

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020



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magazine

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Table listing magazine staff: Editor-in-Chief, Managing Editor, Senior Editor, Art Director, Writers, Copy Editors, Designers, Photographers, Contest Editor.

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Contents

COLUMNS

- 4 Letter from the Editor: Simply Speaking
5 Letter from the Board: It's Not Over Yet
6 Out and About
8 Ask the Expert: Teaching Your Kids to Read
10 Dadlands: Sunlight Through the Clouds
12 Books For Kids: Black Lives Matter
13 Books For Parents: What Black Women Have to Say About Their Experience With Kids
14 From Womb to World: Second Time Joy: Taking a Chance After Postpartum Depression
32 I ♥ Mom: Crayons

FEATURES

- 16 Defining What's Important
20 Kindness Carries Us Through
24 Resilience in the Face of Uncertainty

GGMG

- 4 HOUSEKEEPING
11 VILLAGE: COMMUNITY OUTREACH & CONTEST
15 NEW ARRIVALS
27 NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS
28 DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: COMMITTING TO ANTI-RACIST PARENTING AND TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT RACISM
30 DIVERSITY & INCLUSION: THE ENDURING EFFECTS OF BLACK ACTIVISM
31 VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT, MEMBER SUPPORT, PARTNERSHIPS

# Letter from the Editor: Simply Speaking

By Sonya Abrams



In a former life, Sonya was an event photographer, but in COVID-19 times she's a hiking, home-schooling, hot mess of a mom to three kids, a cat, and a dog.

**M**y dad, a clinical psychologist, once told me I have a high stimulation threshold. I need a lot of excitement and activity to feel satisfied or engaged, and the busy, cluttered, noisy life I've led reflects that. So the pandemic-spurred slowdown of, well, everything, has not been easy. While some others have more elegantly embraced the simplicity of quiet evenings and peaceful family time reading books or

concepts that shape and guide us during tough times: resilience, kindness, family values, among others. On page 16, Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss encourages us to think about family mission statements and mantras as a tool for clarifying values and fostering family connections. On page 20, Veronica Reilly-Granich flips the typical fear-based perspective of the COVID-19 pandemic by sharing ways in which the virus is spawning acts of simple kindness between people, and offering ideas for how we can help ensure that kindness remains paramount. Clare Deignan, on page 24, identifies the key components of resilience, sharing the benefits of incorporating mindfulness, gratitude, and self-care into our daily lives.

Focusing on basic values can also lay the foundation for stronger allyship and activism needed in the Black Lives Matters movement. In this issue, GGMG's Diversity & Inclusion Committee presents articles on anti-racist parenting and Black

**"By nurturing basic values and harnessing the tools within ourselves, we can have the courage to march forward, step by step, forging new paths."**

reconnecting over board games, I'm a live wire without an outlet. I find myself often restless, a nervous energy buzzing through me. It can be a challenge to channel that into healthy behaviors.

Lately, though, I've found myself taking long hikes, usually alone, a deliberate strategy to simplify, focus, and challenge myself. I always bring my phone loaded with podcasts and music, but, surprisingly, I haven't been listening. Instead, I have found myself paying attention to the sounds of nature around me—leaves crunching, birds chirping, tree branches groaning with the wind—and letting my mind slow down, space that allows my thoughts to coalesce around basic questions and observations about my life: How can I be a better parent? What do I really want out of life now? Which behaviors are holding me back, and which are propelling me?

In the midst of so much global chaos, worry, and uncertainty, we are stripping this issue down to basic

activism, and our Books for Kids section is packed with offerings to help instill anti-racist attitudes early in life and get some difficult but necessary conversations started.

Amid the surging COVID-19 cases and all the unknowns we're struggling with as we contemplate the future and the massive structural challenges facing our nation, there is comfort in knowing we can foster positive behaviors to face the future on stable footing. By nurturing basic values and harnessing the tools within ourselves, we can have the courage to march forward, step by step, forging new paths.

# Letter from the Board: It's Not Over Yet

By Erin Cahill

**2**020 has been rough. Does anyone even remember that we started the year off with President Trump's impeachment, Brexit, Democratic debates, and Kobe Bryant's death? This has been followed by the coronavirus pandemic, shelter in place, an economic recession, mass unemployment, business shutdowns, the killings of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd, among others, social unrest, and protests on police brutality heard around the world, the resurgence of Black Lives Matter into public consciousness, the Confederate flag and other statues being taken down, and major Supreme Court cases, including surprising rulings for DACA and LGBTQ. The events this year defied prediction. Who knows what the rest of the year has in store for us?

Luckily, I've discovered a few silver linings in the last few months. I know that we are experiencing different stresses, frustrations, and anger right now, but hopefully you have found some positives this year as well.

**"I honestly don't know how I will go back to the packed, never-ending weekends we used to have."**

**Family time.** Being home all the time has its challenges, but I now get to spend my five-minute breaks playing with my son or doing a silly dance with my daughter. I was able to watch my son take his first steps, which I would have missed if I were at my office.

**Actually talking to people.** Friends with whom I normally only text or see once a year I now have video calls with and "see" with much more frequency. Family members I only used to see at family gatherings every few years I now talk to monthly. This year has taught me the importance of really connecting with loved ones—not just sending a text or an email.

**A chance to slow down and enjoy everything around us.** With the kids' camps closed, museums shut down, and no birthday parties, we have had to find ways to entertain our children. I spend so much time at the park, walking on trails, playing in our garage (which has now become the kids' playroom/gym)—things that are free and easily accessible. I honestly don't know how I will go back to the packed, never-ending weekends we used to have. I like this slower pace.

**Helping one another.** I have seen outpourings of people making contributions to help others, volunteering in new ways, and marching in protests in the midst of a pandemic. We as a society are banding together to help not just our friends and family but help those we don't know and speak up. The lockdown has created stress and anger, but people are funneling that into ways to actually effect change in the world, which is utterly amazing to me.

I would love to hear from you on your own silver linings or other thoughts on 2020. Please email me at [board@ggmg.org](mailto:board@ggmg.org). The only way we will continue to grow and effect change is to listen to one another and engage in dialogue. I look forward to hearing from you.



Erin is both a mom—to Alyx, Jack and two orange tabbies—and a partner in a large accounting firm. Her husband and co-parent, Niall, helps to make this all possible. When she has free time, of which lately there is not a lot, she enjoys hiking, running, trying the latest restaurants, and, of course, wine.

## Housekeeping

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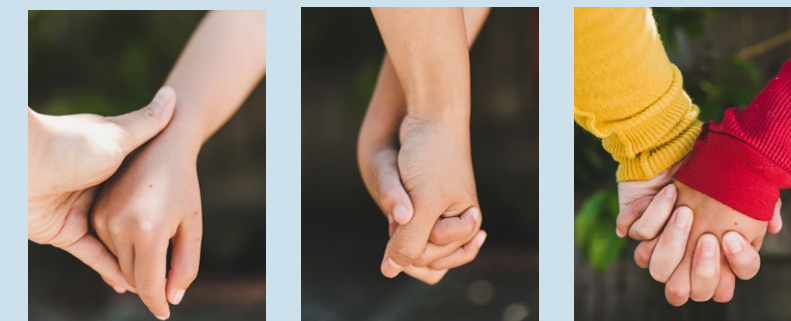
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**THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY:** Monitoring our resident wild hedgehog; Family hikes in Tilden park, starting an MFA in creative writing, taking a walk each morning; Planning fun, upbeat and creative ways to welcome new Kinder families into my daughter's school as the official "Welcome Committee."

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:** Nurture ourselves, our children, our partners, and our community; create an environment of support, information sharing, and connection; learn, teach, create, have fun, and provide balance in our lives and in the lives of our growing families.

## Cover Outtakes



**Only one shot can make it to the cover. Here are some of our other favorites.**

Cover photo by Mini Anna Photography  
Cover model: Bradley (5)



# Outdoor Places to Socially Distance

By Christine Chen



## Hellman's Hollow Picnic Area in Golden Gate Park

Surprisingly uncrowded and BBQs are allowed again. A wonderful place to picnic, launch rocket stompers, or blow bubbles. A bubble guy has been regularly visiting to spread some joy to kids and adults.

## The Concourse at Golden Gate Park

A great place to learn how to ride a bike, or just ride a bike and see what is left of the statues in the park.

## Twin Peaks

The road to Twin Peaks is currently closed to cars, so take advantage of the opportunity for great views without the vehicle exhaust by walking or biking up.

## Golden Gate Bridge

Take advantage of the lack of tourists and appreciate the beauty of the city we live in by walking or biking across without crowds.

## Land's End Trail Hike

Enjoy SF highlights such as the rock labyrinth, Mile Rock Lighthouse, the abandoned Octagon House, Sutro Baths, and the USS San Francisco Memorial.

## Main Post in the Presidio

A great picnic spot or place to use a scooter on the sidewalk.

## Santa Margarita Island Preserve in San Rafael

Great for some sun and a walk with kids to spot various birds and wildlife among the marsh.

## McInnis Golf Center in San Rafael

Mini golf outside is kid-friendly and free for those under 4 with a paying adult.



# Online Classes

By Christine Chen

For parents frustrated with the lack of content in distance learning programs, **Wide Open School**, powered by Common Sense Media, has a comprehensive offering of all subjects for all ages and can be used as a guideline for distance learning or as a supplement for what your school already offers.

[wideopenschool.org](http://wideopenschool.org)

**Varsity Tutors**, which offers free virtual summer camps, also offers a variety of free and paid classes for all ages once school starts.

[varsitytutors.com/virtual-summer-camps](http://varsitytutors.com/virtual-summer-camps)

**The Khan Academy** is a nonprofit organization that offers free online courses for kids from preschool to high school. For younger kids, the Khan Academy Kids app has a cartoon bear named Kodi to guide them through core early-learning subjects with a focus on creativity and social emotional skills.

[learn.khanacademy.org/khan-academy-kids](http://learn.khanacademy.org/khan-academy-kids)

While not free, **Scholastic's Learn at Home Program** offers lesson programs from pre-K to middle school for \$5.99/month. Lessons draw from Scholastic's vast library of books and start with movement challenges to help kids get ready to learn through read-alongs, writing prompts, drawing, and critical-thinking practice.

