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For details visit ggmg-gymboree.com





www.ggmg.org

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Letter from the Editor: Evolving Community Involvement

By Kirsten Pfleger



Kirsten Pfleger lives in the Castro with her husband,
Karl, and their two daughters, Serenity and Sierra.

They are currently waging a take back the
sidewalk campaign with sidewalk chalk.
Stop by and add a doodle.

was recently asked how we determine the theme of the magazine each month. Many of our ideas come from you: from what is being talked about on the online forums, story ideas that are emailed to us, or from the survey that the board conducts. We also receive emails from nonmembers with article ideas, think about what is happening in the world, and consider our writers'

expertise and strengths. Part of our monthly staff meeting is spent brainstorming future topics and seeing what excites us.

Although I love every magazine that we produce, some issues stand out for me long after they have been put to bed. The "We are Family" issue published in 2012, "Gender" and "Survival"

I want them to grow up in a city that they are proud of and that they feel responsible for.

issues in 2013, and "Staying in SF" in 2014 are some that stick with me for the lively staff meeting debates that helped to fine tune the focus of our articles, the extra research and peer vetting our writers went through to ensure articles were both factually

accurate and emotionally honest, and the amount that I learned about each topic.

This civic engagement issue will join that list. Although I registered to vote at age 18 and have voted regularly since then, rather than being a well-informed citizen casting a ballot, I had always felt like I was cramming for a test. I read through the voter informational packet at the last minute, frantically looking up further explanations and voting recommendations from trusted sources. And as someone who moved frequently throughout my life, I viewed my neighborhood as a place to care for, but felt that working to improve it could fall to someone else.

Now, as a mother and a long-term resident, my priorities have shifted. I want my girls to know their neighbors. I want them to be well educated. I want them to grow up in a city that they are proud of and that they feel responsible for. This issue addresses those concerns. Juli provides tools for improving our neighborhoods through friendships and mutual safety goals on page 16, Gail schools us on where the power lies in our public education system on page 20, and on page 24, Sallie walks us through California's unique system of governance. Ready to take it a step further? Read how to become more involved in elections in our Ask the Expert column on page 8, and how one dad is empowering the next generation on page 10.

I know that I will never be the person who always knows what is happening in Sacramento, or who has her finger on the pulse of changes in the school board, but I hope to continue to become more informed about my community and to instill a sense of community pride and ownership in my daughters.



Housekeeping

Opinions expressed in this issue are those of the contributors. Acceptance of advertising does not constitute endorsement by GGMG of any products or services. The editors reserve the right to accept, edit, or reject any content submitted to the magazine.

ADVERTISING: Advertisements are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. For submission information, email *advertising@ggmg.org*.

THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY: Godiva, the LAO (Legislative Analyst's Office), Daddy, Lake Tahoe getaways, soul food, Chinese New Year Festival party poppers, sour grass, humane mouse traps, pedal bikes, Pirate's Booty.

COMING NEXT: May—Taking Care of Mom; June—Get Reading

CONTEST: Congratulations to Phuc Lu, winner of the Mom & Me portrait session with Teresa O'Brien Photography.

Have an idea for an issue theme or article? Please email editor@ggmg.org.

Letter from the Board: Ticking Through Our To-Do List!

By Laurel Kellam

s a mom, have you ever felt like there wasn't enough time in the day? Silly question, right? I guarantee there has come a time when you have felt like there was not enough time or energy to get all the to-do's crossed off your list. That's a bit of what we've been feeling on the GGMG Board.

We have so many ideas for ways to improve the organization for our members and yet, we just haven't had the resources or bandwidth to implement them. To that end, you may have seen the emails announcing open board positions. In addition to redefining and restructuring existing roles, we've recently expanded the GGMG Board from nine women to 12 with the hope of accomplishing more and thereby improving the member experience. With additional help and a more efficient and effective structure, you should start to see changes within GGMG, including more discounts, improved communications from the board, and a greater number of ways to connect with other members.

One of our new board members, Nisha Pillai, has taken over GGMG Partnerships with local vendors. Nisha is using her MBA background, passion for GGMG, and savvy negotiating skills to strategize and rethink member benefits provided by local partners. Since joining, Nisha has recruited a team of five and negotiated and signed three partnership contracts. Her team is diligently working to revamp our partnership program to provide members more meaningful and ongoing benefits with vendors and organizations across the city. See page 33 for important updates from our Partnerships Committee.

The Board typically communicates important updates and announcements to members here in the magazine or on Big Tent.

With the goal of making information easier to find, we will be implementing a mid-month announcements bulletin. In it, we will highlight upcoming events, our newest partnerships and member discounts, board updates and changes, and any other exciting news we would like our members to be aware of. We feel that email is the best medium for reaching all members each month, so watch your inboxes for it.



Laurel is a mom to three kids, wife to an amazing husband, and sales rep for a financial software company. When not managing all that (plus volunteering with GGMG) she enjoys wine, running, reading, and sunshine (assuming the temperature doesn't go over 73).

We've recently expanded the GGMG Board from nine women to 12 with the hope of accomplishing more and thereby improving the member experience.

Finally, please be aware that our spring event will be held on Saturday, May 16, at the Bay Area Discovery Museum. The event will be from 9 a.m. to noon and the museum will be closed to the public during this time. Mark your calendars and come celebrate spring with GGMG!

Caurel Kellan

Volunteer of the Month



Congratulations to **JoJo Rhee Chevalier**, our April volunteer of the month! JoJo began volunteering with GGMG in April 2013 as a designer for the Magazine team and is currently the Art Director. She and her husband, Michael, are parents to their 3-year-old daughter Sienna.

VE WANT TO KNOW:

Something about you that might surprise people if they knew it: I won a 100-mile bike race (over a mountain range) having never ridden more than five miles in one sitting previously. What you most miss about your hometown: That children had the freedom to roam around town or play in the woods without parental supervision. Best feature in your neighborhood: The lack of fog in the Mission-Dolores neighborhood!

JoJo will enjoy a 60-minute massage at International Orange Spa (2044 Fillmore St.). Book yourself a massage today at www.internationalorange.com.

There is an unparalleled abundance to explore in San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area. How and where do we start? This section of the magazine aims to answer that question. Any tips? Do share at magcalendar@ggmg.org.

Earth Day, 2015

Earth Day San Francisco

22nd St., between Mission

Ocean Beach Cleanup

Meet at Stairwell 17

Saturday, April 18, 10 a.m. to noon

If you'd like to keep it simple, volunteers for

the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

meet every third Saturday of the month at

Ocean Beach to pick up the trash. More

Saturday, April 18, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

This is an event that will feature speakers,

Workshops, nonprofit exhibitors that need

your help, a fashion show, entertainment,

your new, a rasmon snow, envertainment, food, and a kids' zone with face painting,

you, and arts and crafts. For the latest,

visit: Www.earthdaysf.org

By Sarah Lai Stirland

orty-five years after Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson and his allies first launched Earth Day as a day of environmental action and education, so much still needs to be done. We can't all sail out to the plastic gyre and collectively haul out the estimated 4.8 million tons of plastic that flows into the ocean every year or single-handedly stop global warming. However, there are dozens of activities that you and your children can engage in locally to change some of the dynamics at play. Earth Day falls on April 22, a Wednesday. However, there are plenty of free, fun events and volunteer opportunities at either end of that week.

Berkelev Bav Festival

201 University Ave., Berkeley

Saturday, April 11, 2015, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Berkeley Marina organizes this annual festival featuring music, a juggler, opportunities to sail, a ride on Chinese dragon boats, and food vendors. The city's Adventure Playground, which has a zip line and tools to make objects (under parental supervision), will also be open. For more information, and updates, visit: www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/BayFestival

Save The Bay: Palo Alto Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve, 2775 Embarcadero Way, Palo Alto Saturday, April 25, 9 a.m. to noon Discover the wonder and importance of California's wetlands, and help to restore them at the same time. To register, and for more information, visit: www.tinyurl.com/pkzjemw

details here: www.tinyurl.com/q9u7b3x The California State Parks Foundation

The California State Parks Foundation is organizing multiple park restoration, infrastructure mending, and cleanup events across the Bay Area. For more details, and to register, visit: www.calparks.org/earthday

Visit A Matter of Trust 3338 17th St. Open daily, noon to 5 p.m., A Matter of Trust is a family-friendly local except major holidays nonprofit that focuses on recycling and renewable resources. It just started a new program that aims to make musical instruments out of recycled materials, and the center is always looking for volunteers. For more information about the organization and its programs, visit. www.matterostrust.org

Earth Day on the Bay The Marine Science Institute, 500 Discovery Pkwy, Redwood City Saturday, April 18, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. MSI will open up its facilities for a day of free educational activities that include musical performances and storytelling, aquarium viewing, trips on MSI's 90-foot research boat, arts and crafts, and close encounters with live marine animals. To register, and for more info, visit: www.sfbaymsi.org/earthday.html

Learn How To "Upcycle" at the Richmond Art Center

2540 Barrett Ave., Richmond Saturday, April 25, 1 to 4 p.m.

The Richmond Art Center is holding a maker festival with workstations that will teach all family members to make new objects out of materials that they might otherwise discard. For more information, and photos of last year's event, visit: www.richmondartcenter.org/events/upcycle

Sarah Lai Stirland is a freelance writer living in Los Gatos.

Visitacion

Lil' Kid, Big City: Civic Center

By Stef Tousignant

🐧 an Francisco is blessed with an amazing and architecturally wonderful City Hall. After all, what other city has an imposing piece of civic architecture decorated with skulls?

Teach civic pride by introducing your little one to the Civic Center which has plenty of child-friendly and super fun things to do! On Fridays, don't worry about bringing lunch—Off the Grid sets up at least five food trucks in front of City Hall.

Start your adventure by singing and dancing your way through storytime at the Main Library which has the biggest children's section in the city and will knock your socks off! Then stroll to the Asian Art Museum where you can join their new kids club (Rhino Club), don an adventurer's backpack, and head off on a kid-focused tour of the museum.

When it's run-and-get-crazy time, jump onto one of the two fenced playgrounds located right on City Hall Plaza, or grab a quick snack at the Heart of the City Farmers Market (Wednesdays only). Finally, head into City Hall. Sit on the magnificent steps for a view of the amazing rotunda or join a tour of the building that takes place at 10 a.m., noon, and 2 p.m. every weekday. ❖

Stef Tousignant is the founder of the popular family event, The Great Baby Romp. She lives in the Inner Richmond with her high school sweetheart and two boys (aged 3 and 6), who love to play air quitar and explore Golden Gate Park! #askstef

Growing Up Giving

By Beth Jansson

Tolunteering is a great way to connect your children to their communities. Whether it's cleaning up a beach or park, sorting food for the hungry, or entertaining senior citizens at a senior center, kids will build an appreciation for the issues faced by people in their own neighborhoods. Finding volunteer opportunities is a very rewarding way to spend quality time with your little ones. How can you get your children civically engaged?

- Make it fun and easy. They should have fun, even if they don't understand why they are volunteering. Save the challenging projects for later.
- Keep it age and personality appropriate. Knowing their skill sets and limits can help make the project rewarding. Organizations also often list age requirements to help determine the right project for your little one.
- Make it relevant and meaningful. There are different ways to get involved throughout the year. For example, find ways to donate food during the Thanksgiving season. Or, adopt a family during the holidays and have your kids pick out toys and clothes.

My son, Jakob, and I have been able to bond over volunteering projects like playing bingo at a senior home in Palo Alto, sorting oranges at the SF Food Bank, adopting a family, and scooping up mulch at Mountain Lake Park.

