com **ONGOING EVENT**
The Harmonica Pocket. Sing and dance to the swinging kids' tunes of this kindie band, part of the Edmonds Summer Concerts series. Noon–1 p.m. Tuesdays through Aug. 26. **FREE.** Hazel Miller Plaza, Edmonds. edmondswa.gov **ONGOING EVENT**

Good Growing

A Seattle Children's Publication | **Summer 2014**

Understanding the Power and Influence of Role Models

Who are your child's role models? It's important to know whom they admire and why — and the topic makes for a great conversation.

Growing up, all kids have role models. Some are people they know personally such as relatives, teachers and coaches. Fictional characters can be excellent role models, like Harry Potter and Hermione Granger. And most kids have celebrity role models, often from the worlds of sports and entertainment. Because kids can see these people every day through the media, they may imagine they know these stars personally. Therefore, these people can have a strong influence on a child's thoughts and behaviors.

One problem with celebrity role models is that they have the power to disappoint us when their real-life behaviors don't match our image of them. Cyclist Lance Armstrong and



other athletes have broken fans' hearts by cheating to improve their performance, then lying about it. Young fans who began following Miley Cyrus and Justin Bieber when these stars were just kids themselves have

witnessed some shocking twists and turns.

A star's fall from grace provides an opportunity to talk about how bad decisions can affect anyone's life — and how abusing drugs or alcohol can ruin it. It also reinforces why we must all take responsibility for our actions.

We can help our kids understand that — star or not — no one is perfect or super-human. The most successful people are those who can solve tough problems, learn from their mistakes, and move forward with a positive attitude.

Your child's role models will change over time, and sometimes they'll change quickly. But do stay current on who is influencing your child, whether it's a celebrity or someone they know personally. Ask your child what they admire about these people, then listen carefully and explore those ideas further. Also talk with your child about the people who have shaped your own life. Parents are people too, and we are still inspired by our role models.

While kids will never have posters of their parents on their bedroom walls, we really are their most important role models in the long run. Our everyday behaviors — including kindness, honesty, compassion, generosity, safety and hard work — will influence them more than the brightest, shiniest star ever could.



Outdoor Movie Night

Saturday, Sept. 6, 6 p.m.
Innis Arden Clubhouse, Shoreline

Bring the family to watch an outdoor movie and support the Little Lemon Drops Junior Guild. Purchase raffle tickets and movie snacks. Donations accepted for admission.

TO LEARN MORE:

Visit www.littlelemondropsguild.weebly.com.

TO LEARN MORE:

Visit www.seattlechildrens.org/goodgrowing.



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Legal Marijuana Means Greater Poisoning Risks for Children

Now that marijuana is legal for adults 21 and older in Washington, it's more apt to be in homes. Children are at risk of accidental poisoning, especially if they ingest marijuana in strong edible forms like baked goods, candy or drinks. A poisoned child is likely to hallucinate and then fall into a sedated sleep. Serious breathing problems may also occur; in these cases, ventilator support may be needed. Although it's rare, overdoses can result in a

coma. If your child is in a home with marijuana, be sure it's stored safely out of reach and sight. If you suspect a child has ingested it, call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 and seek medical help if needed. Give these professionals the full details so they can provide the best treatment.

TO LEARN MORE:

<http://pulse.seattlechildrens.org/more-kids-accidentally-poisoned-by-legal-marijuana-study-finds>



Why Choose Pediatric Emergency Care?



Here's a situation that families in our area face every day. Your child or teen has what you're quite sure is a broken arm — or leg or collar-bone. Do you go to the nearest emergency room or instead travel a bit farther to a pediatric emergency room? As long as the injury is not life threatening and the pain is not too severe, a pediatric emergency room is always a smart choice. These doctors are board-trained and certified in pediatric emergency medicine, which means they can provide state-of-the-art care especially for young patients. The diagnostic equipment in a pediatric ER uses the least amount of radiation

possible to get an accurate image, and pediatric specialists perform the exams and interpret the results. These doctors, nurses and technicians enjoy working with kids, and know how to calm them and manage pain. If there is a wait, you'll be among families with children, and not adults whose behaviors and injuries may be upsetting for a child to see. And the most important benefit, according to kids themselves? Popsicles!

TO LEARN MORE:

Visit www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics-programs/emergency-department.

Help Your Child Develop Good Hygiene Habits

One of the many jobs parents have is to teach their kids about personal hygiene. It's important for everyone's health and self esteem. If you model good hygiene yourself and use praise to encourage your child, they'll have an easier time developing strong habits. Proper hand-washing is easy for toddlers to learn, and it's a lifelong tool for staying ahead of germs. Have them scrub their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds — singing the ABC song can be used as a timing device. You'll need to help little ones brush their teeth and floss until they have the motor skills to do so on their own, at age 6 or 7. (That's generally about the time they can tie their own shoes or write cursive.) They may have



an easier time using kid-friendly flossing tools to help them reach back teeth and do a careful job. Kids can start to trim their own nails at around age 9 or 10, as long as the clippers are small enough for them to grip and use easily. Nails are softer and easier to trim just

after a bath or shower. Fingernails can be cut in a curve to follow the nail's natural shape, while toenails should be cut straight across to prevent them from becoming ingrown. Daily bathing becomes necessary when a child hits puberty and develops body odor; they may also need to use deodorant or antiperspirant. Some kids embrace a daily shower routine more easily than others. Until then, set a regular bathing time, let them choose their own shampoo and shower gel, and praise their fresh smell and clean glow!