[learnathome.scholastic.com](http://learnathome.scholastic.com)

**Go Noodle's** movement and mindfulness videos are used by millions of educators nationwide and are a personal favorite of my kids as a result of their fun blend of popular music, dance, exercise, and goofiness. They also offer free weekly roundups of kid-friendly activities on their site, including some that feature special guests like the Harlem Globetrotters, who will teach kids about balance and coordination.

[gonoodle.com](http://gonoodle.com)



Christine is mother to a 6- and 4-year-old who loved being able to use the iPad on a regular basis as a result of distance learning. Sadly, both are better Zoomers than she is.

# Teaching Your Kids to Read

With Sara Rich



*Sara is a literacy expert and past principal whose company, Just Right Reader, sends Pre-K to 2nd graders books at their reading level to read and then send them back for more. She loves teaching kids to read and with the best teachers she knows launched virtual reading and writing camps.*

## When should I start teaching my child to read?

You are already teaching your child to read! By telling stories together, talking about the world around you, reading books together, singing and playing with words and letters, you are teaching your child about the rich world of literacy, teaching them why reading is important, and how to think deeply about ideas. All of these activities lay the foundation for conventional reading skills. The best way to know when kids are ready for more knowledge about letters, sounds, and decoding is to follow their lead. Model your own excitement and wonder around these topics and kids will follow suit. Make it playful and fun!

## What are the first steps to teaching a child to read?

The first step in learning to read is developing a love for books. When a child values books and is well acquainted with a book's power to tell stories and teach information, his interest in learning to read will grow from there.

To this end, when you're reading with your child, it's important to make reading a special time filled with talking and thinking together. As you read, pause to think aloud, wonder, discuss, reread, share your thoughts, and hear your child's ideas. This helps him see books as meaningful in a myriad of ways; he can learn new information, connect with the characters, take away a life lesson, learn about someone new, discover new rhymes, and so much more in books. The more you model and share this thinking work with your child now, the better you set him up for knowing how to think deeply when he is reading on his own.

## How can I support my beginning reader?

Start by leveraging those well-worn favorites, those books you know by heart because your child has asked you to read them over and over and over again. As you read these books, invite your child to tell the parts of the text she knows. This is a powerful way to support her oral language development. You might be surprised to learn that she sounds as if she's actually reading the book. She is! For new readers, memorizing books and reading by heart is reading!

Familiar books show a child how letters and words work. Suggest that your child "read" any repeated phrases or labels that appear in the book and show her how to point at each word as she says the phrase. This simple task teaches a child that each spoken word matches a written word.

Familiar texts are also a great place to play with hearing sounds in words and finding the letters that match. For example, if there is a cat in the picture, say the word and listen for the first sound, then hunt for a word that begins with that letter on the page. There might even be some words that appear frequently (e.g. the, and, I) that a child can find on each page. Again, it's important to make this work joyful and fun.

Another playful way to engage a child with books is to make them together. You might print some photos from a recent activity and work together to write a simple text your child could read. For example the book could say, "We played on the swings. We played on the slide. We played on the see-saw." You can also do this with topics your child loves or drawings your child created. There is nothing more fun to read than a book you've written yourself. Reading and writing go hand in



Photo by cottonbro from Pexels

hand and doing one skill can strengthen the other.

## How do I select books to read?

Start with what your kid loves! Find books on topics your child is passionate about and spend time with beloved and familiar story books. Provide informational texts as well as stories. In addition, books that play with words and sounds (e.g. rhyming books, poems, nursery rhymes) can improve the ability to hear how letters and sounds work. Books with simple patterns are also a great entry point for young readers; for example, Eric Carle's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* follows a simple sing-song pattern. Highly engaging texts such as Mo Willems' *Elephant and Piggie* are often favorites of early readers.

## Are there additional learning tools that can help?

The most important way for a young child to engage with books is to have the real things in their hands, however, a few tangible and easy-to-purchase items can go a long way in helping a child engage with letters and reading. Magnetic

**“When a child values books and is well acquainted with a book's power to tell stories and teach information, his interest in learning to read will grow from there.”**

letters allow a child to play with building and breaking apart words. A small whiteboard provides an easy place to practice writing letters and words in a low-risk way. If it doesn't look correct, just erase it and try again. Another powerful tool is an alphabet chart, which provides an anchor for a child to learn letters.

## How do you encourage a child who's resistant to reading on his own?

I recommend engaging in a nonjudgmental conversation about the child's nervousness about reading. Ask a few simple questions such as, "What are you worried about? What feels hard about reading? Which books feel tricky and why?"



Once you know what he is worried about, you can tailor your response. It may just be that taking a risk to read words feels tricky, in which case you can do more of the reading. A young child often enters a phase where he knows that "real reading" requires decoding the words on the page, a skill he hasn't yet mastered. In that case, reassure him that reading is a process: Over time he will learn to read all of the words, but for now he can read the words he knows, tell the stories and "read" the pictures as he works his way into conventional decoding. It can also help to make sure he has some books in which he can successfully read all the words.

## Is there media other than books that might encourage reluctant readers?

Absolutely! When a child is nervous about reading, tapping into content she loves is critical, providing an authentic purpose for her to read. Much of the comprehension skills kids need to be excellent readers are the same skills you need to think deeply about a movie or a TV show. Model stopping and thinking, asking and answering questions and wondering together in these texts as well.

You might also find that following her passion leads to books she wants to read. If your child loves Roblox or LEGOs or Elsa, look for texts that connect to those topics. Finally, you might start with a topic your child is interested in, for example, zebras, and find a series of short videos on that topic. This can lead her to want to learn more and provide an avenue to search for books on that topic. She might even want to write her own book, once she becomes an expert.

# Sunlight Through the Clouds

By Bolívar Puyol

“Ready, 3, 2, 1, PLAY!” My first grader starts us off. Recently my 7-year-old daughter, my 13-year-old son, and I became avid viewers of the Netflix dark comedy “A Series of Unfortunate Events” based on Lemony Snicket’s books. We watched the show weekly with my brother, our regular remote quarantine guest, who is also my kids’ favorite uncle. It was an enjoyable way to spend time together over popcorn, Cheetos, and rocky road until we could no longer stomach the grim storyline. With so much death, despair, and agonizing drama all around us in the real world, piling on the darkness with the relentless string of tragedies that continually befall the Baudelaire children seemed not only unnecessary but downright masochistic.

In the best of times, it is challenging to manage the stimuli and influences that my children are exposed to, just as I struggle to give them a balanced diet, notwithstanding the occasional Cheetos contamination. Always candid with my kids about my perspectives on life and our world, I actively engage them in conversation about the darker aspects of human history and the recent events highlighting our society’s inequities. One of the most daunting challenges I regularly face and fail at—besides wrestling with my daughter’s voluminous hair—is forging age-appropriate messages that educate without overwhelming, motivate as opposed to

**“The [nature] scene beat anything we have watched on Netflix and reminded us that life, beauty, and hope continue amidst tragedy.”**

inducing fear, and instill optimism without reliance on rose-colored glasses. As a human being, American, person of color, father trying to make sense of our world, I try to construct a curriculum of teaching moments and life lessons for my children during the struggles of the Black Lives Matter movement and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. I try to shield my kids from much of my indignation and cynicism but recognize that to completely conceal their dad’s concerns amid the often hard realities of our world ultimately shortchanges them.

As a necessary complement, I teach my children to explore and appreciate the rich beauty that exists in both our natural world and our diverse human cultures. As if to offer one such ray of light and a metaphor for our lives, current conditions



recently provided my children and me with a remarkable silver lining. I was furloughed during the height of San Francisco’s shelter-in-place order, giving me a partial reprieve from my juggling act as a full-time homemaker, homeschooler, and architect. I was anxious but assured my children that we would be fine, reminding them of all that we had to be grateful for.

Having the good fortune to live in the Presidio, San Francisco’s own national park, we took advantage of my reduced obligations to survey our surroundings, going on daily walks through the forest and spending time on the beach. My children learned to identify the many bird species that flew circles around us. They brought home lizards and insects. We ate blackberries right off the bushes, and had front-row seats to the spectacle of a red-tailed hawk swooping down to steal a gopher from a frustrated great blue heron.

One evening around sunset, standing on a bluff above the beach, we spotted a humpback whale spouting offshore as it swam toward the Farallones. We watched it repeat its routine each evening, marveling at the majesty of such a magnificent creature. Then, one morning, we discovered it had washed ashore. We were devastated, but my children nevertheless were enthralled by the giant, walking around its massive carcass, studying it, gazing into its lifeless eye. I felt a deep sense of melancholy even as I appreciated the rare opportunity to look at the leviathan up close.

Seemingly on cue, a pod of dolphins slid out of the waves in front of us, their smooth backs and dorsal fins glistening in the sun. Minutes later they were joined by a California gray whale, similarly plying the waters just past the breakers. The scene beat

anything we have watched on Netflix and reminded us that life, beauty, and hope continue amidst tragedy.

What meaning do my children and I assign to moments like these? How do we process these difficult times and what lessons do I teach my children? I don’t pretend to have the right answers, nor am I disingenuous before my children about that. I simply engage with my kids as honestly, sensitively, and lovingly as I can. We are finding our way together. Pass the Cheetos.

*Bolívar is a single dad, the son of hard-working immigrants from México and Ecuador, and an architect, backpacker, and lousy pigtail stylist. He lives in San Francisco with his 7-year-old daughter, his 13-year-old son, and, occasionally during pandemics, his college-age son.*

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### Where to donate to those in need

As you are well aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has swiftly caused immense suffering—from illness, deaths in the family, unemployment, and poverty to name a few. There are so many organizations to give to in times like these. We would like to offer some guidance on where to give—for those who are able and trying to decide where to help. This list is by no means exhaustive—it contains local organizations that we frequently partner with whose clients are disproportionately impacted by this crisis.

#### Help A Mother Out (HAMO)

HAMO is focused on distributing diapers, and they report that diaper demand has already surged 500% since the crisis started.

Donate financially here: <https://www.helpamotherout.org/donate>

#### Homeless Prenatal Program (HPP)

HPP is distributing food, formula, diapers, wipes, hygiene kits, cleaning products, child activity sets, and more to their clients.

Donate financially here: <https://bit.ly/2wRPOE6>

#### San Francisco-Marin Food Bank

The Food Bank has launched pop-up pantries as well as home delivery for low-income seniors who are sheltering in place. Here’s how you can help:

- Donate financially here: [www.sfmfoodbank.org](http://www.sfmfoodbank.org)
- Volunteer to deliver groceries. Sign up here: [www.sfmfoodbank.org/volunteer/home-delivered-groceries-2/](http://www.sfmfoodbank.org/volunteer/home-delivered-groceries-2/)

#### SFSmiles

SFSmiles is collecting and distributing new and/or gently used and clean warm blankets, towels, diapers, formula, strollers, car seats, clothes (infant-adult, any size any sex), bassinets, and laundry soap.

