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Letter from the Editor: DI Why?

By Sonya Abrams



Sonya is an editor, photographer, and a mother to three children who, thankfully, display boundless amounts of cleverness and creativity that they clearly did not inherit from her.

I'm not crafty. Or handy. My motto tends to be *If God wanted us to DIY then why did He give us Amazon?* I don't create my own Valentine's cards, I only sew my own costumes after exhausting all internet alternatives, and I can't figure out how to set up my home computer network if my life depends on it. (And when a dying modem keeps me from accessing my archived "Real Housewives" shows,

sometimes it feels like my life does depend on it).

So it was supremely out of character that I recently found myself in Safeway at midnight, covered in green frosting, cradling an armful of confectioners' sugar. I was five hours into an error-riddled attempt to construct my 4-year-old's monster truck birthday cake, which my son had asked me to make, his pleading face blissfully ignorant of my sloppy impatience and lack of baking-related critical thinking skills. By midnight, one sticky, undercooked cake had already been relegated to the compost bin, and its successor was faring only marginally better.

I woke up the next morning groggy from having finally gone to bed at 2 a.m. and fearful that my frosting monster truck ramp would be laughed at or, worse, receive an awkward, pitying silence when publicly revealed. But even though my icing penmanship was barely legible and my cake was questionably

lumpy, the guests happily dug in, nodding with approval. My son's eyes sparkled with pleasure that I'd followed his instructions meticulously. As I pondered my second (ok, maybe third) serving, I felt a sense of contentment, even pride, that I'd tamped down my fears of failure. Though the product might not have been perfect, I was proud of the process: I was willing to do something technically demanding, time-consuming, tiring, and way outside my comfort zone.

Our writers in this issue face the world fearlessly, thinking, *sure, I can do that*. On page 20 Sandy Woo presents a primer on home

If God wanted us to DIY then why did He give us Amazon?

birth—the process, the pros, and the potential pitfalls. Stephanie AuWerter reminds us all on page 16 that winter is behind us and we're running out of excuses for not having flipped our mattresses in years. She takes control of what can seem like an overwhelming process and lays out a spring-cleaning plan that's practical and achievable. Juliana Egley, on page 26, shares a few resources for attempting our own home and car repairs, underscoring her advice with a reminder that it's important to challenge ourselves but to know our limits. And we mined the GGMG Magazine archives to present a classic piece by Rhea St. Julien on page 24, who gives us a handy template for crafting our own fairy tales to help activate our children's imaginations...and hopefully help usher them into dreamland.

Sonya

Housekeeping

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THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY: Endless sniffles, the dreaded flu season, getting paid to write, the last thin mint and a weekly ballet

standoff, pinworms, old folks birthday bonanza, a full classload of child development classes at City College, a month-long vacation to Japan and Indonesia

COMING NEXT: June/July: Health

CONTEST: Congratulations to **Sarah Koszyk**, winner of a bundle of Nest Happy services.

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

Correction

In our February/March Books for Kids section, we incorrectly referred to a variety of events as celebrating Chinese New Year. When referring to celebrations across multiple Asian cultures, the correct term is Lunar New Year. We regret the error.

My cautious and clumsy son is probably not going to be an athlete. He didn't walk until 18.5 months, and just a few weeks after he finally took off, he tripped, fell, and broke his leg. He's now almost 3, and I've been trying to teach him to ride a balance bike for several months. Here's how our bike outings usually go: (1) he gets really excited to try, (2) he falls after 10 seconds, and (3) he cries and says he doesn't want to ride anymore. I sit him down and explain that it's okay to be scared, it's okay to fall, and that the most important thing is that he tries.

This pep talk is similar to the one I gave myself when I became GGMG vice chair. I had already been on the GGMG board for one year, but becoming an officer felt like "next level" responsibility, and I admittedly was a bit scared to let GGMG down. So I put on my "mom" hat, looked myself in the mirror, and remembered that taking risks is one of my family's core values. Plus, this is GGMG—a community that has made such a tremendous impact on my life. What a privilege to have this rewarding opportunity!

In the beginning of 2018 we welcomed four new members to our board. We are thrilled to introduce veteran volunteer Heather Beckstead as the director of volunteer engagement, previous Diversity and Inclusion Co-Chair Krupa Antani as director of member engagement, magazine writer Christine Chen as director of external communications, and Erin Cahill (a new mom and new volunteer) as director of partnerships. Additionally, Addie Bjornsen, former director of external

I put on my 'mom' hat...and remembered that taking risks is one of my family's core values.

relations, will be taking on a new board role as director of technology and will be spearheading the upcoming launch of the brand-new GGMG app!