Here are several organizations that support volunteer opportunities

Alemany Farms www.alemanyfarm.org HandsOn Bay Area www.handsonbayarea.org Presidio Trust www.presidio.gov SF Marin Food Bank www.sfmfoodbank.org Botanical Garden www.sfbotanicalgarden.org Volunteer Center www.thevolunteercenter.net VolunteerMatch www.volunteermatch.org





Beth Jansson is the co-Chair for the Community Support team and works on events and drives. She was a former senior program manager at a non-profit that focused on volunteerism in the Bay Area. She is currently mom to Jakob, 4 years old.

Ask the Expert Showing Up on Election Day



How can I get involved in the voting process?

Volunteer to be a poll worker! The San Francisco Department of Elections recruits nearly 2,500 individuals to operate 576 polling places for each election. These poll workers provide a vital civic duty by helping to safeguard the democratic process, and

they earn a stipend for their efforts. For supporting the election in November 2014, each poll worker received between \$142 and \$195, depending on his or her assignment.

Poll workers must pass a brief aptitude test and receive two to three hours of training before being assigned to a polling place on Election Day. With set up and closing tasks, poll workers may be on duty for as long as 16 hours. Despite the time commitment, it is a very rewarding experience, and many poll workers return to serve their community election after election.

For more information and to apply to become a poll worker, visit the Department of Elections at sfelections.org or call 415.554.4395. Applications are accepted year-round, but trainings take place in City Hall from early September through Election Day.

What, if any, are the requirements of becoming a poll worker?

Every polling place is staffed with one inspector, who manages the polling place, and up to four other poll workers who serve as clerks, translators, or, depending on their age, high school student clerks. In order to be a poll worker, you must be:

- · A United States citizen
- Registered to vote in the State of California
- · Able to read, write, and speak English
- · Age 18 or older by Election Day

Non-citizens who are legal residents of the United States may work as a clerk or a translator. High school students ages 16 or

Use the words "get to vote" rather than "have to vote," and share that voting is something special.

older are eligible to work as high school student clerks, provided they have the permission of their parent(s) and teacher(s).

As a parent, how do you explain voting to your kids?

Even very young children understand the concept of choice. When you turn basic family decisions—which playground should we visit, where should we eat, what movie do we watch tonight—into an election, you are engaging children in how group decisions are

made and teaching both the concept of voting and critical thinking skills. Raising hands to cast a vote and using majority rule is pretty easy to pull off in many day-to-day interactions.

When children are a little older, you can hold an election during a play date or among siblings to choose something simple like the next activity, which stuffed animal gets to ride in the car this week, or who sits at the head of the dinner table. Introduce different colored paper as ballots, a box for the "secret" vote, and include your children in counting the ballots to declare the winner.

Read election-themed picture books to help get a conversation going about voting and leadership. Duck for President, by Doreen Cronin, is an engaging story for all ages. Grace for President, by Kelly DiPucchio, may appeal to slightly older children.

What are some ways I can involve my children in the

Talk to your children about upcoming elections. Explain that this is the time of year when you get to choose our leaders and make decisions for our city, state, and nation. Use the words "get to vote" rather than "have to vote," and share that voting is something special. Point out symbols like American flags or campaign logos so they can make the visual connection. Show children pictures of current elected officials and our past leaders (you probably have several pictures of past presidents in your wallet), and give age-appropriate descriptions of their duties. On the local level, take your child with you to a campaign rally, parade, or other event where they may get to meet a candidate. Your participation makes a powerful statement of the importance you place on voting. Show how you study the sample ballot and pamphlet that contains information about how to vote, and explain that you are doing "homework" so that you can make informed voting decisions.

Bring a child with you to your local polling place so that they can become familiar with the environment, meet poll workers, see the voting machines, watch you cast your vote, and probably get an "I Voted" sticker of their own to wear for the rest of the day!

Vote-by-mail voters can show a child how you mark a ballot and put it in its special envelope. San Francisco voters can place their vote-by-mail envelope in the mail or take it to a designated ballot drop-off station outside City Hall on the weekend before Election Day. All San Francisco voters can cast their ballot at the City Hall Voting Center, which is open for 29 days prior to each election, including the two weekends before every Election Day. Learn more about voting at sfelections.org; follow San Francisco elections on facebook.com/sfelections and Twitter @sfelections. Register at registertovote.ca.gov. �

Jill Fox is the Manager of Voter Outreach for the San Francisco Department of Elections and the mother of college student, and voter, Fletcher Brown.

GGMG: Helping Others, Treating Yourself

Community Support

La Casa de Las Madres Drive

La Casa is a wonderful San Francisco organization that offers domestic violence crisis shelter and services, support services, training, and outreach and education. During the months of February and March, GGMG partnered with La Casa de Las Madres to raise funds and collect children's clothing to support local women and children affected by domestic violence. La Casa was so touched and grateful for GGMG's contribution. Thank you to all that supported the drive!

If you would like to support La Casa but didn't have a chance during the drive, please check here for ways to help: www.lacasa.org/help.

St. Anthony's Clothing Program Preschool Clothing Drive

Once again, GGMG will be supporting a clothing drive for St. Anthony's Free Clothing Program (www.stanthonysf.org/ freeclothingprogram). We will be collecting new and gently used preschool sized clothing, sizes 3T to 6T. Please make sure clothing is in good shape and clean. St. Anthony's will use the clothing for their Back to School Shopping Days where they provide clothing through a shopping experience for local children in need. Beginning on April 14, the JCCSF will have a bin in the lobby where clothing can be donated. Please check www.GGMG.org for other ways to donate clothing.

Contest

Zeel-Massage on Demand

Win a deluxe in-home massage

Don't have time in your busy schedule for a top-quality couples massage? With Zeel, you do. This month, **two** lucky couples will enjoy a deluxe in-home Zeel Massage On Demand® and get a free massage table for a lifetime of discounted in-home massages (valued at \$400).

Zeel works to bring you the best Massage On Demand®. Our massage therapists are licensed, fully vetted by the Zeel team, and chosen for their excellence and commitment to customer happiness.

Scheduling is super-easy on the Zeel app for iPhone or Android, or at www.zeel.com.

- · Create an account.
- Select your favorite massage technique (relaxing Swedish, invigorating deep tissue, soothing prenatal), and indicate whether you have a gender preference for your massage therapist.
- Choose your preferred place and time—your home, hotel, even your workplace, 8 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., seven days a week, 365 days a year, including holidays.
- Our therapists bring the massage tables, tunes, and lotions.

TO ENTER THE CONTEST, SEND AN EMAIL WITH THE SUBJECT LINE "ZEEL IN-HOME MASSAGE" TO CONTEST@GGMG.ORG BY APRIL 30.

Can't wait to try Zeel? Take \$25 off your first Zeel Massage when you enter the promo code **GGMOMS**.





DADLANDS

Election Day

By Adam Hofmann

r spent the afternoon of November 6, 1984, with my grandmother. She picked me up from school, and we went to La large, well-lit recreation center filled with people. I was seven. As much as I'd like to pretend that I have some preternatural recall for dates, the truth is I remember that day

because I know what we did. We went to the recreation center that day to vote for Walter Mondale. My parents, grandparents, and the other grownups in my life had been talking for weeks about the election, and I wanted Walter Mondale to win. I thought Mondale was funny looking, and I couldn't imagine living in a world with a president who wasn't named "Ray Gun." I wanted Walter Mondale to win because my family wanted him to win, and that was good enough for me.

On our way to the polling place, my grandmother explained that presidents held office for four years

and could only be elected twice. She explained that only adults could vote, so I would just have to help her. When we arrived, we went into the voting booth together. My grandmother inserted a pale yellow punch card, and the booth's curtains closed. She

November 5, 1996. (It was extremely gratifying to be on the winning side that time, though I will confess to having been briefly enamored with the idea of Ross Perot...)

Many years and many elections later, I brought my daughter with me to vote on November 4, 2014. She was three. Many things

> have changed since 1984. To my great regret, the lever machines have been replaced with the horrifically mundane felt-tip marker system favored by the City and County of San Francisco. The curtains are gone as well. On the plus side, my polling place is in a neighbor's garage, rather than a massive, indifferent rec center. Most of all, there is no room in my life for my grandmother's simple politics—"we're voting for Walter Mondale because Jews always vote Democratic." But I brought my daughter to vote with me for the same reason (I imagine) my grandmother brought me. I want her to see voting

as part of adult life. I want her to recognize the role she will one day play in our democracy, and I want her to grow up assuming that she will play that role. In short, I want her to think of voting as one of the privileges and responsibilities that constitute

growing up, like getting a driver's

For my daughter, voting in 2014 was ballot with an uninspiring felt-tip

marker and then getting to slide the ballot into the reader. Oh, and getting an "I Voted" sticker. Again, she's three. But, I hope I have planted a seed. Future elections, with a little luck, will deepen her understanding, and our conversations about voting and politics will get more substantive. And I will tend the seed as

Adam Hofmann is a father of three and an attorney living, working, and voting

long as she'll let me. ❖



I want her to see voting as part of adult life. I want her to recognize license, having a job, or going to the role she will one day play in our democracy, and I want her to grow up assuming that she will play that role. little more than watching me mark a

explained that voting was done in secret so that people could vote freely and without worrying about what anyone else thought. She let me pull the little levers for Walter Mondale and a series of other candidates and ballot initiatives. Then she pulled the big lever, the curtains opened, and we left.

Of course, Mondale had a terrible day. But for me, it was a brief peek into what I understood to be the lives of adults. For me, the democratic process became something tangible and important. I looked forward to the day I would be able to cast my own votes, and I couldn't have imagined that grown men and women would have the right to vote yet choose not to participate. I registered to vote on my 18th birthday, and I voted for the first time on

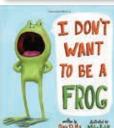


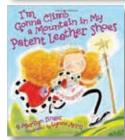




By Laure Latham













pril is a month to celebrate nature in all its splendor. With spring well on the way and longer days to enjoy the sun, kids can look forward to Earth Day and Arbor Day this month. To get into the mood and learn to love nature, these new books are alternatively gorgeous, silly, inspiring, and fun. Your kids will learn without even realizing it. Read on!

The Secret Garden Written by Jennifer Adams, illustrated by Alison Oliver

This stylish and abridged introduction to the classic children's book is a great way for babies to learn about spring and summer flowers. With pages filled with snapdragons, daffodils, and snowdrops, *The Secret Garden* is an open invitation to go outside and enjoy your local botanical gardens! *Ages: 0 to 3 years*

I Don't Want to Be a Frog Written by Dev Petty, illustrated by Mike Boldt

Frog trouble! When a young frog decides that he doesn't want to be a frog and that he'd rather be a cat, a pig, or a rabbit, his father needs to talk him out of it for all sorts of good reasons. There's nothing wrong with being a frog! Silly humor and an argumentative young frog make for a great read about self-acceptance and some of our favorite animals. You'll never look at frogs quite the same way.