Check their Facebook page for location and days and times when they are accepting donations. [www.facebook.com/sfsmiles](http://www.facebook.com/sfsmiles)



## CONTEST

### Musical Prodigy

Could you or your child be a musical prodigy? With over 700 students and nearly 40 teachers and tutors, Inspire Music Center is one of the largest music studios in the Bay Area. Their diverse faculty brings a wide variety of musical experience, offering instruction in many different instruments and musical styles. In addition to private lessons and tutoring, they offer instrument rentals, repairs, and accessories as well as practice room rentals and group classes.

Currently, Inspire Music is offering its full regular slate of classes to its students via Zoom. Inspire will deliver instruments for rental if necessary. When you or your child resume in-person lessons, their convenient location at 1241 Taraval Street in San Francisco is right across the street from the Parkside Public Library, with plenty of street parking.

This prize includes the initial registration fee for a new adult or child music student, plus four regular rate lessons of 30 minutes each. This prize has a \$170 value.

Enter the contest by emailing [contest@gmg.org](mailto:contest@gmg.org) with “Prodigy” in the subject line by August 31, 2020. Winners are selected at random. The winner will arrange directly with Inspire Music which instrument will be studied, and with which teacher on which day and time. Classes are offered 7 days a week.

Thank you to our generous prize donor, Inspire Music Center. Find them at [www.inspiremusiccenter.com](http://www.inspiremusiccenter.com) for more information.

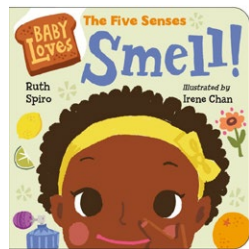
Congratulations to the winner of the Mirror, Mirror on the Wall prize, Addie Bjornsen! She won a \$300 gift card towards a non-surgical service of her choice at Pacific Heights Plastic Surgery.



# Black Lives Matter

By Laure Latham

Diversity in life starts with experiencing diversity in the world—including books. It's important for kids to have access to books with protagonists of various backgrounds, genders, skin colors, religions, etc. Black Lives Matter has shown us that we can do better in our lives. Your little ones will love these tales of daring heroes, brave kids, and great friendships featuring Black main characters as positive role models who inspire and empower.



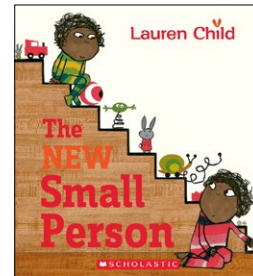
## Baby Loves the Five Senses: Smell! (Baby Loves Science)

Written by Ruth Spiro, illustrated by Irene Chan

Simple yet scientifically accurate, this book invites babies and toddlers to explore the science

of smell with illustrated examples. Author Ruth Spiro frequently speaks at STEM events across the country and knows how to make science accessible to all ages.

**Ages: 0 to 3 years**

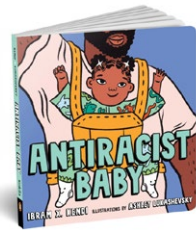


## The New Small Person

Written and illustrated by Lauren Child

The arrival of a young sibling is always a big change in a family, particularly for the older child. Here an older brother struggles with the arrival of a younger brother, but with patience come great rewards. Dealing with challenging issues

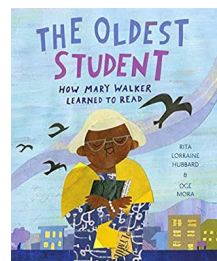
such as child insecurity and family dynamics in a lighthearted way, this book is perfect to help any family welcome a new sibling. **Ages: 3 to 6 years**



## Antiracist Baby

Written by Ibram X. Kendi, illustrated by Ashley Lukashevsky

How do you explain basic human rights to a young child? How do you show them to recognize and fight injustice? This unique board book tackles a tricky topic with lovely illustrations and eloquent words. Explaining what antiracism is, the book shows examples of racist statements and why they are wrong. More a conversation starter than a bedtime read, parents can use this book as inspiration in their daily lives and when their child is old enough to comprehend concepts and address issues in honest words. **Ages: 3 to 6 years**



## The Oldest Student: How Mary Walker Learned to Read

Written by Rita Lorraine Hubbard, illustrated by Oge Mora

Inspired by the true life of Mary Walker, this book follows the life of a woman who was born into slavery

in 1848, was freed, lived through the Civil War and the two World Wars, and who, at age 116, decided that she wanted to learn how to read. School-age kids will marvel at this old great-grandma who joins a reading class after a life of illiteracy, studies, becomes a writer, and shows a profound sense of focus and drive. Walker's life shows that it's never too late to learn. **Ages: 3 to 8 years**



## Black Brother, Black Brother

Written by Jewell Parker Rhodes

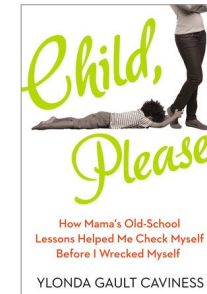
Two mixed race brothers attend the same private school—one has a darker complexion, while the other is light skinned. While one brother is popular, the other known as “the Black brother,” is taunted by other kids, bullied, and generally discriminated against. After the

Black brother is expelled for something he didn't do, he decides to take on the school's “king” at his favorite sport—fencing. Far from your typical sports book, this story will teach a lot to teens about perspective and white privilege, the power of community and accepting your identity. Highly recommended even to reluctant readers. **Ages: 8 to 12 years**

Laure is the author of the mommy blog *Frog Mom* ([frogmom.com](http://frogmom.com)), as well as the book *Best Hikes with Kids: San Francisco Bay Area*. She writes for several parenting websites and lives in London, where she peppers adventures with her husband and two daughters with compulsory cream tea stops. You can find her on social media @frogmomblog.

# What Black Women Have to Say About Their Experience With Kids

By Gail Cornwall

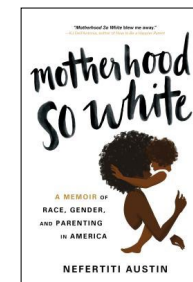


## Child, Please: How Mama's Old-School Lessons Helped Me Check Myself Before I Wrecked Myself

Like many modern mothers, Ylonda Gault Caviness started out with a “self-flagellating, all-consuming obsession to raise a child in a fashion akin to a recipe-perfect soufflé.” But then she

realized something. Her own mother's dismissive response to children's entreaties, “Child, please,” had been all about boundaries: “Without saying so, she let us know we kids could sometimes rock her world, but we couldn't be her world.” That “not studying you” method isn't just acceptable, Gault Caviness decides, it's better at fostering independence and self-reliance in children and emotional wholeness in mothers. *Child, Please* is a memoir of the backstory and unfolding of this epiphany. In it, Gault Caviness transitions with ease from the heavy and potentially inflammatory to the trivial and universally relatable. Ease, in fact—an assertive ease—is what characterizes her tone. She's the straight shooter you can trust to be as loving and open as she is tough and opinionated. Race is always relevant in *Child, Please*, and yet, in some ways also completely irrelevant: “Somewhere in my idyllic view of life with a nice family, a nice life, I pictured myself being happy. At the very least approaching a modicum of contentment. Instead, most every day I feel like I'm not enough of this, too much of that.”

I have to admit I developed a friend-crush on Gault Caviness as she described the condition of feeling not “like a mother so much as ... the sum of my to-do list.” I especially appreciated the “ultimate Me Time fix” she offered up: “When various and sundry people get in your ear—kids, spouses, coworkers, family—about their needs and wants, pay them no mind. Repeat as needed.”



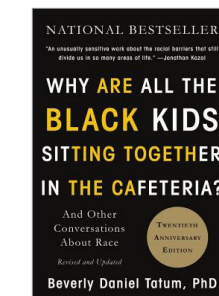
## Motherhood So White

Nefertiti Austin, a college instructor and writer, got tired of “white privilege's erasure of Black parenting perspectives and insistence that the word mother automatically meant white.” In *Motherhood So White*, she tries to produce the book she could never find

as a “Black mother liv[ing] in a different America from white mothers,” especially as one addressing “how to handle ... becoming a single mother in a country where the term single mother was code for Black, welfare mother” and normalizing an adoption journey when “the available literature excluded us.”

There's an admirable matter-of-fact sparseness to the memoir side of *Motherhood So White*. The bulk of the book, though, reads less like a personal story and more like a manifesto-cum-cultural anthropology lesson on topics such as “Black divorce,” “Black adoption,” and what it's like to tell your child some people will always assume the worst of them. Though *Motherhood So White* has a wealth of information from which white mothers can learn, it's not written for me. Austin's edge is not dulled, her punches not pulled, to make white people more comfortable.

I am smack at the center of her target message, however: Stop acting like motherhood is white, she says. It isn't now. It never has been. Motherhood's much stronger that way and has the potential to be strengthened further by white people like me realizing Black mothers have plenty to offer.



## Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race

Clinical psychologist Beverly Daniel Tatum, who's also president emerita of Spelman College, writes: “I have seen the effectiveness of talking about racism and teaching others to do the same.

I have seen the impact on individual students who years later have written to me about the changes they are making in their workplaces... I have witnessed the parents who begin to use their own spheres of influence within the community to address racism and other forms of oppression in their own environments. I remain hopeful.” In an updated version of *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?*, Tatum shares information, perspective, and optimism in an accessible, engaging way. Her pacing and tone make uncomfortable topics feel manageable, even appealing. Thinking and talking about race is work, but it's essential work, and Tatum makes it as pleasurable as it can be.