TO LEARN MORE:

Visit www.seattlechildrens.org/safety-wellness/oral-health.

Kid Bits



Help for Constipation

Constipation is a common problem that can make anyone feel miserable. Our bodies work best when we poop every day, and when the poop is soft so it doesn't hurt to go. Problems develop when we don't go every day, or when the poop is hard so it's painful to go. Kids who are constipated may have tummy aches and spend a long time on the toilet — or even refuse to go because it hurts. Constipation tends to run in families, so some kids may be more prone to it than others. Eating high-fiber foods and drinking lots of water helps, but sometimes extra treatment is needed. Before trying any medicines or treatments, first have your child's doctor check for a blockage or other problems.

TO LEARN MORE:

Visit www.seattlechildrens.org/goodgrowing.



More Movement, Less Screen Time

Active kids and teens sleep better, are more alert during the day and perform better in school. At least one hour of movement each day is all it takes — and it doesn't need to be intense or all at once. spurts of 10 to 15 minutes get the job done. Small changes, like taking the stairs or walking to school, add up. Limiting screen time to make more time for activity is a double bonus. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends less than two hours a day of screen entertainment. So after dinner, instead of video games or TV, gather the family and go fly a kite, play catch or see who can pull the most weeds. Small steps make a difference!

TO LEARN MORE:

Visit www.seattlechildrens.org/videos/small-steps-healthy-lifestyle-7-5-2-1-0.



Flat Head Syndrome

Plagiocephaly, known as flat head syndrome, is a flat spot on the back or side of a baby's head. It's caused by pressure on the bones of the skull. It usually happens after birth, when infants lie on their backs in the same position causing a flat spot to develop. It's more common in premature babies; their skull bones are softer than those of full-term babies and they also tend to move their heads less. Limit the amount of time your baby lies down, and change their position for them if they cannot. During checkups, your baby's doctor will check for flat spots and try to determine if there's a physical problem that prevents your baby from moving their neck and head.

TO LEARN MORE:

Visit www.seattlechildrens.org/goodgrowing.

Quick Tip

Install window guards or stops on windows. Kids can fall from windows open as little as five inches. Screens keep bugs out, but they don't keep kids in.

Regional Clinics

Find us near you at one of our clinics in Bellevue, Everett, Federal Way, Mill Creek, Olympia, Tri-Cities, Wenatchee and at Odessa Brown Children's Clinic.

Main Hospital Numbers

206-987-2000
866-987-2000 (Toll-free)

Online Resources

Visit www.seattlechildrens.org for the following:

- Child Health Advice
- my Good Growing e-mail newsletter
- Doctor Finder
- Seattle Mama Doc, Teenology 101 and Autism blogs
- Medical condition information
- Safety & wellness information
- Ways to help Seattle Children's
- Research Institute

Heather Cooper is the Editor of Good Growing which is produced four times a year by the Marketing Communications Department of Seattle Children's. You can find *Good Growing* in the January, April, July and October issues of *ParentMap* and on our website www.seattlechildrens.org. For permission to reprint articles for non-commercial purposes or to receive *Good Growing* in an alternate format, call 206-987-5323. The inclusion of any resource or website does not imply endorsement. Your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider. © 2014 Seattle Children's, Seattle, Washington.



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www.youtube.com/seattlechildrens



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Classes and Events

To register or view more information, please visit www.seattlechildrens.org/classes. A phone number is provided for those without Internet access. No one will be denied admission if unable to pay the full amount. If you need an interpreter, please let staff know when you register, and one will be provided. These classes are popular and often fill up several months in advance, so register early.

Parenting Classes

Autism 101

WHEN: Thursday, July 24, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

FEE: Free

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-987-8080

For parents and caregivers of children recently diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder who wish to better understand this disorder. The class is also available through Children's video and teleconferencing outreach program in various locations throughout Washington and Alaska.

Autism 200 Series

FEE: Free

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-987-8080

For parents and caregivers of children with autism who wish to better understand this disorder. These classes are also available through Children's video and teleconferencing outreach program in various locations throughout Washington, Alaska, Oregon and Montana.

Autism 207: Transition to Adulthood — Vocational Training and Support

WHEN: Thursday, July 17, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Autism 208: Facilitating Peer Interactions for Children with Social Communication Deficits

WHEN: Thursday, Aug. 21, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Autism 209: Sleep and Autism — The Bumpy Road to the Land of Nod

WHEN: Thursday, Sept. 18, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Babysafe

WHEN: Saturday, July 26, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

FEE: \$50 per family

WHERE: Seattle Children's admin building,
6901 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-789-2306

For new and expectant parents and infant caregivers. Topics include infant development, baby safety, injury prevention and treatment. Infant CPR is demonstrated and practiced.