Ages: 18 months to 5 years

I'm Gonna Climb a Mountain in My Patent Leather Shoes

Written by Marilyn Singer, illustrated by Lynne Avril

Sadie is more than ready for a camping trip with her family, but this is one little girl who intends to enjoy the great outdoors dressed for the ball! She looks for Bigfoot in her ballerina skirt, harvests huckleberries with a purple party bag, and rules by the fire in her shiny silver crown. Kids will root for this happy camper who doesn't care if her clothes get dirty, just as long as she's outside. *Ages: preschool to 3 years*

Welcome to the Neighborwood Written and illustrated by Shawn Sheehy

At the edge of a forest, a spider spins her web while a hummingbird uses spider web silk strands to build her nest. Using interactive paper art as a visual entry to the text, this gorgeous pop-up book introduces children to the habits and survival skills of seven different animals. Since the author is a former science teacher, kids will also learn fun facts about the environments described. *Ages: 4 to 8 years*

Animalium (Welcome to the Museum) Written by Jenny Broom, illustrated by Katie Scott Imagine a trip to the natural history museum of your dreams. In this book, children will discover different galleries with animal species that live on our planet. Meticulously illustrated, the book provides scientific text on habitats, animal families, and quick facts on each of the 200 featured animals. With its huge format and beautiful details, Animalium will offer hours of literary exploration for your young naturalists.

Ages: 8 to 12 years

Raging Rivers (Horrible Geography) Written by Anita Ganeri, illustrated by Mike Phillips
If you thought that geography at school was boring, wait until your kids get this book. They're going to ask
for more! Part of the Horrible Geography series, Raging Rivers teaches kids about roaring waterfalls,
hair-rising rapids, and how the Grand Canyon was formed—with humor thrown in. Expect trivial, unusual,
and fun but completely accurate facts about liquid geography. If only all non-fiction books were this
entertaining. Ages: 8 to 12 years

Laure is the author of the mommy blog Frog Mom (www.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 reach her at info@frogmom.com.

Even Better Together

GGMG & JCCSF are pleased to continue another year of partnership.



Our partnership with the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco (JCCSF) boosts the benefits of your regular Golden Gate Mothers Group (GGMG) membership. Beginning April 1, 2015, your \$75 membership fee opens the door to even more activities for you and your child. GGMG members receive discounts on select JCCSF programs, like Kinder Fun Klub and kids' swim lessons. But that's not all.

The Perks of Childhood

- 50% off the first three months of JCCSF Swim School lessons
- One three-pass card for any JCCSF Kinder Fun Klub drop-in music, art, Spanish, dance or gym class
- The opportunity to register for GGMG-exclusive KinderGym classes (two per year)
- One GGMG-exclusive tour at each of our preschool locations
- 50% off JCCSF preschool and afterschool program application fees
- 10% off any JCCSF camp

The Rewards of Parenthood

- Two single-day passes to the JCCSF Fitness Center
- \$100 off the registration fee for a new Fitness Center Membership
- Free registration when upgrading from an Individual to a JCCSF Family Fitness Center Membership
- \$40 worth of free ICCSF childcare for new Fitness Center Members
- Seasonal invitations to register for select JCCSF classes at a 40% discount

How to Redeer

- First redemption must be done in person. Bring the cover of the current GGMG newsletter or your GGMG membership
 card to the JCCSF Front Desk. Newsletter must bear the name and address of the GGMG member.
- After the first redemption, GGMG members can register in person or by phone.
- GGMG members are eligible for the above discounts through February 28, 2016.

Restrictions

- Swim Lesson discounts are valid only for new participants.
- Complimentary JCCSF Fitness Center passes expire six months from date of activation and GGMG members must pick up passes from the JCCSF Membership Office.
- $\bullet \quad \text{Cannot be combined with other offers. All discounts are one-time offers; cannot redeem offers used in previous years.}$



Jewish Community Center of San Francisco 3200 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94118 415.292.1200 ● jccsf.org



From Womb to World

Purging for a Good Cause

By Shaheen Bilgrami

re you a mom-to-be, desperate to purge your home of unwanted stuff before baby arrives? Are you an exhausted mom of an infant, drowning in a sea of pregnancy clothes, a surplus of baby gifts, and outgrown diapers and clothes? You can get rid of your unwanted stuff while helping to improve the lives of less fortunate families by donating to one of the charities listed below.

WHO?	WHY?	WHAT?	HOW?
SF Smiles sfsmiles.org	In the words of the founder, Chad Christensen: "We work with a lot of different organizations in San Francisco. We collect the items and move them out to where they are needed. We also help families in crisis."	Diapering, feeding and bathing supplies for babies, car seats, strollers, bouncy chairs, swings, walkers, bassinets, cribs, changing tables, play pens/pack 'n plays, carriers and slings, baby and children's clothing and shoes, maternity clothes, breast pumps, and toys.	Email <i>chad@sfsmiles.org</i> to schedule a drop off/pick up. Pick up has a nominal fee of \$20. Drop off is at 1380 16th Ave.
Project Night Night projectnightnight.org	Project Night Night provides Night Night Packages, each containing a blanket, a book, and a stuffed toy in a canvas tote bag to homeless children of all ages. These packages help ease the anxiety associated with shelter living.	New or newly handmade blankets, children's books, and new stuffed animals.	Drop off at Hotel Del Sol on Webster Street or at Peekadoodle Kidsclub. You can also request well-wishers to underwrite the cost of a Night Night Package in your name in lieu of baby gifts.
Homeless Prenatal Program homelessprenatal.org	The Homeless Prenatal Program (HPP) empowers low-income and homeless families to find within themselves the strength and confidence they need to transform their lives.	Gently used and clean clothing, strollers, car seats (unexpired), diapers/wipes (can be opened), and baby food and formula (unopened and unexpired).	Drop off goods on Fridays between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. at 2500 18th St.
La Casa de las Madres lacasa.org	La Casa de las Madres empowers victims of domestic violence and helps them to transform their lives. It also seeks to prevent future violence by educating the community, and by redefining public perceptions about domestic violence.	Diapers and wipes, new toiletries, and baby formula (unopened and unexpired). You can also donate gently used adult clothing, accessories, and home goods to the Community Thrift Store at 623 Valencia St. in La Casa's name.	Drop off at 1663 Mission St., Suite 225. If you call in advance, they will meet you at the curb for pickup (415.503.0500).
Help a Mother Out helpamotherout.org	Help a Mother Out works to improve baby and family well being by increasing access to diapers for families in need through their network of community partners.	Diapers (in original packaging), new cloth pocket diapers, and unopened baby wipes.	Leave at drop bins located at DayOne Baby, JAMaRoo Kids, Natural Resources, Peekadoodle Kidsclub, and Recess. GGMG Community Support is partnering with Help a Mother Out to host a diaper drive in May.
Compass Family Services compass-sf.org	Compass helps more than 5,000 parents and children each year by providing the services they need to overcome the hurdles of homelessness and poverty, and become self-sufficient.	Diapers, wipes, formula, travel- sized toiletries (unopened and unexpired), new socks and underwear, new and gently used laundered clothing, including maternity wear, new and gently used shoes, and strollers. Check for specifics on the website.	Fill in the online form or email Kris Otridge at kotridge@ compass-sf.org. They will select which of their seven outreach programs most needs your items, and request that you deliver there.

Shaheen Bilgrami is freelance writer, editor, and blogger. You'll often find her chasing her 3-year-old daughter, Afsheen, through the parks of Parkside. Contact her through her website, www.shaheenbilgrami.com or her blog, www.girlinfogcity.com.

New Arrivals













Amy P. Baby Louise Peach
Jamie G. Baby Anne Louise
Laurel K. Baby Augustus Jesse
Catherine B. Baby Sloane Elizabeth
Nicole N. Baby Vera Kieu
Kaitlin K. Baby Benson Elliot

Each new mama and baby will receive a **Babyganics** Baby-Safe World Essentials Gift Set. These plant-based, tear-free, and hypoallergenic cleansers and lotion clean and protect skin from head to toe. Perfect for the on the go parent!

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To announce your new arrival in the magazine, fill out the form at www.ggmg.org/community.html.





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Who Are the People in Your Neighborhood?

By Juli Fraga

Photographs by Carmen Dunham Photography

ne of the best parts of living in San Francisco is the vibrant and quaint neighborhoods that are scattered throughout this seven-mile city. While many of our living situations are creative and lack the spacious yards and parking that suburban life offers, limited space need not affect our abilities to become involved in our neighborhoods. There are many ways we can join together and become involved within our communities.

Getting acquainted

Becoming acquainted with your neighbors is a wonderful way to build community. I remember when my husband, daughter and I moved to Noe Valley several years ago. I posted a 'want-ad' on the GGMG forums requesting to meet other moms in the

neighborhood. I met a couple of other moms with young children who shared information about the neighborhood with us which was very helpful as we adjusted to our new home. Below are some creative ways you can interact with your neighbors.

Progressive dinners

These dinners are a fun and creative way to meet your neighbors. Generally, you plan a 4- or 5-course meal and visit one home per

course. For example, you might start at one neighbor's home for drinks and then head to someone else's home for appetizers. A main course might be shared at another neighbor's house, and you might all finish the evening with dessert at another person's home.

Setting up a Yahoo list-serv for your neighborhood (if there isn't one already) is a great way to organize a progressive dinner. In our old neighborhood, we had them several times per year. Some neighbors even plan block parties and book bouncy houses and face painters for their neighborhood; these parties are a great way to bring everyone together for an afternoon of fun.

GGMG playgroups

Many moms and families want to meet other families with children so they can easily set up playdates, yet many new mothers are unsure of how to meet moms in their neighborhoods. Don't forget about the wonderful resource that our GGMG playgroups offer. There are age-based playgroups set up by GGMG volunteers. Members can subdivide into smaller groups based on commonalities, such as neighborhoods, stay-at-home moms, working moms, etc. During the new months of motherhood, this is a helpful resource and a wonderful way to meet some new friends. GGMG also offers Neighborhood Toddler playgroups. These groups are designed to connect moms with toddlers with other

One of the best ways to prevent becoming a victim of crime is by learning how to protect yourself and your family

moms and toddlers in their neighborhoods. These groups meet weekly at a neighborhood playground, and many have playdates for working moms, too. The groups have a monthly mom's night out. There are also special interest groups for moms with shared interests, such as cooking, knitting, writing, etc. These groups are filled with mixed-age children. All GGMG members can join a neighborhood playgroup online.

Neighborhood events

Band together with your neighbors for a community event, such as a community garage sale or a service project. In our former neighborhood, we had a garage sale every spring. Not only did this motivate everyone to complete their spring cleaning, but it was a fun way to connect. If you have a neighborhood yard sale, you can even donate the money earned to a local charity organization. If you connect with other new moms in your neighborhood, you can collect unused and gently used baby items, such as strollers, clothing, and toys and donate them to nonprofit organizations, such as the Homeless Prenatal Program. Another fun idea is to organize a local clothing swap for women's or children's clothes. For these events, someone offers to host the event at

her home. Clothing is gathered and organized by size and type, and everyone who attends leaves with a new outfit or items for their kids. You can even host a toy/book drive and swap toys and books for your children, too.



Making our neighborhoods safe

One of the most effective ways to reduce crime in your neighborhood is by working together to make your neighborhood safe. If you are interested in setting up a neighborhood watch program, the website www.sfsafe.org has all the information you need. The SAFE agency manages the neighborhood watch program for the city and county of San Francisco.

The SF Safe website has a map of all neighborhood watch programs. As of right now, there are neighborhood watches set up in most San Francisco neighborhoods. If your neighborhood is not listed, you can complete a service request form to create a group where you live. All neighborhood watch programs are subsidized by the SFPD and DPW. As a result, Neighborhood Watch signs are installed on all blocks, but watch programs must be organized through the SAFE program in order to access these signs. Your watch group must also meet at least four



times a year, and complete the SAFE application that you can find on the SFSAFE website. These signs communicate to your neighbors, as well as others visiting your neighborhood, that safety is something you are all working towards, and that everyone is involved in reporting suspicious and criminal activity. Watch programs are also an effective way to set up a communication network with your neighbors regarding neighborhood safety.