Gail works as a mom and writer in San Francisco. Read about parenting and education from the perspective of a former teacher and lawyer at [gailcornwall.com/articles](http://gailcornwall.com/articles) or by finding her on Facebook and Twitter

## Second Time Joy: Taking a Chance After Postpartum Depression

By Jessica Perry

**W**hen I had my first daughter, I was the only one of my close, local friends to have a baby. I had zero experience with infants and went through the pregnancy feeling a bit of trepidation, but I was mostly okay. The birth itself was great and my daughter was a beautiful, snuggly, and delightful newborn. But after three weeks of intense hormonal changes and sleep deprivation, my anxiety became so intense that I convinced myself I couldn't be the caregiver she needed. I couldn't sleep, eat, breastfeed properly without worrying, or think clearly. Above all, I was terrified that I had permanently lost myself in what I felt was failed motherhood. My usual gregarious, extroverted, and enthusiastic self had been replaced by someone who was consumed entirely by fear and numbness.



had basically everything we needed for the new baby because we'd already been through it once. I knew exactly how much time alone we'd want after the birth to bond and forge our new family unit and when we'd want relatives to fly in and provide backup. I knew without a doubt that we would someday sleep again and that crazy underwater feeling that parents get when they have a newborn would lift, because we'd done it once already and survived.

With my first daughter, I missed many of the precious newborn moments because I was so nervous that I was doing the wrong thing. With our second daughter, I made sure to slow down and savor my time with her. Breastfeeding was also infinitely easier because I had already tried it once and was in a much better headspace. This time, it created a bond between us that I had heard about but never experienced. I relished the middle-of-the-night snuggles when it was just the two of us.

**“It’s a fear-inducing prospect, opening yourself up to risk again, but I did it, and it was worth it.”**

Truth be told, our toddler needed the most attention while our second daughter was just happy to be along for the ride. She loved to hang out and watch everyone and was even more excited to become a playmate when she was old enough to join in.

After asking my husband and parents for help, and starting treatment for postpartum depression, things started to turn around. A few weeks later, my daughter smiled for the first time and started sleeping for longer than two-hour stretches. A few short weeks after that, I met some friends who I still count amongst my closest today, and embarked on the remainder of my first year of motherhood with an amazing support group. By the end of the first year, I was tired, but I knew that I could be both Mom and me simultaneously. Finally feeling like I was on solid footing again, I was ready to start considering another child.

I dreamed of having siblings when I was growing up as an only child. I wanted a companion for my daughter, but the prospect of expanding our family felt daunting. I worried how things would be if we were evenly matched with two parents to two kids. I wondered if breastfeeding would be hard again and whether having more than one child would become too much to handle and I'd lose myself all over again.

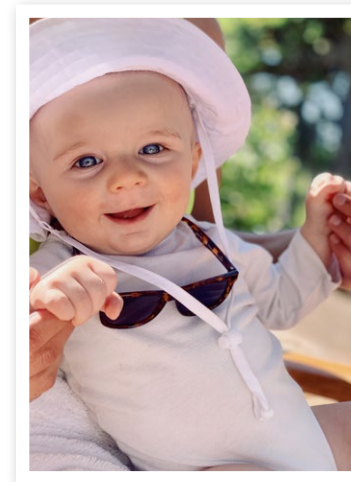
Nevertheless, we capitalized on our confidence of having a year of parenting under our belts and decided to forge ahead. Being pregnant while raising a toddler was exhausting, but it was also very helpful in distracting me from all the worries that had nagged me the first time. The second time around, I knew what those weird kicking sensations meant, knew when I'd stop being able to see my feet, and—best of all—I knew we

Now, more than four months into a pandemic with a 5- and 7-year-old, I still couldn't be happier that we decided to have two. My girls spend their days creating imaginary worlds together and are each other's closest friends. There's undoubtedly chaos, but the best kind, and it was worth taking a chance. Overcoming my postpartum anxiety felt like climbing Mount Everest during a storm. Knowing that it could happen again felt like signing up for another perilous trek, having only just reached the summit. It's a fear-inducing prospect, opening up to risk again, but I did it, and it was worth it.

To everyone who is struggling with similar fears, please believe that sometimes your biggest struggles are what pave the way for your greatest achievements.

*Jessica is mom to not one, but two feisty and compassionate daughters. She spends her time (when she isn't navigating a global pandemic) exploring San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area for new adventures with her kids and husband.*

## NEW ARRIVALS



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# Defining What's Important

## How family agreements, missions, and mantras can help us face life's challenges

By Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss

**F**or my daughter's 8th birthday, she begged me to have a sleepover party with her closest friends. The idea filled me with dread, stemming from my own memories of shrieking, tearful girls freaking out over Ouija boards, too much candy and begging one another to be quiet and go to sleep. So when a colleague enlightened me about creating group agreements with the girls at the start of the party as a key component for a successful sleepover experience, it opened up some possibilities. Photos of her handwritten poster surrounded by hearts, flowers, and the girls' signatures displayed norms like

"Use kind words" and "Take a break if you need one." I knew defining these early on could be the solution I was looking for to bravely push forward and overcome my aversion to group overnights.

For the last several months, with the Bay Area all but completely shut down due to COVID-19, our collective nightmare has become a million times worse than a gaggle of giggling girls in sleeping bags. Families facing a continuum of pressures like job loss, food insecurity, virtual learning, high risk-factors, and pandemic-alooof grandparents are also grappling with how to function amicably and sanely under

the same roof, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, indefinitely.

The immense inequities exacerbated by coronavirus, in tandem with a growing civil unrest and challenging big issues like systemic racism, the upcoming elections, and prolonged school closures, have also left us all reeling from anxiety, emotion, and overwhelm. In order to find our sanity, we need to refocus. If ever there were a scenario for families to sit down, take a deep breath, and determine some community agreements—or a mission and vision to keep sane and hopeful—this would be it.

"We definitely have been thinking more

about our family's values and priorities during the pandemic. A crisis has a way of bringing into sharp focus what really matters," shared Lian Chang, creator of the blog [LittlData.com](https://littldata.com). Rather than fumbling blindly through an ever-compounding and tangled web of changes and uncertainty, zeroing in on certain priorities can help bolster the most rattled families.

Chang admits her family has been thinking and talking a lot about what really matters. As a family logistics expert, she was intrigued by the idea of clearly spelling these out and even posting somewhere visible for all to see. However, like many families, Chang admits she doesn't yet have this articulated crisply in the form of agreements or a mission statement and this is new territory.

### Agreements, missions, and visions: What's the difference?

Many institutions, from small businesses to giant corporations, have some foundational principles in place that guide the institutions' ways of working, making decisions, and letting potential clients, customers, patients, or families know what they are about. Having these principles prominently displayed on a website or brochure helps message what the organization's vision for excellence is and how individuals work together to make it happen. If these foundational principles are the key to navigating the often fraught nature of organizational change management, could these same concepts be applied to our own personal lives and families to help us successfully manage the many challenges being thrown our way in 2020?

By articulating a set of agreements for working together, families can ensure more thoughtful ways of interacting. These are sometimes called "norms," and they differ from rules in that their purpose is to specifically help people live, work, and communicate together. Coming together around a few simple and basic agreements can serve as a foundational piece for proactively facilitating respectful collaboration and decision-making. They are best limited to no more than four or five key



statements and are phrased positively. So, instead of having an agreement such as "no rude language or put downs," a more positively framed community agreement might be worded as "be positive and polite."

A collective vision articulates where an organization intends to be in the future and what the organization hopes to achieve someday. For-profit companies might have

plan backwards and determine the means all members agree will be important in achieving their vision. A mission articulates these actions. It states the mechanisms to help achieve the common vision and clearly defines the family's purpose. For some helpful questions to achieve community agreements, a family mission and a vision, see sidebars.

**"If there ever were a scenario for families to sit down, take a deep breath, and determine some community agreements—or a mission and vision to keep sane and hopeful—this would be it."**

### The power of a family mantra

For many families, creating a mission statement or vision might feel a bit too stifled or "corporate," especially

a vision of being the number one company in their industry, with the most sales or the largest brand recognition. But how does this transfer to the world of families, where there is no product to market or clients to engage?

"When I got pregnant with my oldest child over a decade ago, I knew what I wanted our family to 'look' like. I could see the family dinners, vacations, child training, and sibling bonds as they played out in my head," writes Shelley Jepsen, author of the parenting blog [mamaduck.com](https://mamaduck.com). She suggests parents look to the future envisioning their children as adults and the kind of people they want to raise. Once a vision is clearly articulated, a family can

for families with very young children. This is where starting at a much more basic level with a few mantras can help get to the same goal of defining what's important as well as what you will and won't tolerate.

"I think I'm a very conscious parent. I'm an educator and because I'm attuned to the mission statements of schools that we set at the beginning of every school year, at home it's pretty natural for us," states Leila Sinclair, a teacher in San Rafael and mother to two children, ages 9 and 11. "The way you cement your family values can start with something simple, like stating, "In our family we..." Complete the statement with whatever it is you want to drill home to your children. Repeat this all the time."

Sinclair's family started using the mantra method to tackle a very specific problem with sibling rivalry. "In our family... we don't do revenge." Both my kids love sticking it to one another and we have now said this so many times it's sinking in. "In our family...we share." You come up with different things and then you say them all the time. It's the mechanics of life and then it turns into character development."

But Leila Sinclair hasn't stopped at just tackling the daily quibbles and annoyances of sibling strife with her mantra-method. Mantras can be used to get to deeper values and beliefs that help raise more conscientious, just, and anti-racist children. "I've been taking my kids to Black Lives Matters protests since the movement began years ago. They didn't know why we were going, our mantra was basically, "In our family...we attend protests." But now I am able to go more into the why," explains Sinclair.

In reference to our current global pandemic, Sinclair adds, "Now is a great time to really double down on family values. You can add so much to just the Golden Rule, because it really is so vague. Be more specific than just the Golden Rule," she urges. "In our family, we stop and check to see everyone is safe before continuing."

### Getting your quaranteam on the same page

As families start scrambling to form quaranteams, pods, and microschoools with other neighbors or friends, Chang has started to think about some of the structures that can help diverse groups find commonality and come together to address the challenges of childcare and distance learning.

"[A mission statement] could be such a powerful thing for groups to talk about and establish together as they form their pod. A pod, in these pandemic times, is very much like a family. Explicitly talking about mission statements can be a great way to figure out where the shared goals are, provide a framework for group decisions, and build a sense of kinship," explains Chang, as she aims to work with family groups to do just that through a Facebook group called "Pandemic Pods and Microschools - San Francisco Bay Area."

Families hoping to band together to tackle the logistics of both basic childcare and managing a myriad of Zoom calls may find that establishing basic expectations from the beginning will help alleviate potential pitfalls and conflict down the line. Starting with a collective vision asks your group: What are your hopes for how everyone, including both adults and children, emerges from the microschoool experience once children are able to go back inside school buildings? Is the priority on socio-emotional health and happiness, avoiding academic slippage, or maintaining a sense of normalcy amidst the crisis?