Heartsaver First Aid, CPR and AED

WHEN: Sunday, July 27, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

FEE: \$50

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-987-9878

For parents and caregivers. Topics include how to treat bleeding, sprains, broken bones, shock and other first-aid emergencies. Also includes infant, child and adult CPR and AED use.

Preteen and Teen Classes

Better Babysitters

WHEN: Saturday, Aug. 9,

9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WHERE: Seattle Children's admin. building,
6901 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 20, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WHERE: Overlake Medical Center,
1035 116th Ave. NE, Bellevue

View more dates online

FEE: \$40 per person

CALL: 206-987-9879 for all locations.

For youths, ages 11 to 14. Topics for responsible babysitting include basic child development, infant care and safety, handling emergencies, age-appropriate toys, business hints and parent expectations.

CPR and First Aid for Babysitters

WHEN: Saturday, Aug. 16, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

FEE: \$60 per person

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-987-9878

For youths, ages 11 to 15. Topics include pediatric CPR, treatment for choking, and first-aid skills.

Students receive a 2-year American Heart Association completion card.

For Boys Only: The Joys and Challenges of Growing Up

WHEN: Mondays, Aug. 4 & 11, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

(view more dates online)

FEE: \$70 per parent/son pair; \$20 per extra child

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-789-2306

Two-part series for parents, guardians and sons ages 10 to 12. Focuses on what each can expect as boys begin adolescence. Class covers body changes during puberty, popular myths about growing up, behavior and attitude changes, girls and how to communicate about the experience of adolescence.

For Girls Only: A Heart-to-Heart Talk on Growing Up

WHEN: Tuesdays, July 8 & 15, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

(view more dates online)

FEE: \$70 per parent/daughter pair;
\$20 per extra child

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-789-2306

Two-part series for parents, guardians and daughters ages 10 to 12. Focuses on the physical changes of puberty and menstruation, what girls need to know about boys, social issues and sexuality. The sessions use lectures, videos, group activities and humor to emphasize family values and communication.

Events

Low-Cost Life Jacket Sales

WHEN: Saturdays, July 19 & Aug. 16,
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

FEE: \$20 for infant and youth sizes

(up to 90 lbs.); \$30 for sizes teen to adult

WHERE: Evans Pool at Green Lake,
7201 E Green Lake Drive N, Seattle

CALL: 206-684-7440

Purchase properly fitted life jackets for children, teens and adults. Wearer must be present to purchase. Purchasers under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Car Seat Check

WHEN: Saturday, Aug. 23, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

FEE: Free

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-987-5999

Come learn how to safely secure your child in the car. Child passenger safety experts will check your child in a car seat, booster seat or the seat belt and answer any questions you may have. First come, first served. No appointments needed.

Bike Helmet Fitting and Giveaway

WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 13, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

FEE: Free

WHERE: Kohl's,
18405 Alderwood Mall Pkwy., Lynnwood
CALL: 206-987-1569

Come get your child properly fit for a new bike helmet. Kids must be 1 to 18 and present to receive a helmet. First come, first served. No appointments needed. Learn more at www.MakeSureTheHelmetFits.org.



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WEDNESDAY

2

Red, White & Zoo. Animals snack on Fourth of July picnic-style treats. 10 a.m.–2:30 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday, July 2–3. Included with admission. Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle. zoo.org

Photographic Presence and Contemporary Indians: Matika Wilbur's Project 562. Explore portraits of Native Americans, along with audio recorded during select portrait sessions. Wednesday–Sunday through Oct. 5. Included with admission. Tacoma Art Museum. tacomaartmuseum.org

9

Frozen. Enjoy this ultra-popular animated movie as part of the Movies @ Marymoor series. 7 p.m. pre-movie entertainment, films shown at dusk, Wednesdays through Aug. 27. **FREE**; \$5 for 7 p.m. early seating. Marymoor Park, Redmond. moviesatmarymoor.com

ONGOING EVENT
Recess Monkey. Local favorite kindie band kicks off Auburn's Kids SummerStage series. Noon–1 p.m. Wednesdays through Aug. 13. **FREE**. Les Gove Park, Auburn. auburnwa.gov

16

Bat Quest. Go on a search to see and learn about our flying, furry friends. Select Wednesdays through Sept. 17 (times vary). \$8; preregister. Ages 8 and up with adult. Seward Park Audubon Center, Seattle. sewardpark.audubon.org

Wednesday Evening Orienteering. Cascade Orienteering Club invites families to try out this fun way of exploring terrain; barbecue afterward. 5–7 p.m. \$6–\$11; pre-registration requested. All ages. Wilburton Hill Park, Bellevue. cascadeoc.org

23

Greenwood Seafair Parade. Seattle Seahawks' mascot Blitz serves as Grand Marshal for this Seafair neighborhood tradition. 6–8:30 p.m. **FREE**. Along N. 85th St., Seattle. phinneycenter.org/parade