According to SFPD, the most common neighborhood crimes are robberies. San Francisco received a score of 3 out of 100 on the crime index, which means it is safer than 3% of U.S. cities (www.neighborhoodscout. com). San Francisco is an urban area, and, consequently, has higher rates of violent crime. For example, in California, the chance of someone being a victim of crime is 1 in 249, while in San Francisco, one's chance is 1 in 116. Becoming familiar with the types of crime that are common in your neighborhood and getting involved with your neighborhood watch program are proactive ways to prevent

crime where you live. Another website, sanfrancisco.crimespotting.org, provides an interactive map that lists crimes reported by neighborhood. NextDoor.com is another way to stay abreast of neighborhood news.

Similarly, Twitter is a great resource with some neighborhood associations sharing information via tweets.

Another way to enhance home security is by using a security system. With technological advances, it's possible to set up home surveillance systems via your cable or internet company and by purchasing your own surveillance camera. You can also set up a home alarm system, which alerts your local police department when the alarm is activated.

Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT)

Anyone who lives in San Francisco is well aware of earthquake safety. After the Napa earthquake last summer, the thought of a larger-scale quake rocking San Francisco has become more prominent. After the 1989





earthquake, fire personnel and community members recognized the need for emergency preparedness training and formed Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT). It offers disaster preparedness training, and you can find a list of classes on this website: www.sf-fire.org. In the event of a major disaster, first responders will be overwhelmed with emergency calls. NERT

training teaches basic emergency and disaster preparedness skills so you can help in the event of a crisis. This 20-hour training class is comprised of six classes and each class lasts for three hours. NERT training is free to the public.

While you never know when an earthquake might strike, the NERT training program can boost your self-confidence as you learn

hands-on, life-saving information that can help in the midst of a crisis. This training is also a great way to build community. If your neighborhood has an association, you can take the training with your neighbors, and develop a neighborhood safety plan as well. The website also lists all NERT teams in San Francisco. By looking at the list, you can find out who is trained in your neighborhood. Some neighborhoods even have NERT list-servs and Yahoo groups set up so that neighbors can share information. When it comes to disaster preparedness, it's a good idea to set up a safety plan with friends and family members, as well as childcare centers and providers. Choose a public location, such as a parking lot or local park, as a meeting place. Be sure to have some water, nonperishable food items, blankets, and warm clothing and shoes stored in your house and car for safety. �

Juli Fraga is a psychologist, writer and mom. Her essays about motherhood & parenting have appeared in The Washington Post, The New York Times, Motherlode, and The Huffington Post.

Civil Involvement: From a Dad Who Knows

Neighborhood Supervisor, Mark Farrell

ark Farrell, a native San Franciscan and father of three, represents San Francisco's District 2 on the Board of Supervisors. As a supervisor, Mark is always looking for ways to encourage families to stay and grow here in the city. One of the best ways in which families can become engaged is by volunteering in their neighborhoods or with issues and projects that they care about.

For example, Mark and his family distribute holiday gifts with their local firefighters on Christmas Day, and they are active with a number of nonprofit and faith-based organizations that help the homeless. He advises finding issues or projects that you are passionate about. The Volunteer Center in San Francisco

(thevolunteercenter.net) is a great resource for volunteer opportunities in the City, with age appropriate and family-friendly options. The center connects individuals, nonprofits, and businesses with opportunities and resources that are needed to support local communities.

Public safety is one of Mark's number one priorities. He is often asked how neighbors can get involved to keep their neighborhoods safe and crime-free. He suggests setting up a neighborhood watch, because no one knows the neighborhood better than the neighbors themselves. He also recommends the SF SAFE program. He says one of the best ways to prevent becoming a victim of crime is by learning how to protect yourself and your family.

The Board of Supervisors acts as our city council, serves as our local legislature, and is our representative in government to fix neighborhood issues. Mark and his colleagues work with the neighborhoods on a variety of projects and proposals, such as enacting and voting on local laws here in San Francisco. If you have a concern about your neighborhood, you can reach out to your local supervisor at www.sfbos. org. Neighborhood supervisors help remedy issues like filling potholes, and they also help with neighborhood politics.

Mark's district, District 2, includes the Presidio, Marina, Cow Hollow, Pacific Heights, Presidio Heights, Anza Vista, Laurel Heights, Jordan Park, the Lake Street corridor, Sea Cliff, and parts of Russian Hill. •



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Dollars and Doers:

Power in Public Education

By Gail Cornwall

Photographs by Natasha Babaian Photography

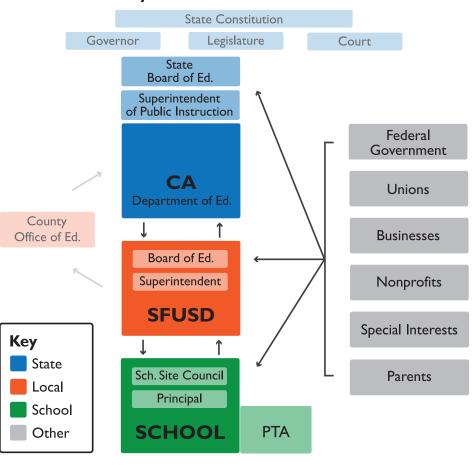
ublic education funding and governance in California have long been nonsensical to experts and virtually incomprehensible to the rest of us. In a flurry of recent legislative and administrative action, policymakers set out to reform what the Stanford Center for Education Policy and Analysis described as the "remarkably crazy quilt of interacting authorities...not aligned for purpose of accountability or action." Though the import of new laws regarding public school funding and control is difficult to comprehend standing alone, a little historical perspective makes the basics surprisingly clear and fascinating. With an understanding of these essentials of public school governance, parents, educators, local business owners, philanthropists, and taxpayers can effectively engage with the system.

California's pendulum swing

The story of California public schools' funding is best envisioned as a swinging pendulum. Prior to the 1970s, the school board in a given town set the rate at which property taxes were levied, and that revenue directly funded local schools. As a result, education policy developed in a decentralized manner as each school board made its own policy decisions.

In the 1971 Serrano v. Priest decision, the California Supreme Court ruled this funding system unconstitutional after finding that it "invidiously discriminates against the poor because it makes the quality of a child's education a function of the wealth of his parents and neighbors." The Court imposed revenue limits in an attempt to redistribute wealth across the state, yet school boards still collected funds locally and spent anything under the limit without interference. Later that decade,

Power Players in California Public Education



however, California voters passed Proposition 13, which prohibited school boards from levying taxes and capped property taxes at one percent of assessed value. As a result, each year between when a home is purchased and when it is sold, property taxes go down in real value (since the market value of the home outpaces the assessed value). This dramatically-lowered ceiling on both tax rate and taxable value dried up the historic well of education funding.

As the state struggled to find money to fill the gap, the quality of schools declined. In response, Propositions 98 and 111 required that a larger portion of the general budget be allocated to education. After Prop 98, approximately 60 percent of K-12 education funding came from the state, 30 percent from local sources largely funneled through the state, and 10 percent from federal programs. As a result of *Serrano* and Props 13, 98, and 111, the locus of education funding moved from local school boards to the state level.

Control followed. The California State
Legislature, sometimes acting upon
gubernatorial proposal, has always passed
laws relating to schooling, codified as the
Education Code. For decades following
Serrano and the propositions, however, state
legislators and overlapping administrative
agencies also set policy by tying funds to
particular programs. School districts got
much of their budget via little bundles of
money, each set aside for a specific function.
This type of categorical funding, which

(CDE) and its head, the constitutionallyestablished and elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI), continue to administer the state's school system. Many of the CDE's policy recommendations and proposed regulations must be approved by a separate constitutionally-established body, the 11-member, largely Governor-appointed State Board of Education (SBE). The SBE commands quite a bit of authority in this role. The SPI serves as the SBE's Secretary and Executive Officer, but he does not get a vote. While the relationship is rather confusing, the SBE, SPI, and CDE largely work in concert. For example, the SBE is the authority responsible for approving standards (like the Common Core) and adopting curriculum frameworks, instructional materials, and assessments recommended by the SPI after research and development by the CDE.

In 2013, legislation referred to as the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) altered the way these agencies interact with local players. Rather than distributing funds earmarked for a proliferation of small policy goals, legislators now give school districts the bulk of their funds based on average daily attendance. From this base grant of per-pupil funding, additional funds are distributed in order to support a small handful of issues that are a priority for the legislature, such as small class size at the K-3 level and providing support for targeted disadvantaged students (like English learners, those eligible to receive a free or reduced-price meal, and foster youth).

Rather than completing separate paperwork for many little grants, school districts engage in one big, self-directed exercise under LCFF. They must hold public meetings in order to adopt a Local Control

There's a range of opportunity for parents to make an impact based on the way in which they want the issue addressed.

operated very similarly to the stringsattached federal grant money received by districts, kept most policy-making in Sacramento.

Over the last few years, many changes have been made.

The California Department of Education

and Accountability Plan (LCAP), setting goals in eight areas and a related budget. County Offices of Education (COEs) play a more robust role as they can make recommendations regarding school districts' LCAPs and have ultimate approval authority. School districts



must then annually report to the COEs the actions and expenditures made to achieve the goals, progress toward the goals, and an updated set of goals.

This process shifts significant budgetary decision-making authority back to the local level. As SFUSD School Board of Education Vice President Matt Haney explains, "Education is less of a state-determined enterprise now. We have a lot more discretion and flexibility in how we use our LCFF dollars." Yet Sacramento legislators still control changes to the Education Code, and the CDE and SBE continue to enforce mandates and issue regulations.

Requirements as seemingly trivial as the number of minutes spent in PE class remain state-mandated.

It is unclear how involved the state will be, especially with respect to politically hot issues such as suspension and expulsion policy. Erin Gabel, former advisor to State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, explains, "The ink is barely dry. The Legislature just handed over the keys to the car. They have yet to see how they feel about what they've authorized. Local school districts have yet to obtain any student data to prove that they can manage the responsibility. They may have the keys...but it's still unclear how much driving they'll actually get to do."

In other words, the extent to which control will follow the funding pendulum remains to be seen.

San Francisco Unified School District

The San Francisco Unified School District

(SFUSD) is the seventh largest district in California, and it educates approximately 56,000 students each year. Employees in the Central Office work to support SFUSD's 103 schools. They report via various intermediary directors, assistants, and officers to the SFUSD Superintendent who in turn answers to the SFUSD Board of Education. The San Francisco COE is completely coterminous with and not independent from SFUSD. (Since SFUSD cannot support and monitor itself, the district submits its LCAP directly to the CDE.)

After completing the LCAP process, SFUSD takes the funds received from Sacramento via the LCFF and uses its own funding formula to distribute the money between schools. Since 2002, SFUSD has used the Weighted Student Formula (WSF) that, like the LCFF, largely employs a per-pupil base rate (that changes by grade level) with funds added if the student falls into one of the "targeted"

disadvantaged students" categories.

Additional funding is then provided to schools with populations of these students exceeding 55 percent in the form of concentration grants. Thus, schools with a higher proportion of disadvantaged students receive more per-capita funding. Whether this process will change in the wake of LCFF is unclear.