Getting really clear on the vision for the end goals of this arrangement will then set the group up to define its mission, or how the group intends to achieve this vision. Will there be an emphasis on going outdoors as much as possible, playing games, and arriving at dinner happy and exhausted? Or will it be fidelity to assigned Zoom calls and regular updates on academic progress? Parental attitudes towards distance learning have varied widely. Also, adults will need to consider the degree to which different families have defined social distancing, sheltering in place, what day-to-day interactions have been acceptable and what have not amidst conflicting CDC recommendations and government orders. Finding some common ground and clearly defining and writing these out early on will be imperative for a successful microschoool or pod experience.

The world has forever changed and how we choose to embrace and adapt to these changes can be positively impacted by our ability to pare down, come together, and get really clear with those we love most about our shared values, hopes, dreams and needs. The actions we take now, like creating a few mantras or agreements, can help us not only survive and thrive during this global crisis, but can also serve as the foundation for an even brighter, more crystal clear, and just future for our family units for decades to come.

*Jennifer is an educational consultant who loves facilitating groups to determine missions, visions, and norms. Her pod consists of her husband Ryan, children Lilly and Duke and their new puppy, "Nugget." Find out more at [jenniferkuhrbutterfoss.com](http://jenniferkuhrbutterfoss.com).*

### CREATING A FAMILY VISION

**A vision defines where you envision your family in the future.**

- Who are some of the people I admire most in my life?
- What are the qualities they have?
- How do I envision my relationship to be with my adult children?
- What kind of people are my adult children?
- What do they stand for?
- How are they contributing to our family, their community, and society?

### CREATING A FAMILY MISSION

**A mission states how you will achieve your vision.**

- What actions can we commit to as a family to achieve our vision?
- What are some regular rituals, practices, or habits we need to employ?
- What is our purpose for our existence?
- What is most important to us?
- What are some things we can agree to let go of?

### CREATING COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

**Community agreements define specific ways of working together.**

- What are some rules or agreements at school or work that help you do your best?
- What do you need from others to help you be your best self at home?
- What can you do to help others get what they need?
- What is something that drives you crazy or makes you mad?
- What is something that makes you feel loved and supported?



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# Kindness Carries Us Through

## How to survive and possibly thrive in a pandemic through generosity

By Veronica Reilly-Granich

*"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes."*

—Fred Rogers

In the midst of this global pandemic, drawing inward and focusing on protecting our own families can be tempting. However, as Mr. Rogers suggests, there is an opportunity to enlarge our lives and our hearts by responding to the needs around us. I have been inspired by the many people who have found ways to connect with their own generosity and compassion and help each

other despite the challenges and the distance inherent in our current situation.

### Sharing food

As people began baking more, generous neighbors shared sourdough starter in creative, contact-free ways. In April, people in San Francisco began leaving the starter on trees and telephone poles, and a Victory Dough map with these locations was active

for a while. Others posted simple starter recipes online, which anyone could use to begin their own bread lineage.

Sharing food helps us connect and sustain ourselves during times of stress. My neighbors began stopping by with cookies so fresh they were still warm. Others have experienced the delivery of homemade muffins to their doorsteps. The behavior became reciprocal in some local



*"Giving is always an activity that flows in at least two directions; sometimes we might be the recipients and sometimes we may be the givers, and often we are both at once, giving what we are able, and taking the help that we need."*

furloughed from her job in Washington State. Her initial reaction was to make herself a really good pan of lasagna. Then she decided that others might enjoy or even need a delicious meal, so she used her entire stimulus check to buy ingredients and started giving away lasagnas—first to neighbors, then to strangers. Currently, she has raised

\$22,000 for ingredients and works 8 hours a day, 7 days a week making pans of lasagna for anyone in her community needing a hot meal, including first responders and furloughed workers.

On a smaller but no less significant scale, a family in Berkeley has been cooking meals for their neighbor who is a nurse. Their 6-year-old son draws pictures to accompany the meals that say "thank you for helping all the people be safe!"

### Making masks

As the nature of the COVID-19 virus and its transmission through droplets in the air became clear, face masks became incredibly important. Unfortunately, there were shortages of the types of masks best suited to protecting frontline workers. Many people began sewing, cutting HEPA filters to size, making sure those filters didn't contain fiberglass, and getting safety gear to people who needed it.

Initially, the use of masks was recommended only for people serving COVID-19 patients directly. San Francisco now mandates that everyone wear a mask in public to reduce viral load and spread. While some were able to sew or purchase masks, many others were unable to do so. Once again, people worked from home to fill this gap, making hundreds of masks and passing them out to anyone who needed them. An old friend wrote and told me he had given his extra mask to his cab driver just a few weeks ago. Another friend

said she had received two handmade masks as a gift and has begun sewing them for others.

An acquaintance shared a story that shows how small acts of kindness and service can spread to unexpected places. He wrote, "My wife has been sewing masks and giving them to charities. Last week, watching the news on Channel 7, she saw one of her masks. It was unmistakably a mask she had sewn because the fabric was from an old dress with the ladybug pattern that was worn by our young daughter. The mask was worn by someone shown as the family of Steven Taylor." Steven Taylor was a 33-year-old Black man shot and killed by police officers at a Walmart in Sacramento in April. Thanks to the generosity of a stranger, this family member could safely appear in public to talk about the untimely death of her relative.

### You can help or get help

If you have been inspired by these stories, think about jumping in and doing something compassionate for a neighbor, a friend, or an organization you care about. It's OK to start small. You might make a phone call to someone you know who lives alone and is probably more isolated than ever right now, or set up a video chat with an elderly relative and your children. A little bit of baking can also go a long way in lightening someone's load. Those items might seem overwhelming if you're juggling young children and working from home, so donating money to an organization you care about can also be a great way to help. Food banks are seeing surges in need, with many people unemployed or underemployed in the current economy. The SF-Marin Food Bank is now providing 60,000 households with weekly groceries, which is 28,000 more than they were serving before the pandemic. In addition, they have instituted 25 new pop-up pantries to meet the needs of our neighbors who are struggling.



As an added bonus, volunteering even a little bit of your time can also improve your health. According to the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley and research from Stanford University, people over 50 who volunteer regularly have 33 percent lower mortality rates than demographically similar people who don't take time to help (over an 8 year period). We could all use a little immune system boost right now, so if you can add some compassionate giving to your zinc and vitamin C supplements, you might just be around longer to enjoy the improved mood that 89 percent of people experience after lending a hand (also according to the Greater Good Science Center).

On the other hand, if you are feeling overwhelmed by the way the world has been transformed by the global pandemic, please make sure to reach out to one of the many helpers in our community. There are people out there willing to support you and guide you to the resources you might need, including the Member Support team at GGMG. And when you are strong enough, you can give back in whatever way makes sense. Giving is always an activity that flows in at least two directions; sometimes we might be the recipients and sometimes we may be the givers, and often we are both at once, giving what we are able, and taking the help that we need.

The scale of this pandemic may make these small actions seem futile. According to psychologist Paul Slovic from the University of Oregon, people are designed to become numb if they are confronted with too much suffering. Human beings are more likely and more able to respond to individual stories of struggle, especially if there is a clear way to help. You may not be able to single handedly create an effective vaccine for COVID-19 or provide masks for everyone unable to afford their own. But you can start with baking cookies for a neighbor who is an essential worker, or donating time or money to an organization that speaks to your values. If you can sew, masks are still useful and needed by many. Who knows where yours will end up and what moment of need they may ease? Although we are physically separated by 6 feet or more to stay safe in this moment, our hearts can reach across that gap to give and receive compassionately.

*Veronica is an educator based in the Bay Area. She lives with her husband, two young daughters, and two mischievous cats. Recently she has turned to adult coloring books for stress relief and recommends you do the same.*

## PLACES TO DONATE

### LOCAL

[DonatePPE.org](http://DonatePPE.org) has a Bay Area chapter and takes donations of PPE or money to provide protection to frontline workers.

**The East Oakland Collective** serves unhoused people and other vulnerable populations in East Oakland, with a current focus on providing food and hygiene supplies to those in need due to the pandemic.

[Give2SF.org](http://Give2SF.org) is the city of San Francisco's own COVID-19 Relief Fund.

**The SF-Marín Foodbank** can use donations of time or money.

**SupplyHopelInfo** is a local initiative started by two George Washington High School seniors to supply low income students in San Francisco with school supplies during distance learning.

**UCSF** will take donations of money, PPE, and/or blood. You can also send a thank you message to a healthcare worker or participate in a research study related to COVID-19.

### NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

**Doctors Without Borders** is responding to the pandemic in 70 countries.

**The Immigrant Worker Safety Net Fund** supports migrant workers who have contracted COVID-19 or who are at high risk if they contract it.

**National Bail Out** is a Black-led and Black-centered collective focused on bailing out Black people who are in prison because they can't afford bail. This is especially urgent as prisons become COVID-19 hotspots.

**UNICEF** is taking donations that are specifically targeted at helping children around the world stay healthy during the pandemic, including making sure they have access to soap.



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# Resilience in the Face of Uncertainty

Go back to the basics of self-care, gratitude, and mindfulness to find resilience in the face of an uncertain future

By Clare Deignan

It's no surprise that parents are experiencing high levels of stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a recent American Psychological Association survey, 46 percent of parents with children 18 and under have reported a high level of pandemic-related stress. While many health-care professionals have noted that the pandemic's long-term effects on children and teenagers are currently unknown, a recent Gallup poll found that 45 percent of participating parents said a significant hardship for their family was their child(ren) missing the social aspect of school, such as interactions with classmates, friends, and teachers.

With so many families experiencing high levels of stress due to work and school changes, financial and health fears, and limited social interaction, GGMG Magazine

spoke to Christine Carter, Ph.D., a sociologist, parenting coach, and senior research fellow at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center. She delved into how families can go back to the basics of self-care, connection, gratitude, and mindfulness to find resilience in the face of an uncertain future.

## Tiny comforts

"Parents need a break. They need a way to let off some steam," says Carter, a mom of four teenagers.

Carter describes self-care as a form of emotional hygiene that is necessary for developing resilience. She compares ignoring self-care to not doing your laundry. "If you don't do your laundry for months on end, eventually you're going to have a huge problem." She continues, "Human beings don't do very well with deferred maintenance."