Science Magic Show. Magician Jeff Evans demonstrates how scientific principles can explain magic tricks. 3 p.m. (Lake Forest Park) and 7 p.m. (Federal Way 320th). **FREE**. Ages 5 and up. King County Library System, Lake Forest Park Branch and Federal Way 320th Branch. kcls.org

30

Water Spray Fun. Seattle sprayparks and Tacoma spraygrounds are open for cooling off on hot summer days. Daily 11 a.m.–8 p.m. **FREE**. Various locations, Seattle and Tacoma. parentmap.com/spray

Eldridge Gravy & The Court Supreme. Drink in the sounds of University Village's Wednesday Summer Sounds concert series while you eat or shop; kids' area has face-painting and a balloon artist. 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays through Aug. 20. **FREE**. University Village, Seattle. uvillage.com **ONGOING EVENT**

THURSDAY

3

Community Kite Painting. Stop by to help paint a kite to be part of the park's art-kite installation. Thursdays noon–2 p.m. through July 31. **FREE**. All ages. Freeway Park, Seattle. seattle.gov/parks/downtown

ONGOING EVENT
Late Play Date. Stop by the museum for fun crafts and activities. 6–8 p.m. **FREE**. Ages 3–12 with families. White River Valley Museum, Auburn. wrvmuseum.org

10

Summer at SAM. The Olympic Sculpture Park Thursday night summer series kicks off with live music, art projects and food truck fare; also check out the new interactive sound sculpture by Trimpin. 6–9 p.m. Thursdays through Aug. 28. **FREE**; food for purchase. Seattle. seattleartmuseum.org **ONGOING EVENT**

We Will Rock You. This hit musical features the songs of legendary British rock group Queen. Tuesday–Sunday, July 8–13. \$30 and up. Rated PG-13. The 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle. 5thavenue.org

17

The LEGO Movie. Hold on to the Piece of Resistance, LEGO fans; part of the Outdoor Movies at Magnuson series. 7 p.m. pre-movie entertainment, films shown at dusk, Thursdays through Aug. 28. **FREE**; \$5 for 7 p.m. early seating. Magnuson Park, Seattle. epiceap.com **ONGOING EVENT**

Kla Ha Ya Days. Carnival, kids' fair, fun runs, frog jumping, parade and much more. Wednesday–Sunday, July 16–20. **FREE**; some activities have fee. Various venues, Snohomish. klahayadays.com

24

Timber! Outdoor Music Festival. Live music and nature come together in an immersive, family-friendly festival. Musical acts run the gamut from Charles Bradley to J. Mascis, with a special kids' stage in the mornings. Other activities include organized star-gazing and an outdoor movie. Thursday–Saturday, July 24–26. \$65/3-day pass or \$20–\$35/day; camping additional. Tolt-MacDonald Park, Carnation. timberfest.com

31

Alan Fruzzetti Ph.D.: Families in Distress. DBT expert Alan Fruzzetti explores the effects of emotions on families and skills to build more positive relationships. 6:30 p.m. \$35. Adults. Town Hall, Seattle. townhallseattle.org
Ernest Ogby Punkweiler and the Fabulous Miraculous Time Intrusionator. Journey to another time and place. Through Jan. 5. Included with admission. Washington State History Museum, Tacoma. washingtonhistory.org

FRIDAY

4

Seafair Summer Fourth. Hula-hooping, pie-eating, sack-racing and other fun culminating in a humongous fireworks show. Noon–11 p.m. **FREE**. Gas Works Park and Lake Union Park, Seattle. seafair.com
Tacoma Freedom Fair. Kiddie fun plus air show, car show, bike show and fireworks show. **FREE**; donations requested. 10 a.m.–10:30 p.m. Ruston Way Waterfront, Tacoma. freedomfair.com

11

Day Out with Thomas. If your little train fan wants to meet the "real" Thomas, this is your chance; get tickets early. Friday–Sunday, July 11–13 and 18–20. \$23–\$24; under age 2 free. Northwest Railway Museum, Snoqualmie. trainmuseum.org
Kruckeberg Garden Tots. Stop by the garden for a plant activity, exploration and a craft project. 10 a.m.–1 p.m. Fridays through Sept. 26. \$7/family. Ages 2–6 with caregiver. Kruckeberg Botanic Garden, Shoreline. kruckeberg.org **ONGOING EVENT**

18

Northwest Chorale Movie Sing Along: The Sound of Music. Come ready to belt out the tunes you know and love; wear a costume if you like. 7 p.m. \$15 suggested donation. All ages. Lake City Presbyterian Church, Seattle. nwchorale.org
Fort Nisqually 19th Century Family Fun Night. Partake in music, dancing and games of the 1800s, and find out what the "Candy Cannon" is. 6–9 p.m. \$5–\$8; ages 4 and under free. Fort Nisqually Living History Museum, Tacoma. fortnisqually.org

25

Renton River Days. Enter the Rubber Ducky Derby (fee) on Sunday or watch the "Shake, Waddle 'n' Roll" parade Saturday. July 25–27. **FREE**; fee for some activities. Liberty Park and other venues, Renton. rentonriverdays.org
Marymoor Grand Prix. Billed as the fastest show on two wheels, this is the most exciting kind of bike race to watch. 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, July 25–26. \$5; ages 15 and under free. Marymoor Velodrome, Redmond. velodrome.org