Who determines how schools spend their allotted portions? Every two years, each school holds an election for its School Site Council (SSC). SSCs vary in the number of participants, but different groups must be represented according to fixed proportions: half are parents (or students, in the case of secondary schools) and community members and half are school staff members; the Principal is always a member of the SSC. Tiffany Kendall Obayashi, Assistant Principal of Rooftop School, assures that "even though our SSCs consist of elected members, SSC meetings are always open to the school community."

SSCs—monitored by the SFUSD Central Office—develop an academic plan and budget in order to determine how best to meet SFUSD's goals. "Each year the SSC holds two formal Community Meetings to gather input from families regarding their children's education," says Obayashi, "and it is vital that community members have their voices heard during this annual planning process." The Principal is charged with implementing the resulting plan.



Over the past decade, allocations via the WSF have left many schools with insufficient funding. In some schools, parent organizations—known as Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) or Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs)—raise funds to decrease the impact of the shortfall. Jeremy Adam Smith of the San Francisco Public Press reports that in 2002, elementary school PTAs/PTOs "brought in a total of just \$592,000. But through 2011, their combined budgets had ballooned to \$5.32 million, an increase of about 800 percent."

That doesn't mean all students benefit from the extra money. Smith explains that the "Grattan PTA has budgeted...almost \$1,000 per pupil. At Junipero Serra, where most students come from poor and immigrant families, the PTA raises approximately \$25 per pupil." Inequality in fundraising likely translates to a parental power imbalance as well. Because fundraising doesn't just add to the pot of money available to the SSC in educating students but rather is spent at the direction of the PTA/PTO, it stands to reason

that these groups wield more power to shape the school when they raise more funds.

Opportunities for influence

The resulting picture is three tiers of control at the state, local, and school level with largely parallel structure. Teachers (individually and via the unions), the federal government, nonprofits, philanthropic organizations, businesses, and other special interests interact with each layer of governance. Parents can, too.

The answer to the question "Who holds the power to help?" differs based on the desired impact level. Haney explains: "If your problem is about policy or about how resources are distributed in a broad way, take your concerns to the School Board. If it's about how a district policy is being implemented, go to your SSC and Principal. Fundraising for supplementation is a matter for the PTA. Take music, for example. If you think the district doesn't prioritize music education as a general matter, talk to the Board. If you've got a complaint about the way the specific music

class runs, go to your Principal. To fundraise for a part-time music teacher, try the PTA. There's a range of opportunity for parents to make an impact based on the way in which they want the issue addressed. Depending on your problem, you may want to bring it to the attention of multiple levels at the same time." And don't forget the chance to make a statewide impact. Don't like the Common Core? Head to Sacramento to the next SBE public meeting. Want vaccination to be mandatory for public school attendance? Lobby the legislature.

With a basic understanding of the various state, local, and school-level actors and their roles, all San Francisco stakeholders can take advantage of the increased transparency and broader participation wrought by recent reforms to become involved with the public schools in a meaningful way.

Gail Cornwall is a former public school teacher and recovering lawyer who now works as a stay-at-home mom of three and writes about motherhood. You can read more at joiedeviv.wordpress.com (maternal musings) and readymommy.wordpress.com (book reviews for moms).



Each week we blend local, organic, seasonal ingredients by hand in small batches and deliver them to your baby's highchair. From purees with spices, to finger foods, and now toddler bites- we offer lots of yummy options for your wee ones. Our little eaters rave about the pear, persimmon & cardamom puree, white bean pesto with farro, chicken-carrot meatballs, and butternut squash-apple muffins, to name a few! We also whip up healthy and delicious snacks for preschools.

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How a Bill Becomes a Law

By Sallie H

Photographs by Allison Busch Photography

moved to California for graduate school almost a decade ago. One of the first things I noticed at my new university was the people hanging around the student center trying to get us to sign petitions. These were not student activists. Naturally, as a D.C. native, I smelled a rat.

I asked my husband, who is from Sacramento and once served as a gubernatorial intern, to explain what in tarnation was going on. I learned

that the California system of government is complex and unique, and I am going to unravel it for you with the help of San Francisco Assembly Member David Chiu and Erica Murray, President and Chief Executive Officer of the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (i.e., a lobbyist). Sing along if you already know the words. If you don't, have a seat and listen carefully.

What are those guys with the clipboards doing?

The guys with the weather-beaten clipboards hanging around the student center (and post office and grocery store) are sometimes volunteers who believe in their cause and sometimes paid collectors. The number of clipboards tells the tale: pros are equal-opportunity collectors.

Why would you pay someone to collect signatures? There are two ways to put a proposed law, also known as a proposition, on the state ballot: 1) the legislature can put a proposition on the ballot (more on that later), or 2) through the initiative process, whereby the voters of California, or anyone else for that matter, can propose a new law. A proposition needs to be backed by a certain number of signatures in order to make the ballot. For proposed constitutional amendments, you must have valid signatures from eight percent of the people who voted in the last gubernatorial

election; for other statutes, you need five percent.

Furthermore, a valid signature is only from a registered voter who gives his or her real address on the petition. The California Secretary of State goes through every signature, checking for authenticity, and invalidates somewhere between 25 and 30 percent. For that reason, a rule of thumb many organizations use is to gather 50 percent more signatures than they need. Many unregistered voters sign; others don't give their addresses either out of haste or concern about privacy issues. So if you really want a proposition to go on the ballot, give your real address.

There is more work behind the scenes on the government side. Only an official petition

counts, and before the paper you sign even becomes an official petition, the attorney general's office has to translate the proposed legislation into valid legal terminology. The legislative analyst also provides a report of fiscal impact so you have an idea of the consequences of what you are backing.

Another reason to pay signature gatherers is that the clock is ticking from the time the attorney general approves the petition.

Sponsors have 150 days to gather signatures. The petition must be submitted to the secretary of state 131 days before the next election. And the attorney general and legislative analyst each have 25 and 15 days, respectively, to do their thing. It can be 311 days from submitting your idea to the attorney general to election day. So it's easy, but not that easy.

Is that all there is to it? Well, yes, pretty much. If you want to declare purple popsicle day, you get your signatures, submit your paperwork, and it goes on the ballot. There is no provision in the constitution that prevents "silly" propositions from making it onto the ballot. The one proviso was added in 2011, 100 years after the initiative system was born, and that is that all initiatives must be on the November ballot. There can be no special elections for purple popsicle day.

Whither the initiative process?

Since 1911, Californians have been able to guide the trajectory of our state through the initiative process. It allows the people of California to make laws and dictate how the state spends our tax money.

According to Assemblyman Chiu, "Back then, it made sense because special interests such as Southern Pacific Railroad had taken over Sacramento. However, today the tables have turned, and we increasingly see well-financed interests turning to the initiative process to pursue narrow policy agendas. What may have worked in the early 1900s has changed dramatically in 21st-century California."

Some critics derisively call it "ballot-box budgeting." Public education spending, for example, is required by the constitution to be more than 40 percent of the total budget, the largest mandate but by no means the only one. Working around voter-approved

constitutional mandates for spending makes it hard to fit in other programs that either the voters or the legislature would like to implement. And repealing these mandates requires another voter-backed drive.

Many supporters of the initiative process think that it has been corrupted. It's not your average citizen putting out a bake sale table and a petition anymore. Companies and industries, even those located outside the state, can be behind initiatives. Chiu writes, "Critics of the initiative process have a strong argument—if you have enough money, you can pay signature gatherers to get anything on the ballot. It makes sense to look at reforms to ensure at least that ballot measures get a public hearing and public vetting before they head to the voters."

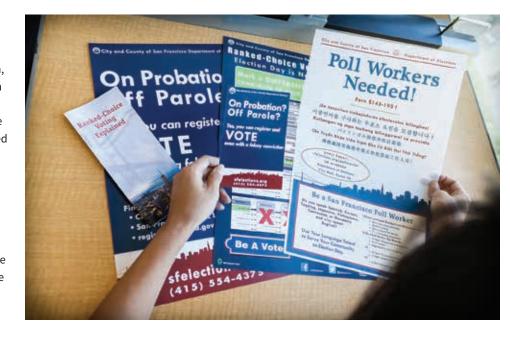
The legislature can put propositions on the ballot, too. In fact, it can sometimes be better to leave it to the experts. Per Chiu, "Proposals...that are placed on the ballot by the legislature

It looks as though we like the idea that we have so much influence, but we aren't always willing to exercise that right.

and the governor go through a rigorous vetting process through policy committees, and require a two-thirds vote in both the Assembly and the Senate. They then must earn the signature of the Governor before going on the ballot. This process makes it more likely that the measures won't be poorly written and have unintended consequences. However, initiative measures may get on the ballot by signatures, which means they don't go through a public vetting process. These measures are more likely to have mistakes that would require a 'clean-up' bill that can only be approved by millions of California voters again at the ballot box, which is a very expensive undertaking."

Regardless of who puts them on the ballot, any constitutional amendment must be subject to referendum, i.e., a general vote by the electorate. So why make a constitutional amendment instead of just a plain old law? The first reason is political: it is hard to repeal a constitutional amendment, so you can make it stick. The other major reason is legal—and circular. Anything that alters an existing constitutional requirement must be altered within the constitution, and thus, on the ballot.

Since so many of our laws are not just plain old laws but written into the constitution, we end up not just with a long ballot but also with a long constitution. In book form, the California constitution is over an inch thick. Our constitution is the third longest in the world, after India and Louisiana.

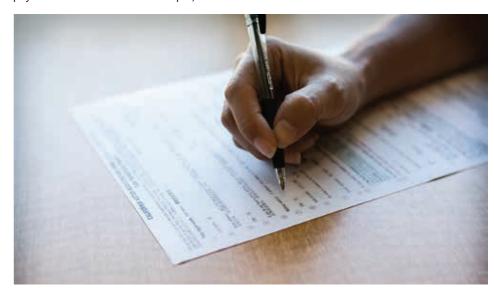


But why aren't they just making laws instead of putting everything on the ballot?

First, our constitution requires our approval for certain things. As Chiu explains, "Some actions can only be taken at the ballot box. The Legislature and the Governor are constitutionally bound to put general obligation bonds on the ballot. These bonds pay for essential items. For example,

petitions. Of those, 1,367 initiatives failed to qualify for the ballot and 363 initiatives qualified for the ballot. Of the 363 that qualified, 123 initiatives were approved by the voters.

In contrast, over 4,000 bills were introduced in the California legislature in the 2013-2014 session alone. At the end of 2013, over 800 new laws were passed in Sacramento. Many critics, including Governor Jerry Brown, say that this is too many given our limited



California is in desperate need of updated water infrastructure improvements and projects up and down California, especially during this historic drought. The Legislature voted in favor of a \$7.5 billion water bond—which then went on the ballot for voter approval. It was approved with 67 percent of the vote, and now California can start investing in updated water infrastructure."

Second, the legislature does make laws, and a lot of them. Far more laws are passed in Sacramento without our influence than are placed on the ballot. In fact, every legislator introduces somewhere between 10 and 20 bills over the course of the session. Murray explains, "There are so many bills. A big part of their job is figuring out what they want to sponsor. With term limits, it's like musical chairs. Sometimes a legislator will pick up a bill that a retired person was planning to sponsor."

According to the Secretary of State's office, since 1912, a total of 1,828 initiatives have been titled and summarized for circulation of

resources and the perceived frivolity of some bills introduced. (A search for purple popsicle day in the legislature's records did not, however, yield any results.)

An open process no matter where an idea comes from

An organization can also sponsor or cosponsor legislation. However, this is not some dark story of Washington lobbyists writing legislation that Congress then rubber-stamps. It is very easy to find out if there is an organization co-sponsoring legislation in California because it is mandatory to disclose that relationship. As Murray, a veteran of Capitol Hill, notes, "A congressman in D.C. would never say, 'I'm working with so-and-so.' Here, it is a bit more above board."