Some parents feel doing something just for themselves or having alone time is selfish because there is so much to do, and their family needs them. Carter points out, "Comforting yourself in healthy ways is not selfish. It's investing in yourself so that you can keep going through this ordeal."

It's the unhealthy comforts that Carter wants parents to avoid. She says we have to remember we've been on top of each other for months, so partners, parents, and kids naturally will reach for coping mechanisms. When we are stressed, we rely on our go-to comfort foods, beverages, and shows. But Carter encourages parents to ask themselves the following: Is the coping mechanism helpful, or will it eventually hurt me? In the short-term, some comforts may make us feel better but hurt us in the long run, such as reaching for a pan of brownies, obsessing over the news, or binge-watching a favorite show until 2 a.m.

"We all know the memes about day drinking. Having an extra glass of wine might feel very necessary at times, but it can also possibly interrupt your sleep, and then you're more tired the next day," explains Carter.

To keep our coping mechanism in check, Carter suggests asking what emotion you're after. Is it joy, hope, love, inspiration, passion? Then, brainstorm which basic actions led to that emotion, such as taking a walk or nap, listening to music, watching



a funny movie, taking a bath, calling a friend, cooking, reading, or doing yoga. Finally, Carter encourages parents to make a list of these actions to draw on the next time they need a break or to change their mood.

A 2004 study published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information indicated how important positive emotions are to building resilience in overcoming negative situations. Carter explains, "We are after a reset of the chronic low-level stress. It's just bringing that little tiny enjoyment into your life that can have a measurable physiological effect."

## Balance during COVID-19

Anne is a San Francisco mom of three trying to find balance and manage stress. With kids underfoot, while her husband launches a business, Anne works from home in the biotech industry. Since the shelter-in-place order, her world has become more intense; her work responsibilities require she sometimes speak to between 50 and 100 people a day.

"My boys are young, and they have lots of energy," she shares. "There is a lot of juggling. We don't have childcare right now, which I think is the case for a lot of people."

Anne accepts that she can't do everything at once, so she tries to focus on doing one thing at a time and builds in some space for rejuvenation.

"I try to take self-care moments for myself, even if it's taking a walk, talking with friends or writing to-do lists, so things are not just swimming around in my head. I carve a little bit of time to clear my mind," explains Anne. "When I don't have a

meeting, I try to take my lunch hour to take the kids out for a bike ride, where I can run or get a little bit of exercise."

Anne finds honesty and reaching out can be crucial in reducing her stress. "I talk to my husband, and I text a lot with my friends that are in similar situations so we can support each other because I think we all need a lot of support right now."

With a daily gratitude practice, Anne believes gratefulness is essential to managing stress, especially at such an unprecedented time. She tries to find three things she is grateful for each day. Anne also turns to prayer and breathing exercises to re-center herself. At bedtime, she shares these practices with her children, with the meditation and mindfulness app Headspace, as well as a few kid-friendly meditations.

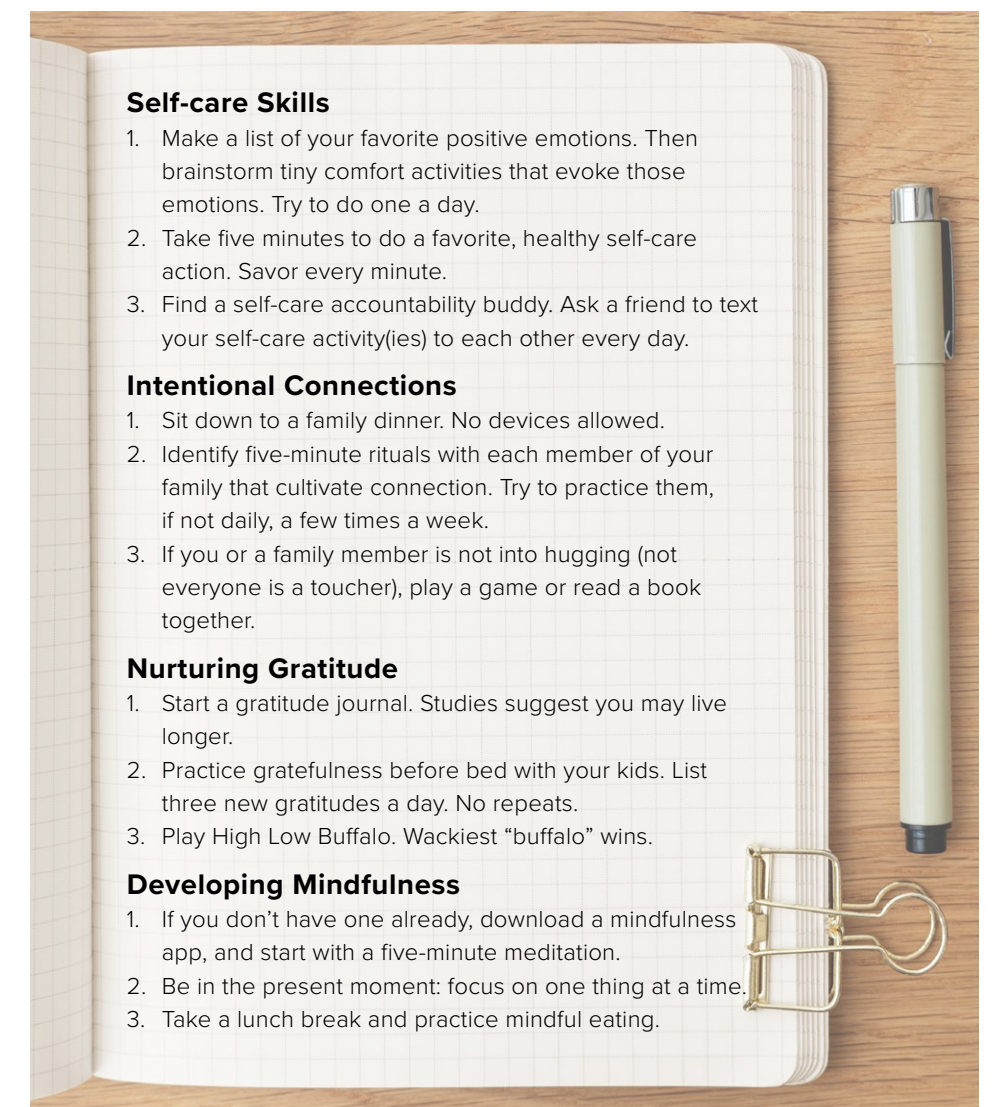
"We can all lay down together and it

helps to relax us as we're winding down from the day," says Anne.

## Never felt so alone

Without realizing it, Anne is doing much of what Carter would prescribe to parents trying to survive the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially cuddling with her children. During this time, Carter thinks human connection is vitally important. Laughing, she recalls that when her family sits and watches a show together, her kids think it's really funny when she says, "You guys can sit anywhere you want so long as you're touching me."

But as a coach, Carter shares, "I have a lot of parents who are saying, 'I've never spent more time with my partner, and I've never felt more alone.'" She encourages families to go back to basic rituals to create connection. Carter tries to carve out time



### Self-care Skills

1. Make a list of your favorite positive emotions. Then brainstorm tiny comfort activities that evoke those emotions. Try to do one a day.
2. Take five minutes to do a favorite, healthy self-care action. Savor every minute.
3. Find a self-care accountability buddy. Ask a friend to text your self-care activity(ies) to each other every day.

### Intentional Connections

1. Sit down to a family dinner. No devices allowed.
2. Identify five-minute rituals with each member of your family that cultivate connection. Try to practice them, if not daily, a few times a week.
3. If you or a family member is not into hugging (not everyone is a toucher), play a game or read a book together.

### Nurturing Gratitude

1. Start a gratitude journal. Studies suggest you may live longer.
2. Practice gratefulness before bed with your kids. List three new gratitudes a day. No repeats.
3. Play High Low Buffalo. Wackiest "buffalo" wins.

### Developing Mindfulness

1. If you don't have one already, download a mindfulness app, and start with a five-minute meditation.
2. Be in the present moment: focus on one thing at a time.
3. Take a lunch break and practice mindful eating.



with her husband and each of her four kids every day. Her guidance is, "It doesn't have to be long, but real."

Carter suggests looking for where these little routines pop up naturally. She shares that she plays a five-minute game of ping pong with her son daily. Although Carter says that he kills her every time, it's a fun connection.

Another humorous ritual Carter recounts is a bedtime regression with her daughter. "One of my kids is 17. Either I put her to bed, or she puts me to bed. It's hysterical," Carter laughs. "We've gone literally back to when she was really little."

### The science of gratitude

In this time of confusion and anxiety, Carter emphasizes that something we actually have control over is where we focus our attention. She says, "If we pay attention to what we appreciate, our ability to cope with what isn't going well is going to be much greater."

Like fostering other positive emotions, Carter notes the science behind gratitude suggests thankfulness bolsters our resiliency. She points out that a practice of gratitude can reverse the "fight-or-flight" response, drop our heart rate and blood pressure, increase a sense of calm, and invite more positive emotions.

Numerous studies on gratitude show how it benefits health and reduces stress, anxiety, and depression while strengthen-

ing resilience and increasing happiness. A 2008 study found when kids practiced gratitude, they held an increased positive outlook of their families and school.

"Gratitude is a positive emotion. It's a practice. We can foster it ourselves by simply moving our attention to what is good in our life, that we appreciate or that we have enough of," Carter explains.

**"Comforting yourself in healthy ways is not selfish. It's investing in yourself so that you can keep going through this ordeal."**

An optimal time to practice gratitude as a family is either dinner time or bedtime, where each member of the family can share one or multiple gratitudes from the day. Carter says she's been doing bedtime gratitudes with her kids since they were two years old.

When it's been a challenging day, and a gratitude list seems inappropriate or forced, Carter suggests a game her kids learned at camp: High Low Buffalo. To play High Low Buffalo, pick a high of the day, a low of the day, and something random or a wacky gratitude, such as a weird but cool

thing that happened or a fun fact they learned. Carter thinks it's an excellent opportunity for kids to share what's not working or didn't work.

"Bringing that curiosity and acceptance to the hard things is important," she says. "The great thing about this context is 'we' are listening. I think it's really good for kids to have an opportunity to share the lows, where parents are not going to try and fix things for them. They're just sharing, we're just listening."

### An antidote to cognitive overload

In the face of uncertainty, moms and dads are multitasking more than ever before. Carter says this can cause a cognitive overload. She thinks it's time to turn to mindfulness, not multitasking, to build resilience.