There are so many events to look forward to in the coming months. Make sure to check the GGMG calendar frequently since new events are added each week. And save the date—May 6th—for our annual Spring Fling at the Bay Area Discovery Museum. You won't want to miss this signature event filled with entertainment, crafts, food, giveaways, games, and friends. New



Karen is mom to two adorable and spirited kids, Adam and Ava. Her favorite pastimes include drinking coffee, drinking wine, indoor cycling, and taking long walks around San Francisco.

this year is the opportunity for the public to purchase tickets to the Spring Fling, so you can invite your non-GGMG friends as well!

As you can see, 2018 is already off to a great start with lots more excitement to come. I'm hoping, too, that 2018 will be a big year for my son and his balance bike. We're going to keep practicing, and I'm sure that one of these days he will start zooming around the park with his friends.

Karen

Cover Outtakes



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

Searching for Spring Blooms in the Bay

Although the seasons in San Francisco are not as pronounced as in other places, spring does bring more sunshine and flowers. Whether you want to escape the urban grime in one of the many tiny, tucked away city gardens, or prefer to enjoy a family hike among the wildflowers outside city limits, options abound to enjoy spring in bloom.

By Shaheen Bilgrami

FLOWERING GARDENS IN GOLDEN GATE PARK:

Spring brings blooms in many parts of our largest park. Not sure when to see different flowers in bloom? Check out the SF Rec and Park website for an online guide at <https://tinyurl.com/GGParkInBloom>

The Living Roof at the California Academy of Sciences

Spring is a great time to check out the living roof, which boasts “the densest concentration of wild flowers in San Francisco.”

The Queen Wilhelmina Tulip Garden

Early spring is the perfect time to check out the tulips near the North (Dutch) Windmill in Golden Gate Park.

Japanese Tea Garden

Check out the cherry blossoms and azaleas in early spring in this little oasis of zen and enjoy a pot of tea and snack at the tea house inside.

San Francisco Botanical Garden

In April, everything starts to bloom in this beautiful garden where you will find native and international flora. Enjoy free entry for city residents. Enhance your visit by joining a free wildflower docent tour, or download the free smartphone app to identify the flowers you spot.

WILDFLOWERS IN THE CITY:

Lake Merced

For a chance to see all the flowers in bloom around the lake, try the 4.5-mile Lake Merced Trail.

The Presidio

The Presidio boasts pockets of blooming wildflowers. The 2.4-mile California Coast Trail offers some of the best blooms and epic views.



SPRING IN BLOOM OUTSIDE THE CITY:

Mount Tamalpais State Park, North Bay

Venture across the bridge to enjoy blooming wildflowers including California poppies and irises. Child-friendly hikes include the 2.7-mile Cataract Falls Trail and the 4.7-mile Temelpa Trail.

Mount Diablo State Park, East Bay

Known for its amazing views, rock formations, and wildlife, as well as stunning wildflowers, this state park caters to visitors of all ages.

Henry Coe State Park, South Bay

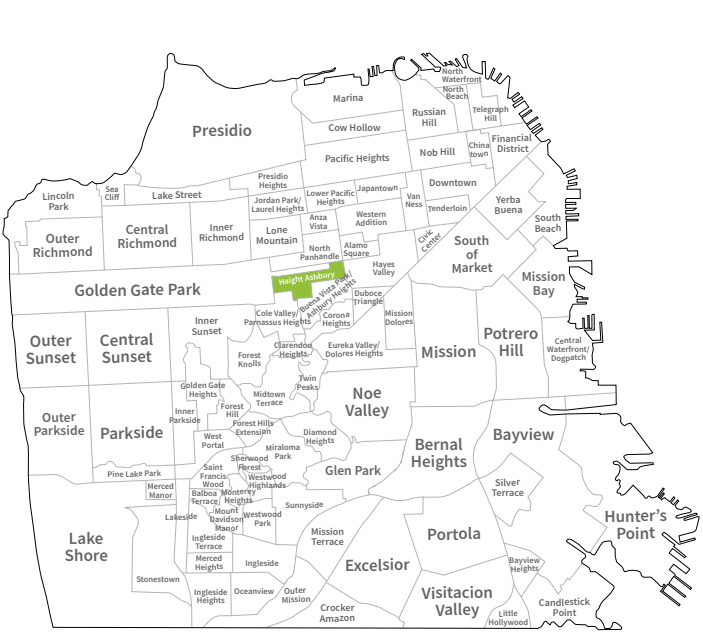
This huge state park is over 87,000 acres. The 3.7-mile Spring and Forest Trail loop is a good one to catch the blossoms. Pro-tip: you must pay for parking in cash.