There is also a public comment period wherein anyone, whether it is a person or another organization, can submit a statement about proposed legislation. These statements can be in support, neutral, or in opposition. Murray is a fan: "It is an open process, a

deliberately open process. There are many ways of getting your voice heard." Some organizations release opinions all the time, and some less frequently.

Murray believes that term limits, wherein assembly members can serve only three terms or six years and senate members only two terms or eight years, have caused a bit of a problem. "Term limits have given more influence to the staffers. They have everchanging bosses, so the staffers are the only source of institutional knowledge. This is tough in a state the size of a country. We spend a lot of time on re-education." To her point, the 2012 voter-approved reform of 1990's voter-approved term limits law was due in part to concern that legislators were relying too heavily on lobbyists.

The great irony: high stakes and low voter turnout

Chiu and Murray agree that voter turnout is a problem.

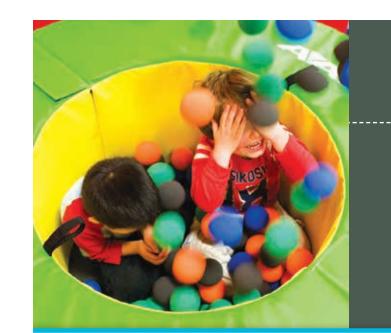
Chiu puts it into historical perspective:

"The biggest challenge to our democracy is plummeting voter turnout. In November 2014, only 31 percent of eligible Californians voted in Gov. Jerry Brown's election to a fourth term, compared to the 57.5 percent of eligible voters who turned out for Gov. Pat Brown's election to a second term in 1962. We have to reverse this trend, even as we continue a vigorous discussion of how to improve our initiative process."

Murray posits that our highly interactive ballot system might contribute to that. "We have one of the lowest voter turnouts in the country and a disaffected electorate. Contrast that with the proposition system, a system that asks so much of its citizens. It's a huge burden. Think about the wide diversity of our state, the most diverse in the country. Yet we are all asked to participate in this system."

As Chiu notes, though, "Voters still say that they support the initiative process, and it's an important safety valve for our democracy." It looks as though we like the idea that we have so much influence, but we aren't always willing to exercise that right. •

Sallie Hess is an interior designer and has two children, a 2-year-old girl and a 4-year-old boy. Check out her website at www.salliehess.com.





PEEKADOODLE KIDSCAMP

[EXPLORATION FOR THE MIND]

Kidscamp offers the perfect balance between self-directed exploratory play and structured projects led by our teachers. Each day consists of cooking, art and fitness classes that correspond with the theme of the week. In addition to the structured classes, campers will have plenty of time to explore the indoor PlaySpace, the Romper Room, and our newly constructed outdoor play area.

FOR KIDS AGES 3-5. MONDAY - FRIDAY. 9AM - IPM CALL TODAY TO REGISTER!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OUR KIDSCAMP PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT US AT 415.440.7335 OR VISIT WWW.PEEKADOODLE.COM/KIDSCAMP

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GGMG events

About GGMG Events: Events listed on these pages are either exclusive to GGMG members or are offered to GGMG members at a discount. Generally, registration is required and can be completed by following the REGISTRATION instructions listed under the event details or at www.qqmq.org/events.html (BigTent). Rules and policies vary. GGMG members and their families only.

GGMG volunteers may occasionally take photos during our events for use in this publication or on the GGMG/BigTent website. Please understand these photographs may include images of all attendees (including children).

Vendors who would like to partner with GGMG, please contact the appropriate committee. Email addresses are listed on page 3.



Indicates events appropriate for infants (0-12 months). Many also welcome toddlers and preschoolers (see registration rules for more details).

KIDS ACTIVITIES

Unless otherwise noted, parent participation is required for all Kids Activities events.



Mazel Tots, Bagels and Babies at Congregation Emanu-El

A weekly playdate to enjoy music, stories, and puppets as we prepare to welcome Shabbat on Fridays and celebrate Havdalah on Mondays.

> DATE: Mondays and Fridays in April (no playdates on 4/3, 4/6, 4/10)

9:30 to 11 a.m. TIME: PLACE: 2 Lake St.

COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Drop In. All ages are welcome.

Music Jiggle Jam at Carmel Blue

With a background in early childhood development, teacher Rado brings music and movement to life through playful songs, games, and activities. Choose between two half-hour sessions.

> DATE: Friday, April 3

4:30 p.m. (ages 6 to 18 months)

5:15 p.m. (all ages)

PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave. \$10 for one parent/one child,

\$5 for second parent

REGISTRATION: www.carmelblue.com



Enrich your baby development with songs, yoga, and infant massage.

> DATE: Friday, April 3 TIME: 11 a.m. to noon PLACE: 569 Ruger St.

COST: \$15 cash; \$18 credit card

REGISTRATION: Ages newborn to pre-crawlers. Introductory rate. Register by emailing info@itsyogakids.com

It's Yoga, Movers at It's Yoga Kids

Developmentally appropriate yoga movement with song and play for young movers with adult participation.

DATE: Friday, April 10 TIME: 9:30 a.m. or 12:15 p.m. PLACE: 569 Ruger St. COST: \$15 cash; \$18 credit card

REGISTRATION: Ages crawlers to 2 years. Introductory rate. Register by emailing info@itsyogakids.com.

DINO-Light Performance at JCCSF

Colorful electroluminescent creatures light up the darkness in DiNO-Light, a tale about a friendly dinosaur who wanders from home and discovers various creatures. Featuring cutting-edge puppetry and dance, set to both modern and classical music.

TIME: 11 a.m. PLACE: 3200 California St.

REGISTRATION: Ages 4 and up. Register on BigTent.

Register at seesawsf.com or email info@seesawsf.com. **Pacific Heights Health Club** Un Poquito Más Spanish at seesaw

Spanish story time, sing along, music and movement.

DATE: Tuesday, April 14 TIME: PLACE: 2356 Pine St. **COST:** \$10

REGISTRATION: Ages 6 months to 3 years. Introductory rate. at www.jamarookids.com or call 415.614.2001.

Yoga at JAMaROO Kids

ChouChou French at seesaw

animals, foods, shapes, and more.

TIME:

PLACE:

DATE:

TIME:

COST:

COST: FREE

DATE: Tuesday, April 7

Join experienced French teacher, Françoise, for a

11 a.m. to noon

multi-sensory exploration of numbers, colors, feelings,

600 Octavia St., Suite A

REGISTRATION: Ages 6 months to 3 years. Introductory rate.

Tuesday, April 7

10 to 11 a.m.

PLACE: 600 Octavia St., Suite A

Register at seesawsf.com or email info@seesawsf.com.

FRFF

Children will work on strengthening their growing bodies and stretching their little muscles, while improving their balance, coordination, and concentration

> DATE: Wednesday, April 8 TIME: 11 to 11:30 a.m. PLACE: 388 4th Ave. COST: \$10; siblings \$5

REGISTRATION: Ages 2 to 3 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.jamarookids.com or call 415.614.2001.

Ichi Ni San Music at seesaw

Children will sing, dance, and play a variety of musical instruments. Taught in Japanese and English.

DATE: Thursday, April 9 11 a.m. to noon PLACE: 600 Octavia St., Suite A

COST:

REGISTRATION: Ages 6 months to 3 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.seesawsf.com or email info@seesawsf.com.

DATE: Sunday, April 12 **COST:** \$12.75 per ticket

JAMaRoo Kids Storytime Music at

This class combines the joys of reading and music.

10:45 to 11:15 a.m.

REGISTRATION: Ages 2 to 5 years. Introductory rate. Register

Baby Boot Camp at Noe **Basketball Courts**

Try this innovative stroller fitness program to help regain or enhance pre-pregnancy fitness levels.

> Wednesday, April 15 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. PLACE: 24th and Douglass streets COST: FRFF

REGISTRATION: Participants must be at least 6 weeks postpartum. Register by emailing kathleen.laipply@ babybootcamp.com.

Building a Relationship with Your New Baby at Recess

Designed for mama and baby, learn songs and other bonding activities, enjoy a safe space to discuss the joys and challenges of being a parent, and learn through an informal discussion.

DATE: Thursday, April 16

10:30 a.m. to noon with free play

until 1 p.m.

Storytime Art at JAMaROO Kids

This class combines the joys of reading and art.

DATE: Wednesday, April 22 TIME: 10:30 to 11 a.m. PLACE: 88 4th Ave. **COST:** \$10

REGISTRATION: Ages 3 to 5 years. Introductory rate. Register at Jamarookids.com or call 415.614.2001.



PLACE: 470 Carolina St.

DATE: Friday, April 17

PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.

at Peekadoodle Kidsclub

We will start things off creating our own hungry

the class by turning into a group of beautiful

Friday, April 17

PLACE: 900 North Point St., Ste. F100

REGISTRATION: Ages 2 to 3. Call 415.440.7335 to reserve your

Infant Massage at Carmel Blue

Join Kari Marble for this great class introducing a deep

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

COST: Two parents for the price of one (\$65)

REGISTRATION: Ages 4 weeks to pre crawling. Register at

JAMaROO Kids Storytime

This class combines the joys of reading and music.

Monday, April 20

REGISTRATION: Ages infant to 2 years. Introductory rate.

Register at www.jamarookids.com or call 415.614.2001.

5 to 5:30 p.m.

hands-on bonding experience for parents and babies.

9 to 9:45 a.m.

spot. Space is limited. Parent participation required.

FRFF

DATE: Sunday April 19

PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.

Music at Sprout

PLACE: 1838 Union St.

\$5

caterpillars, followed by a cooking project that any

hungry caterpillar would be excited to eat. We will end

Register at www.carmelblue.com.

info@recess-sf.com.

for your little ones.

TIME:

COST:

butterflies!

DATE:

COST:

TIME:

www.carmelblue.com.

DATE:

TIME:

COST:

COST: \$32 per parent; \$53 per couple

REGISTRATION: Ages newborn to 1 year. Register by emailing

Intro to Solids and Baby Food

Cooking Class at Carmel Blue

Join in a live and interactive cooking class all about

Noon to 1:30 p.m.

REGISTRATION: Ages 3 to 10 months. Babies are welcome.

Totshop: A Very Hungry Afternoon

making the best, easiest, and most nutrient-rich foods

Baby Boot Camp at Crissy Field

This innovative stroller fitness program helps moms regain or enhance pre-pregnancy fitness levels.

DATE: Wednesday, April 29 TIME: 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

PLACE: 99 Yacht Rd. (meet at the landing to the west of the parking lot)

COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Participants must be at least 6 weeks postpartum. Register by emailing kathleen.laipply@ babybootcamp.com.



Intro to Baby Sign Language for Parents, Caregivers, and Siblings at Recess

You will learn about the important benefits of signing with your baby along with techniques to teach your pre-verbal baby to sign.

DATE: Thursday, April 30

TIME: 10:30 a.m. to noon with free play

until 1 p.m. PLACE: 470 Carolina St.

COST: \$32 per parent; \$53 per couple

REGISTRATION: Ages newborn to 12 months. Register by emailing info@recess-sf.com. Play space time is included.

Understanding Your Toddler: 6-week Play-n-Learn Series at **Carmel Blue**

Learn all about your child's rapidly developing brain and positive parenting approaches to navigate tantrums, the "No!" stage, and other toddler behaviors.