"I've heard the opposite of uncertainty isn't certainty; it's presence," says Carter. She notes a hurdle of the pandemic is extreme uncertainty. We don't know when schools will truly open, when we will be able to go back to work, or when there will be a vaccine.

"When things feel uncertain, we start planning, we start organizing...or checking our horoscope. Whatever it is to create certainty," explains Carter. However, she finds the practice of mindfulness to be more beneficial than trying to ensure certainty.

"By presence, I just mean: we pay attention on purpose to what is happening in our immediate lives." She continues, "This can bring us more happiness and more peace than knowing what is going to happen in the future."

If you or someone you love is experiencing distress for multiple days or weeks, contact Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMSA) at 1.800.985.5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

*Clare is a freelance journalist and mother of two.*

Due to the ongoing shelter-in-place and related COVID-19 shutdowns, we are not planning events more than 3-4 weeks ahead. As things slowly start to open back up, and we add more events, we will update the events calendar on the GGMG website as well as the GGMG Facebook page. Hope you are all safe and healthy.



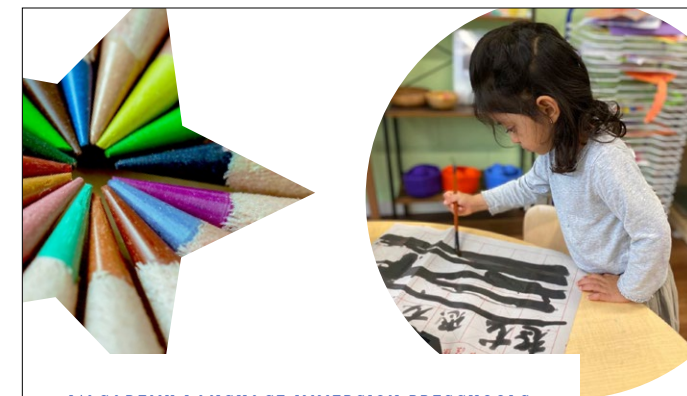
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## DIVERSITY &amp; INCLUSION

## Committing to Anti-Racist Parenting and Talking to Your Kids About Racism

Civil rights icon and Congressman John Lewis once said, “We may not have chosen the time, but the time has chosen us.”

The last day of Memorial Day weekend 2020 brought with it a viral video recorded in NYC’s Central Park in which Amy Cooper, a white woman, lashed out against Christian Cooper, a Black man, and in her hostility attempted to weaponize racism against Blacks in the form of the NYC police force. Although no physical harm came to Christian Cooper that day, Amy Cooper invokes the language of lynching with seeming ease and speed. Tragically, her words seem to foreshadow the murder of George Floyd by local police in Minneapolis later that same day. For too many, May 25, 2020, was a terrifying reminder of what they already knew, but for many others, it served as a shocking wakeup call to the grim realities of race in the United States. The resulting Black Lives Matter protests throughout the country and the world continue to raise

awareness of police brutality against Black and brown bodies and other forms of systemic racism, and many parents are—for the first time—coming to terms with the brutal truths of our society plagued by white supremacy and racism.

Recently, Dr. Jennifer Eberhardt, Stanford professor and author of *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do*, joined Janet Lansbury on her podcast, *Unruffled*. In the program, Eberhardt discusses her research on the development of racial bias. She describes a study in which preschoolers were shown two short videos, one in which an adult treats another adult badly, and one in which an adult treats a second adult well. When polled, a strong majority of the children preferred the adult that was treated well rather than the one who was treated badly. These children had absorbed the attitude of the abusing adult toward the victim of bad treatment and revealed their belief that “it was the target of bias that was responsible for the bias rather than the holder of bias.” When biases are triggered they influence our decisions and our actions, and both speed and stress exacerbate this process. In her work, Eberhardt demonstrates that this process can be disrupted by slowing down. In her

personal life, Eberhardt applies this technique when parenting her three children. She shares an example of a plane ride she once took with her then 5-year-old, who identified a man on the plane as looking like his father. Eberhardt observed that the man looked nothing like her husband, but that her child had made this determination because he was the only Black man on the plane. Shortly after, her child said that he hoped the man would not rob the plane. “So this is an example of how we’re living with such severe racial stratification that even a five-year-old can tell us what’s supposed to happen next. Even with no evil doer, even with no explicit hatred, this association between Blackness and crime had entered the mind of my five-year-old. And it enters the minds of all of our children and into all of us.” Eberhardt seized this opportunity to draw attention, with her child, to the thought process that leads to these conclusions. “...I think the take-home point is that you can

disrupt your own bias by slowing down, by calming down, by asking yourselves the right question, and then by holding yourselves accountable.”

The week after the infamous Amy Cooper video made its first headline, the EmbraceRace team of Andrew Grant-Thomas and Melissa Giraud (<https://www.embracerace.org>) hosted a webinar entitled “How Do I Make Sure I’m Not Raising the Next ‘Amy Cooper’”, featuring Dr. Jennifer Harvey, author of *Raising White Kids: Bringing Up Children in a Racially Unjust America*. Harvey emphasizes the importance of modeling for our children our own willingness to talk about issues of race and confront instances of racism as they naturally arise. This can be as simple as saying, “...I’m really uncomfortable with what you just said. Seemed a little racist to me.” She acknowledges the fear of getting things wrong that can keep us from talking but urges us to speak anyway because of the valuable opportunity that arises when we get things wrong: “One of the truths of anti-racism is the ability to make a mistake and be humble about that and learn. So that’s another reason not to let the fear stop us because it’s okay if we make a mistake, as long as we return to it. And so, I think we partly



help our kids do that by modeling that too, modeling humility, telling them that we’ve made mistakes, showing when we learn something new when our language has changed around something.” Doing the necessary work to raise anti-racist kids requires us to challenge our assumptions, examine our own biases, and change our behavior as needed, as we guide our children to do the same.

This work of anti-racism looks different for different families, who each embody such different life experiences and circumstances. One GGMG mom of a bi-racial 22-month-old has already started preparing the environment for future dialogue by working to diversify her child’s bookshelf: “I make sure that she has books that represent black and brown skin tones.”

Another local South Asian American mom of two children has doubled down on her commitment to heightening her understanding of racial inequity. She shares, “The racist events of May 2020 have lit a fire in me to deepen my own understanding of what it means to be Black in America—and not just once a year during Black History Month, but every day. I have gained an enormous amount of perspective from reading *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates, and from seeing the film *Fruitvale Station*. I’m now reading *So You Want to Talk About Race*, by Ijeoma Oluo. What got me thinking about my education on these topics as something that should be daily is the 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge. When I began to follow that syllabus, I was stunned by how much I didn’t know, despite being a brown-skinned American who has experienced racism all my life.”

For another GGMG mother of mixed-race children, the conversation about racial disparity is ongoing: “I have consciously initiated explicit conversations about race with my children since my older child was 3. We have a racially diverse set of family members and close friends, and we have always celebrated our diversity, so I was surprised when my child told me he did not want his skin to grow any darker than it already was. I responded by telling him how beautiful his and other brown and black skin tones are. But I was a bit rattled by his comment. Given our family’s limited exposure to media, I was confused about the origin of it. I was eventually able to ask enough questions to understand that my child had noticed that a disproportionate number of homeless people we encounter are Black, while the majority of people who live in our affluent neighborhood are white. We had a detailed discussion about why it seems advantageous to have white skin and the origins of a system that is inherently unfair. I continue to build on this conversation whenever I can.”

Another GGMG member writes about the proactive approach she is taking to ensure that her white children are literate about race: “Diversity, in general, is an ongoing conversation in our house, but we talk about race the most—the ways we are similar to our friends, and the ways we are different. We have always made an effort to have diverse books and toys, but in the last year or so I have started to look for things that are explicitly anti-racist (we are loving *Antiracist Baby*, by Ibram X. Kendi, right now). I layer this by trying to buy from businesses owned by BIPOC. I’ve been a lifelong protestor, and have taken my kids along since they were in slings strapped to my chest, but we have switched to driving protests since Covid. All of these things—the books and the

“One of the truths of anti-racism is the ability to make a mistake and be humble about that and learn.”

protests—are excellent opportunities to talk about race and racism. I don’t have all the answers, and sometimes I have to re-do the conversations because I don’t like how I handled something, but we’re talking...Knowing what to say doesn’t magically appear, it takes effort. Adults didn’t talk to me about this stuff when I was growing up, so my early attempts to talk to my kids were so, so wobbly. It took time, and work on my part (thinking, reading, listening) to unlearn many of my fundamental understandings about race and racism, and get comfortable with the discomfort of analyzing my own biases. This will be work I’ll have to do for the rest of my life.”

This work to challenge racism with our children must grow and change, as our children develop, and as the understanding we share with them deepens. As Harvey says, “They will show us what they don’t understand. And we get to try again tomorrow. And so, we do not have to be right or perfect. We just have to be brave. We just have to start.”

As we continue to provide anti-racist parenting support to our membership, we recognize the power of real experiences from our community. We would like to include more of these perspectives in future articles and invite you to share by emailing [diversity@ggmg.org](mailto:diversity@ggmg.org).

## DIVERSITY &amp; INCLUSION

## The Enduring Effects of Black Activism

How Black activists ushered in the Pride movement and immigrant diversity

Summer calls for a celebration of diversity in all its forms—in addition to including Juneteenth, June is also Pride and Immigrant Heritage Month.

Beyond promoting openness and equity, these commemorations remind us of the immense contributions of the Black community towards diversity and inclusion in race, gender, and ethnicity. Black womxn launched the Pride movement, helping us expand and redefine our understanding of gender (and motherhood). The Civil Rights Movement served as an inspiration and precursor to new laws that opened up immigration, resulting in a greater diversity of immigrant women and children allowed into the United States.

June 2020 marked the 50th anniversary of the New York City Pride Parade. The original Pride celebration came as a result of the Stonewall uprisings in New York's Greenwich Village. In those days, gay bars were not permitted liquor licenses, and the police regularly conducted raids.

**“We all benefit from an inclusive and diverse society, yet the burden of fighting for equity and justice is often carried only by the most marginalized and oppressed groups.”**

One night in June 1969, during one of the usual raids, a biracial lesbian named Stormé DeLarverie, known as “the Rosa Parks of the gay community,” fought back against the police. Beaten and bleeding from the head, Stormé called out to the crowd, “Why don't you guys do something?!” This passionate and urgent call for action invigorated others to rebel. One of those who resisted arrest that night was Marsha P. Johnson, a Black trans woman who went on to lead a series of protests and marches demanding rights for the LGBTQ+ community. These protests grew to become the first official Pride parade the following year, launched to commemorate the Stonewall uprisings.