Filoli Gardens, Peninsula

From February to April the landscaped gardens at Filoli are filled with spring flowers. In addition to the gardens, tour the 100-year-old manor house or take part in one of the events that are run throughout the season.



Shaheen Bilgrami is freelance writer and editor and is the mom of an energetic kindergartener. Contact her through her website, www.shaheenbilgrami.com.



Li'l Kid, Big City: Haight Ashbury

By Veronica Reilly-Granich

The Haight is a vibrant, walkable neighborhood that keeps the 1960s alive with eclectic eats and quirky shops. Got the munchies? Stop by **Street Taco** (1607 Haight St.) for flavorful Mexico City-style tacos. If Caribbean and Cuban tapas is more your groove, hit **Cha Cha Cha** (1801 Haight St.). Or hang loose on the patio of **Sparrow Bar and Kitchen** (1640 Haight St.) where you can get breakfast for lunch. On Thursday evenings, check out **Off the Grid** (corner of Stanyan St. and Waller St.) where many of the city’s favorite food trucks gather.

Introduce your flower child to the world of vintage pinball games at **Free Gold Watch** (1767 Waller St.) with over 30 machines. Feeling creative? Head into **Mendel’s** (1556 Haight St.) to score some dragon scale vinyl and inspiration. If your little ankle biter still has energy to burn, jam up to **Buena Vista Park Playground** (Buena Vista Ave. & Waller St.).

Before you leave, pop by **Ben and Jerry’s** (1480 Haight St.) at the storied intersection of Haight and Ashbury, then stroll around the corner to the **Grateful Dead House** (710 Ashbury St.) where the legendary band crashed for a few far out years. You’re definitely in for a groovy time. ❖

Veronica is mama to two young girls and works full time for San Francisco Unified School District. She digs novels, tea, and Zen Buddhism.

Earthquake Prep: reducing the risk of injury at home

By Catherine Symon

Thousands of earthquakes rattle California each year. Most are inconsequential, but the Bay Area is overdue for a temblor large enough (predicted to be 6.7 or above on the Richter scale) to cause damage and injuries. Assessing the risk of damage to your building requires an inspection by a structural engineer, who may recommend retrofitting. But you can take simple steps any time to reduce the risk of injury in your home.

Being struck by falling objects is the most common cause of earthquake-related injury. When researchers at UCLA studied the 1994



Northridge earthquake (6.7 on the Richter scale), they found that 55 percent of injuries were caused by falling objects compared to less than 1 percent caused by a building’s structural failure. The remaining injuries were

due to people falling during the shaking (22 percent) and taking unsafe actions such as trying to catch a falling television or jumping out of a window (15 percent).

Here are a few ways to lower the risk of getting hurt at home during an earthquake:

- 1. Secure items than can topple, including bookshelves, dressers, speakers, televisions, vases, framed photos. For items that are impractical or difficult to secure (countertop appliances, books, pots and pans), store them low to the ground.
- 2. Practice “**DROP, COVER, HOLD ON**” drills. You are more likely to get hurt if you try to move around during the shaking of an earthquake.
- 3. Know how to shut off gas, electric, and water. Keep working fire extinguishers on hand and know how to use them.

Even if you and your family escape injury, keep first aid supplies in your to-go bag and learn how to treat common earthquake-related injuries (cuts, bruises, sprains, and burns) so you can help neighbors.

For lots more information on earthquake preparation and safety, visit earthquakecountry.org. ❖

SOURCES: US Geological Survey (USGS), UCLA, Earthquake Country Alliance

Catherine is a medical writer.

Ask the Expert

Photograph Like a Pro

With Jennifer Loomis, M.A.



Jennifer is an award-winning fine art photographer, author, and teacher who has been capturing women and their families since 2001. She has studios in San Francisco, Seattle, and New York. She loves her 3-year-old son, laughing, creating, and good coffee. Find her at www.jenniferloomis.com.

GGMG: What are some general tips for photographing kids?

JL: We all have things we love about our kids, whether it's how they laugh, a certain expression, or something they do all the time. Spend a few minutes writing them down. These are the starting images you want to try to catch. Next, make sure to pick a time when they are in a good mood, which is often the first thing in the morning and just after nap or a meal.