SATURDAY

5

Lake Union Wooden Boat Festival. Free boat rides, music, pond boat sailing and toy boat building, in celebration of Seattle's maritime history. Friday–Sunday, July 4–6. **FREE**; fee for select activities. Center for Wooden Boats, Seattle. cwb.org
Wallingford Family Parade and Festival. The long-running neighborhood Seafair parade invites kids to participate, and everyone to party down afterward. 11 a.m. parade; noon–5 p.m. festival. **FREE**. N. 45th St., Meridian Park, Seattle. wallingford.org

12

Lakewood SummerFEST. Car show, safety fair, swimming lessons, Kidz Zone, movie and more. 11 a.m.–11:30 p.m. **FREE**. Fort Steilacoom Park, Lakewood. cityoflakewood.us
Milk Carton Derby. Build a milk carton watercraft and race it on Seattle's Green Lake, or just watch. Plus, kids' entertainment galore. Seattle. 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m. seafair.com

19

White Center Jubilee Days. This neighborhood festival includes a carnival and car show, and don't miss the parade Saturday, July 19 at 2:30 p.m. Festival is Saturday–Sunday, July 12–20. **FREE**; some activities have fee. Parade along 16th Ave. S.W., Seattle. jubileedays.org
High School Musical Jr. Sing along (silently) to the catchy songs of this musical based on the hit movie. Friday–Sunday, July 18–20. \$8. Ages 5 and up. Auburn Avenue Theater, Auburn. auburnwa.gov

26

Seafair Torchlight Run and Parade. The big daddy of Seafair parades boasts giant balloons, pirates and fun for all, preceded by a run (6:30 p.m.). 7:30 p.m. **FREE**; fee for run. Along Fourth Ave., Seattle. seafair.com
Ethnic Fest. Celebrate the cultures that make up the Pierce County community with music, dance, art and kids' activities. Saturday and Sunday, July 26–27. **FREE**. Wright Park, Tacoma. metroparkstacoma.org/ethnicfest



Explore, create
and connect at
The Seattle Public Library
this summer.

June 23 – Aug. 31
www.spl.org/zonein



Water babies

Our favorite swim gear for little tykes

By Kali Sakai

Grab your water wings and head for the pool — it's officially swimming season! We've put together a list of new and ingenious products to make swim time a win time for parents and kids.

STAY SAFE

Sea Squirts life jacket

Young swimmers can glide like orcas, dive like dolphins or be "found" like Nemo in these jackets inspired by marine life. Sporting a cool flexible fin on the back, this Coast Guard-approved neoprene gear makes water safety extra-fun. The jackets come in three sizes based on chest measurement and weight range.

\$47, swimways.com

Sun Smarties UV zip suit

Kids can't wait to get into the sun and water, but swimsuits and sunscreen take time to put on. Stretchy and lightweight, this suit features instant 50+ UPF protection and a zipper that runs from neck to belly (with leg snaps on sizes 24 months and under), so you can hit the pool or beach in no time!

\$40, onestepahead.com

O'Neill infant life jacket

Does the thought of your ambling toddler near a deep pool make you want to hide out indoors? This infant jacket with head-up positioner and grab-loop handle will ease your fears. Made of neoprene, this Coast Guard-approved jacket moves and stretches while keeping your kiddo safe. For infants 30 pounds or less.

\$60, isnorkel.com

Puddle Jumper life jacket

For the little swimmer who needs a life vest but might be swallowed up by a puffy jacket, try the Puddle Jumper. A cross between a life vest and water wings, it's less bulky and won't ride up. This Coast Guard-approved flotation device is designed for kids between 30 and 50 pounds.

\$20-\$50, amazon.com

LOOK SMART

Sun Smarties swim hat

Long locks are lovely, but they can get messy in the water. This festive swim hat keeps hair tangle-free and away from the face, and it provides UV scalp protection! Stretchy but not skintight, it has fully adjustable ties in the back.

\$10, onestepahead.com

Baby Sun Legz

Does a slathering of sunscreen turn your little crawler's legs into magnets for sand and dirt? Does a typical swimsuit not adequately cover bare knees? With these bright 50+ UV-protective accessories, baby's legs will be protected from sun and scrapes in fine style.

\$19, uvskinz.com

Aqua Sphere Seal swim goggles

With the sleekness of goggles and the visibility of a snorkel mask, these UVA- and UVB-protective wraparound goggles offer distortion-free clarity. The leak-resistant frames and hassle-free buckle system make Aqua Sphere's goggles a great pick for kids' pool-time shenanigans.

\$17-\$30, amazon.com



Sun Smarties rubber-frame sunglasses

You'll feel cooler than Corey Hart wearing his sunglasses at night when you give your little rock star these rubber-frame shades. Made to withstand the rigors of childhood, they also include shatter- and impact-resistant lenses. Infant, toddler and child sizes available.

\$10, onestepahead.com

HAVE FUN!