DATE: Tuesdays, April 28 through June 2 TIME: 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.

COST: \$180 for one parent and child **REGISTRATION:** For walkers to 30 months. Register at www.

carmelblue.com.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Relax and Restore with Amrit Yoga Nidra at the Presidio **Sports Basement**

Are you looking to escape the stress and rush of everyday life? Join us for a free session of Integrative Amrit Method of Yoga Nidra and a brief healthy lifestyle discussion. Yoga Nidra is a powerful sleep-based meditation technique, a unique combination of alert awareness and deepest relaxation, intended to awaken the infinite potential dormant within us. Bring a warm sweater or a throw to keep warm while meditating. Feel free to bring lunch.

Wednesday, April 1 TIME: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m 610 Old Mason St. PLACE:

COST: FREE

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Earth Day Gardening Project at the San Francisco **Botanical Garden**

Join us for a fun morning of gardening! Learn about the garden and help with weeding, mulching, and planting. In case of rain, SFBG has sheltered spaces to work so we can repair the world together, rain or shine. All ages are welcome: best for ages 4 and up. Dress in layers, especially clothes you do not mind getting dirty. Stay for treats afterward.

> Sunday, April 12 DATE: TIME: 9 a.m. to noon 1199 9th Ave., PLACE: Golden Gate Park

COST: FREE (space limited)

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/ calendar/event/90041772

ED SERIES

Hiring a Nanny: Challenges and Solutions

Hiring a Nanny is not a simple task, particularly for parents of multiples. In this workshop, you will learn the meaningful steps to hiring a nanny who fits. Checklists, forms, and worksheets will be provided so you have all the tools needed to make this most important hiring decision!

DATE: Tuesday, April 2
TIME: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

PLACE: Sports Basement Presidio
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: admin@chirpchirp.com

Music with Friends at Natural Resources

Come and join in some musical fun specifically designed for young children and the adults accompanying them.

DATE: Mondays, April 6 through May 4

TIME: 10:30 to 11:15 a.m. or 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.

COST: \$25 per class; for additional 5 percent discount: GGMGNR5

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/Music-with-Friends *or call* 415.550.2611. Space is limited.

LGBTQ Parents and Expecting Parents Peer-Led Support Circle at Natural Resources

This peer-led support circle is a way to connect, create community, and share your unique experiences as you navigate the early stages of parenthood. Come hang out, get the support you need, and create community.

DATE: Tuesdays, April 7 through 28 **TIME:** 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.

COST: \$10; for additional 5 percent discount: GGMGNR5

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/LGBTQ-Parents-Peer-Led *or call*

Pregnancy, You, and Your Yoni at Natural Resources

Liz Miracle, MSPT, WCS will lead an open format discussion on the pelvic floor muscles and their role in childbirth.

DATE: Friday, April 10
TIME: Noon to 12:45 p.m.
PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/Pregnancy-You-Yoni *or call*

Postpartum, You, and Your Yoni at Natural Resources

Liz Miracle, MSPT, WCS will lead an open format discussion on the pelvic floor muscles, their role and function and recovery after birth.

DATE: Friday, April 10
TIME: 1 to 1:45 p.m.
PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/Postpartum-You-Yoni *or call*

LGBTQ Parents & Parents-to-Be Support Circle at Natural Resources

This group is offered for LGBTQ parents and parents-tobe who are awaiting adoption, the birth of their child(ren) through surrogacy, or who are pregnant.

DATE: Monday, April 13

TIME: 6 to 7 p.m.

PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.

COST: \$15; for additional 5 percent

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/LGBTQ-Parents-NR or call 415.550.2611.

discount: GGMGNR5

Introducing Solids at Natural Resources

This class will take the guesswork out of giving your baby the best nutrition and a healthy relationship with food right from the start.

DATE: Tuesday, April 14

TIME: 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.

COST: \$45; for additional 5 percent

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/Introducing-Solids-NR *or call* 415.550.2611. *Pre-registration is required*.

discount: GGMGNR5

Infant Massage Series at Natural Resources

Massaging your baby contributes tremendously to cultivating love, compassion, and respect through communication and touch.

DATE: Tuesdays, April 14 through May 12 (no class May 5)

TIME: 1:45 to 3 p.m.

PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.

COST: \$150; for additional 5 percent discount: GGMGNR5

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/Infant-Massage-Series *or call* 415.550.2611. *Pre-registration is required.*

Parenting Your Toddler: Got Tantrums? Got "No!"s? at Recess

Join Rebecca Walsh of Early Childhood Matters and learn more about your child's rapidly developing brain as well as positive parenting approaches to navigate tantrums, "NO!"s, and other typical toddler behavior.

DATE: Tuesday, April 14
TIME: 7:30 to 9 p.m.
PLACE: 470 Carolina St.
COST: \$38 or \$58 per couple; to save \$5: GGMG15

REGISTRATION: recess-sf.com/workshops

Eczema Facts & Myths at Pacific Plastic Surgery Group

You will hear a brief presentation about eczema and treatment followed by Q&A session with Board Certified Dermatologist, Dr. Lavanya Krishnan.

DATE: Wednesday, April 15
TIME: 6:30 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: 77 Van Ness Ave., Suite 302

COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: info@pacificplasticsurgerygroup.com

Schools and Real Estate in the East Bay and Peninsula at Bryant St. Sports Basement

Join us for a discussion about the best schools and communities in the East Bay and Peninsula and the costs of living there. Hosted by Heidi Maierhofer with Keller Williams, Claudia Mills with McGuire Real Estate, and Julie Shumate with Stearns Lending. We are three real estate professionals and moms sharing our knowledge. Dads welcome.

DATE: Thursday, April 30
TIME: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1590 Bryant St
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: shumate.julie@gmail.com

Monthly Members Exclusive Series at Natural Resources

Join Natural Resources for an exclusive series of monthly classes just for members. A different topic at every class covering infant development, nutrition, VBACs, babywearing, storytime, and much more.

DATE: Varies monthly
TIME: Varies monthly
PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.

COST: FREE (for NR and GGMG Members only)

Offity)

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/Member-Exclusive *or call* 415.550.2611. Space is limited.

Private In-Store Lactation Consultations at Natural Resources

In-store private breastfeeding consultations fill the gap between in-home lactation consultant visits and our drop-in breastfeeding mothers circle. Our professionals can also provide home visits while you are healing from your baby's birth and establishing breastfeeding.

DATES & TIMES:

Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. and 11 a.m.; Fridays, 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.

PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.

COST: \$150; for additional 5 percent discount: GGMGNR5

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/BF-Consultation or call 415.550.2611. *Pre-registration is required.*

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS

GGMG sponsors Neighborhood Meetups as a gateway for moms to build a community with other moms in their neighborhood. In addition to special events, each neighborhood hosts weekly playdates for moms and kids as well as mommy-only events such as wine nights and book clubs at local venues. Meetups are usually free to attend and always open to all members.

To join your local Neighborhood Meetup group, log into www.bigtent.com and select the "Subgroups" tab to find your neighborhood. For a complete, up-to-date list of all your local Meetups, including play dates, check the "Events" tab on your Neighborhood Meetups group homepage.

RSVPs are required for moms' night out gatherings and special/themed play dates as noted below. For regularly scheduled play dates, simply show up and look for the person wearing a GGMG branded visor.

BERNAL HEIGHTS/GLEN PARK

MOMS' NIGHT OUT AT PRECITA PARK CAFE

Enjoy a night out with other moms from Glen Park, Bernal Heights, and other south-central and southeastern neighborhoods at Precita Park Cafe. GGMG will pay for appetizers. Look for Olivia with a GGMG sign. Please RSVP as space is limited.

DATE: Friday, April 17
TIME: 7 to 9 p.m.
PLACE: 500 Precita Ave.

FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/90826379

THE HEIGHTS

COST:

EASTER AND PASSOVER CELEBRATION AT LAFAYETTE PARK

We'll have an Easter Egg and Matzoh Hunt (or find the Afikomen!), treats, and crafts! Let's meet on the northwest corner of the park. All ages welcome!

DATE: Saturday, April 4
TIME: 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
PLACE: Lafayette Park
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/90852696

MISSION/CASTRO

MOMS' NIGHT OUT AT WEST OF PECOS

Come join a group of fun regulars who love meeting new mamas for uninterrupted chatting over margaritas (with appetizers on GGMG)!

DATE: Wednesday, April 29
TIME: 6 to 9 p.m.
PLACE: 550 Valencia St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/ event/90901173

NOPA/HAIGHTS

EASTER EGG HUNT PLAYDATE AT DUBOCE PARK

The egg hunt will be on the lawn across from the playground and starts promptly at 10:15 a.m.! Baskets and snacks provided.

DATE: Friday April 3

TIME: 10 a.m. to noon

PLACE: Duboce Park Playground

COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/90935517#reply

MOMS' NIGHT OUT AT WINE KITCHEN

Join your neighborhood GGMG Moms for a night out. GGMG will be providing the appetizers.

DATE: Tuesday, April 21
TIME: 8 to 9:30 p.m.
PLACE: 507 Divisadero St.

COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/ event/90848295?trackback

SUNSET

KIDDIE MOVIE NIGHT

Bring your tot to watch Wallace & Gromit on a big screen in a member's home. Feel free to dress your little one in PJs. Popcorn for all and wine for moms provided by GGMG. Space is limited so please RSVP early.

DATE: Friday, April 17

TIME: 6:45 p.m., movie starts at 7:00 p.m. sharp

PLACE: RSVP for address

COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/90851203

SUNSET AND BEYOND WINE NIGHT

Join the company of moms from Sunset, Parkside, West Portal, and other nearby neighborhoods at a member's home. Come early or late; this is a casual affair and a chance to hold complete conversations. GGMG will get us started with wine and appetizers; please RSVP!

DATE: Wednesday, April 29
TIME: 8 to 10:30 p.m.
PLACE: RSVP for address
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/90850912



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GGMG committee updates

Committee Spotlight: Recruiting

With Chair Laura Kim

Describe the personality of your committee.

Our team is hard-working, detail-oriented, friendly, and networked. Some of us have a recruiting background, and all of us enjoy working with people and thrive on interpersonal interaction.

Why do you do what you do? What has been an unexpected benefit of being involved with the Recruiting Committee?

Our team works to recruit volunteers who run GGMG. GGMG wouldn't exist without all of our awesome volunteers. We get to meet all the new volunteers and find out how their skills will work best within our community.

What types of activities or projects to you undertake?

The Recruiting Committee works with the various co-chairs of all the committees within GGMG to find the right volunteers for their teams. We also attend events to actively recruit in person. The Recruiting Committee is particularly excited to relaunch the referral program this year: when a member refers another member to become a volunteer, that referring member will receive a \$20 gift card to Whole Foods!

How do you know when you are making a difference?

We love having the opportunity to meet our GGMG members in person,

and then see them go on to become volunteers, co-chairs, board members—basically run this town! It's very exciting, almost like seeing someone's career taking off thanks to a simple introduction. Plus, it's moving to know that at the base of each event, each membership mixer, each community support drive, is one volunteer who had an awesome idea to do something to support GGMG. All of our volunteers make a huge difference within GGMG.

Who are your current volunteers?

Viorica Ciobanu, Jennifer Friedland, Kaitlin Kertsman, Leah Khagani, Laura Kim, Shirley Ling, and Anna Skender.

What's next for the Recruiting team?

The Recruiting Committee is incredibly excited to continue finding the best volunteer candidates out there! We are also hoping to partner with various committees within GGMG to work on volunteer training and on-boarding.