In the same way that gender inclusion came about as a result of Black activism, so did non-discriminatory immigration policy. Despite the humanitarian message etched on the Statue of Liberty (“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...”), early immigration into the United States was heavily restricted based on race and ethnicity. Up until the 1960s, laws banned or limited immigration from non-white countries. Arabs, Asians, and Indians were effectively banned from entering the



country, while immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, as well as Africa, was highly regulated. On the other hand, immigrants from Northern and Western Europe were favored and allowed easier entry.

During the same period as these restrictive immigration policies, the Black community had been actively protesting against segregation laws. Through sit-ins, marches, and other forms of civil disobedience, they endeavored to influence change. Their sustained efforts resulted in the passage of the Civil Rights Act, virtually ending

legal segregation and discrimination based on race, religion, sex, and national origin.

With the passage of the Civil Rights Act, it became increasingly difficult to defend laws and regulations based on race. Not long after, Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which prohibited discrimination in issuing immigrant visas based on race, sex, nationality, place of birth, or place of residence.

In addition to abolishing race-based quotas, the Immigration and Nationality Act also prioritized family-based immigration, allowing foreign-born spouses and children of U.S. citizens to immigrate to the United States without limitations. After its passage, immigrant women began to outnumber immigrant men, and by 2011, 51 percent of all foreign-born individuals residing in the United States were women (Garcia and Franchim, 2013).

Despite massive sacrifices and achievements by the Black community in fighting for equity, diversity, and inclusion in the last 50 years, much remains to be done. In 2019, 91 percent of transgender or gender nonconforming people who were murdered were Black womxn (McCusker, 2020). Refugee and employment-based immigration were banned beginning in June to last through 2020, with the current political administration working to make the ban permanent.

We all benefit from an inclusive and diverse society, yet the burden of fighting for equity and justice is often carried only by the most marginalized and oppressed groups. Protests launched by the Black community, which were initially perceived as violent and unnecessary, have had reverberating positive effects across all facets of life.

In our role as mothers and members of society, we possess immense power in influencing and shaping a country's culture and values. We can nurture our children to become open-minded and accepting adults; we can support the rights and needs of minority groups in our children's schools, our place of work, and our communities; we can advocate for policies that promote social and economic justice; we can all do so much more. Let us respond to Stormé DeLarverie's impassioned call for help, and do something.

## VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

The Volunteer Engagement Committee's mission is to support the volunteers of GGMG. Our committee organizes the logistics for the bi-monthly volunteer meetings, GGMG's annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, and an annual Chair Appreciation event. In lieu of our annual in-person Chair Appreciation event this past June, we were happy to have been able to send Thank You gifts to our chairs.

We sincerely appreciate all our volunteers and all of the hard work you do. Thanks to our volunteers who have pivoted and hosted fun, creative, yet socially distanced activities to help keep moms engaged. We can't wait to see what you continue to come up with next!

If you are interested in volunteering with GGMG, please reach out! We are looking to fill a number of roles across the board and at different levels (committee members as well as co-chairs)—from Member Support to Parent Education to Diversity & Inclusion to many, many more!

Please reach out to [recruiting@gmg.org](mailto:recruiting@gmg.org) to learn more. We would love to have you join us.

## MEMBER SUPPORT

Now, more than ever, we all need the support of family and friends. Precautions around the COVID-19 pandemic have stripped us of the ability to travel or attend social events in the usual carefree manner, and loved ones may seem a world away. Luckily, we can use creativity and technology to stay connected. Here are a few ways to share the love:

- **Weekly happy hour:** Keep it on the calendar for post-bed-time to connect with your besties.
- **Postcards from the pandemic:** Everyone loves surprise snail mail. Enlist the kids to create postcards with stickers, paint, and a few words about the week. Or, fold up your child's latest scribble and send it to the grandparents.
- **Virtual fitness class with a friend:** Try out a new class with a friend across the country. It's perfectly okay to turn off your video and text your friend about the bad playlist.
- **Game application:** There are dozens of apps available to plug into Zoom or stand alone that allow for game night from various trivia to Pictionary to Scrabble.
- **Pick up the phone:** Don't wait for the usual Sunday night catch-up. Call when you think about that person.
- **Watch a show together:** With so much new content available, find a new (or decades-old) show to watch and laugh about.

As always, the Member Support Committee is available to lend a helping hand if you are feeling especially down or stressed during this time. Please reach out to [member.support@gmg.org](mailto:member.support@gmg.org) if you need a hand.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Are you looking for a way to use your skills to give back to the GGMG community? Consider joining the GGMG Partnerships Committee! Our team of amazing women works with local businesses to bring exclusive deals to our members. We work closely with strategic partners—such as JCCSF, UrbanSitter, Recess Collective, and Peekadoodle—to obtain benefits for all GGMG members on an annual contractual basis, as well as additional benefits for GGMG volunteers. Through our Friends Program, we also work with various local companies to obtain substantial promotions and discounts for GGMG members. We use the power of our 2,500+ member community to gain exclusive deals on everything from childcare to adult fitness classes to food delivery services. We look forward to continuing to support our GGMG community with new and relevant discounts during these unprecedented times.

See all discounts and benefits for GGMG members in the “member perks” section of our website: [www.gmg.org/member-perks/friends](http://www.gmg.org/member-perks/friends) (Friends Program) and [www.gmg.org/member-perks/partners](http://www.gmg.org/member-perks/partners) (Partners Program).

And look for our monthly GGMG Member Perks email highlighting many of these great deals!

We are always searching for new members to join our committee. If you are interested in joining, please contact our director of partnerships at [partnerships@gmg.org](mailto:partnerships@gmg.org).







# Crayons

By Victoria Dvorak

Most every adult I know has that one toy they coveted but never got to have. One friend says the Easy-Bake Oven was the object of desire. For another, Rock 'em Sock 'em Robots. Both are quality choices, but mine is as unremarkable as you can imagine: crayons.

I am a crayon hoarder. I buy crayons nearly every time I go to Target—and, boy, do I go often, or at least I used to. If they are on special, like the Back-to-School promotion, it's a frenzy. I'll take the Pearl crayons, Colors of the World crayons, the Glitter limited edition, and the erasable ones, thank you very much. I have crayons stashed all over the place like one would stash money or gold coins. My husband finds them and tries to put them away, except they can't go in the crayon box, because the crayon box already has two boxes, and so they sort of shift around the house, much to my delight. Sometimes I find a pack I've stashed somewhere like the linen closet and a bubble of joy rises in me. I open the top to find 16 colorful friends, my saviors, my escape. I run my fingers over the perfect, sharp, blunt tops and I sniff deeply.

Crayons smell so good. The crayons are for my children. Eventually. The elusive sticks of colored wax, a simple box of 16 crayons, was all my 5-year-old heart desired. This love was to be unrequited and thus I have spent a lifetime filling that void.

My love for crayons started in kindergarten. My teacher forever secured a place in my memory on the first day of school when she announced we were going to draw self-portraits. She sat by an easel to draw herself. Next to her was a brand-new box of crayons. "I have a yellow shirt on, so I'm going to first outline it with this yellow crayon and then fill in with color. Everyone see that?" Up until that moment, I had no idea crayons existed. I felt like I had been living in a world without color. I watched in awe as I saw what that little yellow crayon could do. The blank paper was suddenly filled

with color! Had it not been for this activity, my teacher—whose name I've forgotten—would have completely faded into the abyss of my memory. It's no coincidence yellow is my favorite color.

You know that feeling when you step into your schoolyard as an adult and realize how small it looks compared to

memory? In my head, I see things from a thigh-high perspective. From here, I can feel the longing for the crayons I never got, and the weird way I just accepted that I would never get them. No crayons. Don't ask why. Do something else.

My children, because they have never wanted for anything, especially crayons, are savages with my precious crayons. Savages! They rip off the labels that hold the crayon's esteemed name to expose it, delicate and bare. *Cornflower*, *Canary*, *Sunset*, all jettisoned and thereafter referred to by their commodity

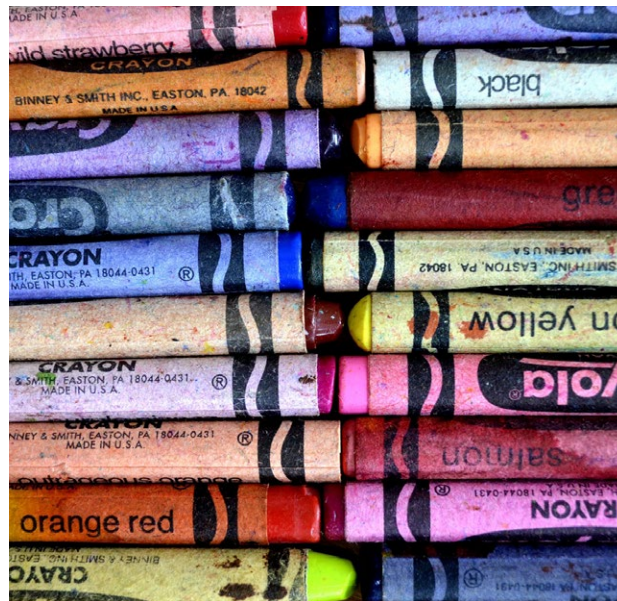
names: Blue, Yellow, Orange, boring. The discard of proper names aside, I'm not too bothered with the devastation left behind. Undeterred, I gather up the crayons and we give

them a new life. During one heat wave, we made sun crayons where we took all the little, broken pieces and sorted them into color families in muffin tins and then

"baked" them in the sun. Maybe it's because providing crayons for my kids has temporarily ameliorated that broken place. Maybe it's because the abundance of crayons signals no more bad feelings. Maybe crayons make me feel less invisible. Maybe, maybe.

Only recently I asked my mom about my non-existent crayons. Well, I complained more than asked. "You know, mom, I wish I had crayons. Why didn't you buy them for me?" I already knew what the answer was because I feel I've always known. But she surprised me. "I sorry about that," she says, shaking her head. "I wish I stronger then."

*Victoria lives in SF with her family. They hug a lot.*



**"Maybe it's because the abundance of crayons signals no more bad feelings. Maybe crayons make me feel less invisible."**