Baby Spring Float activity center

Here's a way to keep baby entertained — and contained — while in the pool. Using an activity-center model, this interactive float features a removable sun canopy plus a squeaker, a rattle, stacking rings, a teether and a squeeze star. On dry land, the whole shebang folds easily into its own carrying case.

\$40, swimways.com

Quot Ballo water bucket

Everyone knows you can't make a good sandcastle unless you have a little water and some wet sand. With this awesome spherical bucket, your amateur architects will slosh and spill no more! The easy-carry, easy-pour design is perfect for small hands.

\$20, hearthsong.com

Float Buddy pool toy

Sometimes you just need a pal. This floating, huggable, water-resistant friend provides constant comfort in or near the waves, great for soothing baby's fears and going where no conventional plush toy can. Dolphin, penguin, polar bear and shark buddies all feature antimicrobial, quick-drying outer fabric and stuffing.

\$25, hearthsong.com

Water Gear progressive back float

This ingenious flotation device enables parents to change the buoyancy level as kids get used to swimming on their own. The adjustable vest allows a full range of motion, helping young swimmers develop confidence while giving parents peace of mind.

\$12, watergear.com ■

Malia Jacobson is a nationally published health and parenting journalist and mom of three. Her latest book is Sleep Tight, Every Night.

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5-12

Beyond lemonade stands

What kids are selling this summer

By Nancy Schatz Alton

Today's mini-entrepreneurs are taking roadside commerce in new directions. Picture a pop-up thrift store run by the daughters of two business owners, or a dahlia stand that pays a family's way to Great Wolf Lodge.

Whether they set up shop in the front yard or peddle services in the neighborhood, children earn their own money in ways we probably never imagined as kids: tutoring piano, baking dog biscuits, making rubber-band jewelry.

As usual, parents are following the passions of their children this summer, and the modern world offers a wealth of new opportunities. We talked with a handful of young entrepreneurs (and their parents) to uncover how they began their lives in commerce. In the process, we also checked in with a few experts in the field of children and money, who added their voices to this primer on getting business done the kid way.

Catching and sparking ideas

Kids often enter the marketplace naturally. Neighbors asked Cyanna Sjerven of Ballard to walk their dog, but her younger brother Peter was more interested in the job. The thrill of earning his own money motivated Peter, now 10, to make fliers to find more dogs to walk — which he did, until he'd saved up \$400 to buy his first computer.

Ella Singer's passion was ignited by the cash she earned selling her toys at the annual Greenwood Garage Sale. When her mom suggested she set up a stand to sell her loom band jewelry and trinkets because her school friends were already ordering products from her, Ella, 9 and a half, decided to earn spending money by selling her designs every Monday in front of her family's Phinney Ridge home.

"I started 'working' when I was 5 years old, when I first made a pop-up thrift store in my driveway. My preschool friend Grace and I always wanted to be in business together. Our moms are great friends and both run their own businesses, so we probably got the idea from them," says Maya Sulkin, the now 12-year-old daughter of ParentMap publisher Alayne Sulkin. "Grace and I had clothes we did not like and thought we should just sell them to other kids. We sold mini-jean skirts, lemonade, headbands and T-shirts."



Thirteen-year-old Gavin Taylor of Danville, Calif., has a great time tutoring a younger neighbor boy in piano. "I've always loved working with kids. Parents say I am supergood with kids. I like piano, and I like to teach it," says Gavin, who started giving lessons at age 12.

Turning passions into products

KidBiz, a unique program in Buffalo, N.Y., teaches entrepreneurship to third- through sixth-graders. Andrea L. Lizak, associate director at SUNY Buffalo State's Small Business Development Center, helped start the program in 1996. After teaching a range of ages, she decided students at those grade levels were the perfect candidates for beginner business lessons. "They are outgoing, they are talkative, and they are learning about money and customer service at this point," Lizak says.

Participants come to class with their marketplace idea ready, from dolls to Buffalo-shaped cookies. The kids learn how much to charge, how to market their items (e.g., offer a free dog biscuit to every dog) and how to work with money. Then these small business owners set up shop on three different dates at the Elmwood-Bidwell Farmers Market. "Starting young gives them confidence," Lizak explains. "The biggest thing kids [need] to realize is they have to be having fun. It's all about having fun."

Sometimes passion for business is a family trait that kids grow into. "I think kids love to sell things, since it is one of the first things they experience in

life: We all go to stores and purchase items," says Monica Armstrong of Broadview, whose two sons, 8-year-old Sam and 7-year-old Drew, set up stores at an early age by procuring items from around the house (that didn't belong to them — a refrain echoed by other parents).

This entrepreneurial spirit is in her family's blood line, Armstrong adds. "Many of my dad's family members own and operate their own businesses. I myself grew up in a toy store that my parents created and a billiard store that my dad still runs . . . this family-owned business has only begun to leave an imprint on [my sons'] business minds."

During dahlia season, Sam and Drew (pictured at left) sell flowers at a stand they set up at the end of their driveway. During their first summer in business, the boys earned more than \$250, and last year, they earned enough to take the whole family to Great Wolf Lodge.