How can interested GGMG members get involved in Recruiting?

Email us at volunteer@ggmg.org. Please let us know if you'd like to get involved in recruiting or any of the other fabulous committees that run GGMG.

Membership

On February 19, 25 moms gathered for the first Member Mixer of 2015 at Recess Urban Recreation. All enjoyed catered bites and cupcakes from Whole Foods, free samples from Babyganics, complimentary chair massages from Zeel, babysitting discounts and raffle prizes from Urbansitter, and discounts and free totes from Reso.

We look forward to having you attend our next member mixer on May 26 at Peekadoodle. See the May issue of GGMG Magazine and BigTent for details.





Recruiting:

GGMG Needs You!

Yes, you! Are you the mom we are looking for? Do you have what it takes to be one of our amazing volunteers? GGMG is currently on the lookout for the best and brightest to join our group of volunteers, and we think it could be you. Do you love philanthropy and helping out the community? Maybe the Community Support team could use your help! Have you ever considered working as an event planner, but don't really have that experience? Look into the Social Events committee, which is looking for new volunteers. Or if perhaps you would like a position where you can work from home at your leisure, check out the web team moderator role. There really is something for everyone.

Roles are currently open on the following committees:

- Just for Moms
- · Community Support
- Membership
- Web Team
- New Mommy Meetups
- Neighborhood Playgroups
- PR/Marketing
- Social Events
- Magazine

Interested in learning more? Simply email volunteer@ggmg.org.

Partnerships

The Partnerships Committee manages GGMG's relationships with the merchants and organizations that provide us our membership perks. Most GGMG members will be familiar with our major partnerships program. This year, we are working to ensure that all GGMG members receive substantial, ongoing benefits from these partners. For example:

- Peekadoodle has added free play time every week, exclusively for GGMG members.
- JCC will now provide each GGMG member two free fitness passes per year.

So even if you have used a benefit from a major partner in the past, going forward, there will be ongoing benefits available to you, and this extends beyond Peekadoodle and JCC. For details and to redeem your exclusive GGMG membership perks, visit www.ggmg.org/partnerships.html.

We also have a Member Discount program that provides discounts on vendor goods and services. This is a very popular program among merchants, with 20 to 40 merchants contacting us every month to sign up! The Partnerships team is currently revamping this program in response to feedback received from GGMG members and from merchants. Look for an announcement about this program soon! In the meantime, you can find more information at www.ggmg.org/ discount.html.

We are very excited about the opportunities in front of us. Outside organizations are excited to work with GGMG, and we believe win-win opportunities exist to work with them and secure exciting new perks for our members at the same time!

Member Support Meal Deliveries and Support

Providing a meal to a family is a timeless show of support and a hallmark of the Member Support team. We often deliver meals to GGMG moms experiencing tough circumstances and find this small gesture of support and kindness is very much appreciated by the recipients. Sometimes a mother and her family could benefit from extended meal support. For these cases, the Member Support team is able to organize a meal calendar and call upon the GGMG meal delivery volunteers to provide scheduled meals.

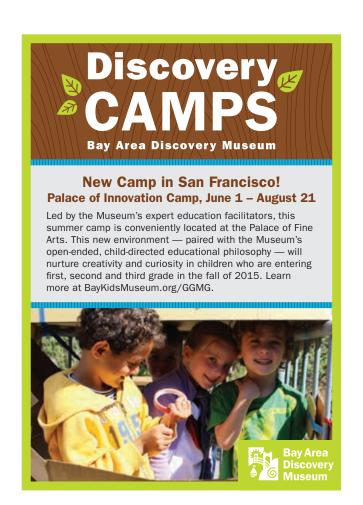
During 2014, the GGMG meal delivery group provided over 100 meals to GGMG moms who needed support. Member Support would like to thank these ladies for their generosity and dedication to helping others.

If you would like to join the meal delivery group, please visit www.bigtent.com/group/subgroup and access the "Member Support Meal Delivery" subgroup. This is a wonderful way to give back to the GGMG community in a flexible, low-commitment

If you or someone you know is experiencing a difficult time, please do not hesitate to contact our member support team at member.support@ggmg.org. We work confidentially and have many resources to call upon to provide support.

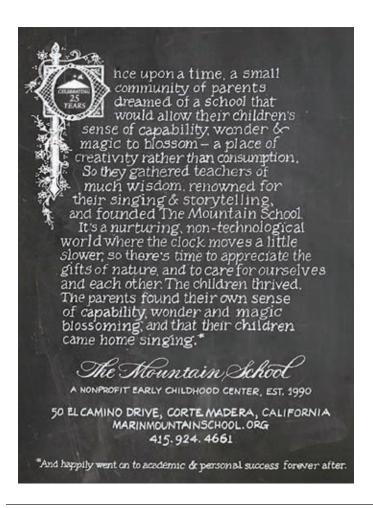
GGMG-WIDE SOCIAL **BAY AREA DISCOVERY MUSEUM** You can look forward to all the Museum's regular exhibits plus bouncy houses, face painting, and other special activities for children up to age 11. Open only to GGMG members and our guests. Keep an eye on Facebook and BigTent for more details. Saturday, May 16 9 a.m. to noon Fort Baker, 557 McReynolds Rd., Sausalito



















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Baby Wipes vs. a Shower?

In an effort to be "Green", would you ever consider using just baby wipes to cleanse your body? Would you dine at a restaurant that only uses baby wipes to wash the dirty dishes in an effort to be "Green"? Of course not! Well the shocking truth is- that is exactly how most "Green" carpet cleaning companies are cleaning your carpets and rugs.

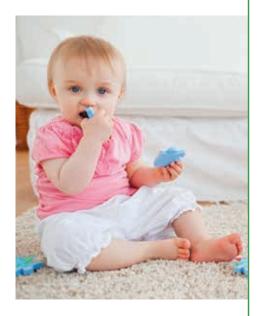
Today in order to be considered "Green" in the cleaning industry means: To conserve natural resources. That means that "green" cleaning companies must conserve water. If a cleaning company uses chemicals instead of water, then this is considered "green": which in turn means to leave behind more contaminates and chemicals in the home; just like the baby wipes example.



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Prepare a detailed "comps" spreadsheet to show you exactly where the list & sale price estimates come from (i.e. not out of thin air)



Develop a marketing strategy that will match your particular family's goals and appeal to the target



Clean up stray dental floss and undergarments before each Open House



Strategize how to best transition your family to your new home (buy first? sell first? rent?) Get to know the intricate details of your home/building,



your neighbors, school, restaurants, nightlife, parks, etc to sell a whole a lifestyle, not just a property



Help you to make your property so appealing that you briefly consider staying there



Prepare a detailed disclosure package, BEFORE going on the market, read it to ensure there are no surprises, and proactively resolve any potential issues a buyer might find



Protect your money like a dog protecting a bone (but without the growling or the fleas)



Provide detailed checklist on how to prepare your home for the market with a list of recommended service providers



Transform into MacGuyver and fix things that break during Open Houses (toilets included)



Hire escorts for larger condo buildings. No, not that kind!! Extra agents to greet buyers at the main entrance, walk them to the unit, and tour the amenities



Produce high quality and creative marketing pieces that feature the best assets of your home and neighborhood



Create a comprehensive project website to track all preparation, marketing and sales activities so you always know what to expect, and what is expected of you



Obsess over the tiniest of details, like ensuring photos are taken at the optimal time of day to reduce shadows



Scrutinize all offers to determine which are the strongest (accounting for shady agents and risky



Keep a very close eye on all parts of the transaction (escrow, financing, inspections, timelines) so nothing slips through the cracks



Be completely honest and direct with you (even if it's not what you want to hear)



Negotiate, negotiate, negotiate. Get every last dollar possible for you



Conduct your open houses and interact with every visitor in a meaningful way so you can receive detailed feedback (good and bad) after every showing



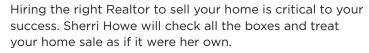
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Why I Serve

By Amy Bacharach

rowing up in Philadelphia, civic engagement was the -farthest thing from my mind. My family wasn't very public service-oriented: to this day, my father won't register to vote in order to avoid jury duty. It wasn't until after moving to California for graduate school that I started to think about public service. While pursuing my degree in forensic psychology, I was offered an internship with a County Supervisor. I didn't want the position because I didn't see how it related to my field, but a wise friend convinced me that even if I didn't like it, I would learn a lot. That decision changed the trajectory of my career and my life and taught me the value of civic engagement.

At that Supervisor's office, I learned how important politics, policy, and public service are to our community, and how important it is to elect people who want to do something rather than be something. I learned how I could use social science research to help push for evidence-based policies that made sense. That internship led me to my current job doing policy research for a state agency, as well as teaching at a local university. More recently, it led me to want to run for office myself.

Soon after moving to San Francisco, I discovered Emerge California, a competitive program that trains Democratic women to run for office. I applied and was accepted. Two years later, I ran for the San Francisco Community College Board in 2012. Emerge trained me well, but San Francisco is a special kind of crazy when it comes to politics. The campaign process is not unlike a long ride on an old, rickety roller coaster. We're a very politically active city, which is a great thing. But it also means having to meet with scores of clubs, organizations, and interest groups across the city. I distinctly remember wondering on more than one occasion how anyone with a child could run for office; there were days when I couldn't feed myself let alone anyone else! I ended up losing that 2012 race by about 500 votes and wasn't sure if I wanted to run again.

Fast forward to August 2014. With less than a week to the filing deadline, I decided to run again for the College Board. I was 9 months into a complicated pregnancy with my first child. I joked that I was either certifiably insane or a glutton for punishment. But inside I was terrified and wondered if I had made the right decision. I had talked to as many parents in elected office as I could, all of whom were encouraging but realistic. At the end of the day, though, I wanted to model for my daughter that she can do anything under any circumstance. I want her to know that public service is not an optional thing that someone else does. People always say, "Someone should do something about that." I want my daughter to know that she IS someone else.

At 2 months old, once the fog began to lift and she had her TDAP, she was on the campaign trail with me. She's been to fundraisers, rallies. and press conferences. I ended up winning the 2014 race, but only with immense help from my husband, friends, and community leaders who spoke on my behalf at endorsement



meetings and events I couldn't attend. I learned that I didn't have to be able to "do it all" by myself; that I could rely on my community, those who also believe in public service and in helping women. In fact, a fellow community leader, elected official, and mom (and GGMG member) was invaluable as my proxy, especially while in labor!

I recently watched the documentary, She's Beautiful When She's Angry, which covers the women's right movement of the late '60s to early '70s. Several unsung heroes of the movement were interviewed, and one woman noted that her daughter, who is my age, has a very different life than the one she had, even though we continue to fight for the same equality, access, and justice for which our mothers and grandmothers fought. This makes me

I learned how important politics, policy, and public service are to our community, and how important it is to elect people who want to do something rather than be something.

hopeful about the life my daughter will have. The documentary reinforced why it's so important to have programs like Emerge California. It closed with one of the women saying, "Don't tell me that one person can't change the world. I watched it happen." A major reason I chose public service is to change the world. And I want my daughter to know that she can change the world, too. •

Dr. Amy Bacharach is a policy researcher for the judicial branch of the California state government. Her expertise is in evidence-based practices in juvenile justice and human trafficking. She is an elected delegate to the California Democratic Party and an elected Board Trustee for San Francisco City College. She also serves on the Board of the Richmond District Neighborhood Center. Although she has a lot of titles in her day-to-day existence, she's getting used to prioritizing the newest and most important: that of "mom."



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