The intangible benefits

Starting a summer business is one way to help children grasp the idea that money comes from work, not from mom's and dad's pockets, says Rachel Cruze, who cowrote *Smart Money Smart Kids: Raising the Next Generation to Win with Money* with her own father.

Young entrepreneurs like their first taste of being grown-up, too. "It makes me feel more mature. I'm doing it myself, and it makes me feel like I'm doing something with my life," says piano tutor Gavin.

But it's really the joy of it that keeps them selling on summer days, says Julie Pond, whose three kids, ages 6-11, run an origami stand in Seattle's Meadowbrook neighborhood. "We like seeing the customers happy and talking with people. It's fun to be outside and in the sun, and everyone likes our new creations." ■

Freelance writer Nancy Schatz Alton is the coauthor of two holistic health care guides, The Healthy Back Book and The Healthy Knees Book; find her blog at withinthewords.com. Her oldest daughter secured her first long-term babysitting job while Nancy was researching this story.



Listen up

YA audiobooks the whole family will love

By Mia Lipman

If you're hopping into the car this summer for a road trip with a sullen (sorry, I mean thrilled!) teen, here's a great way to distract her from texts and Snapchat — crank up her favorite book on the stereo. If you follow our lead to these crossover novels, you might even find yourself enjoying it.

Wait . . . what's a crossover? In this era of blockbuster fiction, the book industry has a special word for young adult (YA) titles that appeal to a range of ages — including yours. "It's about being able to identify with a former version of yourself," says Cressida Hanson, children's buyer at Kepler's Books in Menlo Park, Calif. "Adults can remember themselves at that age."

So how do you spot a stellar crossover, other than the hordes of twentysomethings lined up to see the movie version? "The ones that are the most successful have a really solid protagonist — somebody that's very relatable but also a strong individual," explains Seira Wilson, children's and teens editor at Amazon Books.

And no matter how old we are, we never get tired of being read to. "Only an audiobook is going to make a three-hour drive fly by," says Wilson, who distracts her 7-year-old with *Pippi Longstocking* and *Ivy & Bean*.

In other words: The family that listens together survives prolonged periods in tight spaces together. Here are our top picks for taking story time on the road.



Escapist adventures

Fire up your imagination and press play

***The Here and Now*, Ann Brashares:**

By the author of *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, this postapocalyptic teen love story "looks at the idea of manipulating the future by traveling back in time — and if we should," Wilson says.

***Eragon*, Christopher Paolini:**

The first installment of the wildly popular *Inheritance* cycle is "a fun escapist read" and "a good all-ages

book," says Christy McDanold, owner of Secret Garden Books in Seattle. And if your family loves it, you're in luck: There are three more!

***Alanna: The First Adventure*, Tamora Pierce:** Another historical series, this time with a feisty heroine who conceals her gender to train as a knight — and is seriously awesome at it. McDanold calls *Alanna* "wonderfully feminist" and "a rip-roaring adventure."

***The Wee Free Men*, Terry Pratchett:**

Set in a fairyland in the British Isles, this charming series has "many variations on British and Scottish accents," says McDanold. "Very hard to do yourself, but [narrator Stephen Griggs] does them beautifully." Good for ages 10 and up, so preteen passengers can listen in as well.

Conversation starters

Smart, fun and full of teachable moments

***Wonder*, R.J. Palacio:** When

August Pullman switches schools for fifth grade, he has to deal with all the usual challenges of being the new kid — plus his severe facial

anomalies. The best-selling story of how August conquers his fears will melt your family's hearts.

***Code Name Verity*, Elizabeth**

Wein: If you or your teen loved *The Book Thief*, try this historical novel set in Nazi-occupied France. When a British spy plane crashes, one of the young women on board is arrested by the Gestapo. With a pair of narrators sporting English and German accents, the audio is "a beautiful performance piece," Hanson says.

***Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer*, John**

Grisham: Penned by the superstar author of *The Firm* and other legal mysteries, this clever series is "layered with information about civic issues — when the truth matters and when it doesn't — discussed in a good, constructive way," McDanold says.

Dead End in Norvelt, Jack Gantos: This Newbery Medal winner tells the story of “a kid with ADHD and his father raising each other” in one of the real-life towns built from scratch by Eleanor Roosevelt in the '60s, says McDanold, who praises the “hilarious audio.”

Hollywood blockbusters

Making the leap from page to screen

Divergent, Veronica Roth: Set in a dystopian Chicago, this heart-pounding series imagines society divided into five factions — and a group of teens who don't fit into any of them. The movie was released in March, so your kids have seen it at least a dozen times by now.

The Fault in Our Stars, John Green: Chronicling the roller-coaster romance of two teens with cancer, this rock-star writer's latest novel (preceded by his other smash hit, *Looking for Alaska*, also recommended) went cinematic in June.

Harry Potter 1–7, J. K. Rowling: “Obviously, *Harry Potter*,” Hanson says of the beloved series that's been turned into eight popular films. British actor Jim Dale narrates all the audiobooks, and Hanson raves that “he's exceptional.”

The Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins: Ah, the arrow shot heard 'round the world. Pretend you have a pixie cut and a taste for blood, and join your teen in a sci-fi fight to the death. Movies

of the first two books came out in 2012 and 2013; the third is slated for this fall.

Perennial classics

Tried-and-true family favorites

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee: This celebrated exploration of human nature has been captivating young readers for 50-plus years, and Wilson loves Sissy Spacek's “awesome” audiobook rendition.

D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths, Ingri and Edgar d'Aulaire: Turn your vacation into a historical event with these canonical tales read by a swoon-worthy cast: Paul Newman, Sidney Poitier, Kathleen Turner and Matthew Broderick.

The Hobbit, J.R.R. Tolkien: Trust us when we tell you to skip the snoozy film and listen to the book instead. Narrated by Rob Inglis, formerly of the Royal Shakespeare Company, the audio has “a decidedly British accent,” McDanold says.

The Giver, Lois Lowry: Before Roth or Collins, there was Lowry. This Newbery winner by a master children's author envisions a utopian society whose future rests in a 12-year-old's hands. Yes, you called it — the movie comes out in August. ■

Mia Lipman, ParentMap's Ages & Stages editor, was born in New England, came of age in California and moved to Seattle to grow up. Learn more about her at dotdodashes.com.

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Someone you should know

By Tiffany Doerr Guerzon • Photograph by Will Austin

Everyone in South King County knows the little restaurant in Black Diamond called Mama's Steak and Pasta — or, as locals know it, Mama Passarelli's. Since 2004, Mama (**GINGER PASSARELLI**) has been serving up a menu of home-cooked meals. But not everyone knows Mama's alter ego: The Soup Lady. Her nonprofit is dedicated to serving police, firefighters and other first responders at the scenes of crimes and natural disasters. At the recent landslide in Oso, Wash., The Soup Ladies (soupladies.org) put out more than 6,600 hot meals for all the first responders.

How did The Soup Ladies get started?

One of the kids at my church was a volunteer with search and rescue, and eight or nine years ago, he asked me if we could bring food out. So we did. Then one of the deputies started walking us through the process of how to get our incident command training, how to conduct ourselves on a scene. We began getting requests to come out to more critical scenes. When there is an active scene, or an investigation, every first responder has a job to do. They can't afford to send a vital person out for burgers or pizza. We are also at all the scenes of line-of-duty deaths for police and firefighters.

What gave you the idea to make feeding first responders your calling?

All I know is that when I was down in Mississippi after Katrina, the first responders ... they were kind of stuck out there. Whatever they stuffed in their pockets, granola bars, power bars, or MREs in the vehicles, that's what they lived on. And that just felt wrong to me. I'm just a little speck on this planet, when you think about it. We're not some big organization that can cook a bazillion meals a day. We only put out about 500 or 600 meals a day. But they were home-cooked and they were made with love. They do jobs I would never want to do, but I can cook. Everyone has a gift.

I heard you have a pretty awesome mobile kitchen in a trailer.

Yes, it has 12 burners and two full-size ovens. We can put out 600 meals every 90 minutes if we are serving soup. We only take the mobile kitchen to huge incidents, extended scenes. Usually we cook here at my restaurant and then deliver. We have boxes that hold the food hot for 8–10 hours; 99.99 percent of our contributions are at small incidents, and 85 percent are just a drop-off, short term, 24–72 hours. There are exceptions: Oso was 16 days.

How many Soup Ladies do you have in the organization?



Only 40. Each and every volunteer is certified through FEMA in incident command. They have to pass a minimum of two tests plus a background check through the King County Sheriff's department. They are then issued credentials through the state as emergency workers.

What kind of training do you have?

I personally am a chaplain for Black Diamond Police and Mountain View Fire, Washington State

Patrol, and Fish and Wildlife. I have CISM [critical incident stress management] training. We do debriefs. Even if we're just feeding the people who are out there, we need to be debriefed.

What do you mean by debriefing?

Each day when we are done, the team gets together and talks about our day. I am not a professional, I just tell people what they can expect, and give them tools and resources. I tell them they can expect to feel sadness, anger and even guilt.

Who debriefs Mama?

I'm glad you asked that. I have someone that I call and I unload — then I'm OK. I never knew how important that was until there was one incident — a car that went into the Green River with two kids in it. And that little guy in the car was the same age as my oldest granddaughter. About three days later, I was in the kitchen and I couldn't stop crying. I called a chaplain and he said, "Oh, that's critical incident stress." That's when I knew I needed to get some training in how to help my people.

Do you only serve soup?

No, we also make chicken pot pie, stroganoff, shepherd's pie, anything high-carb and high-protein.

What is your long-term goal for The Soup Ladies?

I want our organization to serve with excellence. I don't want to ever lose the heart of what we're doing. We're writing an operations and procedures manual right now on how to do what we do. I can see this in every community, people taking care of their own first responders. And doing it right. Why should I fly to Galveston or Oklahoma? Someday it will be bigger; we'll teach other people to do what we're doing.

What's your favorite soup?

Prime rib and horseradish. It's on my menu here at the restaurant. ■

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