Once you've taken care of those two things, you need to find the ideal location and the best light. We used to say in graduate school that amazing light can make even the most boring

We used to say in graduate school that amazing light can make even the most boring situation look amazing.

situation look amazing. So, find the light and make sure to notice how it changes throughout the day. I prefer diffused light instead of direct light. Diffused light is light that isn't shining directly through a window but is still illuminating the room.

Once you have the light, clean up the room. Move everything that isn't important out. I always make sure the background is really simple and there aren't any brightly colored objects (like toys) that are distracting.

Then grab your kiddo and have some fun. I like to teach students to photograph "wide," meaning using a wide angle to capture the entire area, "medium," meaning to capture the body of the child, and "tight," meaning just take photos of the head and expressions. Try to do it in the camera instead of having to crop the photo afterwards.

If photographing outdoors, a great idea for light is in the shade of a tree because light is even under a tree. (Avoid dappled light.) Or look for a grassy field, a hedge, or a row of trees and try to get images of the children running and their facial expressions. It's also fun to dress the kids up in costumes, capes, or wings because that can add some mystery to the photo.

GGMG: How can we take better photos with a smartphone?

JL: Taking good photos with a smartphone is quite similar to taking good photos with a professional camera—it's all about the light, location, clean backdrops, and a child in a great mood. Even though smartphones have gotten so much better in the past 20 years, you still need great light or you won't catch the moment. A good rule of thumb is to have the light source at your back. The light source can be a window, or the sun, or even an overhead light or a kitchen light. When the light is at your back, it is probably illuminating your subjects' faces.

For the advanced photographer, try using your phone to pan, which means to photograph while you are moving the camera the same speed as your child. As your kiddo is running, follow him at the same speed and snap photos as you go. You might get some fun images of your child with blurred backgrounds.

Also, my favorite app for the iPhone is the Hipstamatic app. It has great filters and retro borders that add some variety to photos.

GGMG: What programs do you recommend for storing and editing photos?

JL: For storing photos, I use multiple hard drives that I name after my favorite cities, and everything is automatically backed up every day. I recommend making this process automatic so that you don't even have to think about it. In addition, I keep three backup copies and two hard drives in my safe deposit box because with maternity photography, there is no such thing as a reshoot. I have never lost an image, and I don't ever want to. Lastly, I do not store any of my professional images in the cloud because I photograph celebrities and other clients who have privacy concerns, and I don't want to risk their personal images getting into the wrong hands.

I use Lightroom to import, name, and put images in a specific folder, usually by client name and date. I highly recommend setting up a good naming structure. For my professional work, I use LastName_FirstName_YearMonth_Imagenumber. For organizing personal photos, I use YEAR_Event_Location_Imagenumber and then in the metadata or the keyword tag area of Lightroom, I enter key words like year, where it was taken, name of client, event, or age of my son or key details about where we were, which helps me search for it.

Like many parents, I have thousands of photos of my child, which I use to create books or calendars for relatives. For iPhone photos, I use iTunes to backup my phone to my computer and to iCloud. I try to plug my phone into my computer once a month and back up that way. I also use Dropbox to store photos temporarily, though it does have good long-term storage options. It's handy to use the Dropbox app for uploading. ❖

Any questions or challenges? Email Jennifer at info@jenniferloomis.com.

GGMG AT WORK

Community Outreach Drive

Help Babies Who Don't Have Access to Clean Diapers Get a Healthier Start in Life

Donate to our Diaper Drive this spring!

Did you know?

- Public assistance programs (like food stamps) don't cover the cost of diapers
- 22 percent of all children under 5 years old in the U.S. live in poverty, and 1 out of every 3 families struggles to afford diapers
- If a family can't afford diapers, a baby may spend extended periods of time in the same soiled diaper
- Diapers cost more than \$50 a month, which means that families are choosing between diapers and other basic needs like food, rent, and utilities



Something as basic as diapers can actually have a big impact on a family's ability to become financially self-sufficient. That is why GGMG is hosting a diaper drive this April and May in support of Help a Mother Out (HAMO), a nonprofit organization that works to improve baby and family well-being by increasing access to diapers. HAMO distributes diapers to families in need through a network of social service partners including voluntary home visit programs, facilitated parent support groups, family resource centers, and public health departments.

Please drop off open or unopened packs of diapers (HAMO is most in need of size 4, 5, and 6 but accepts any size) at the Spring Fling on Sunday, May 6 (see page 36), or at the following locations:

Play Haven at 254 Laguna Honda Blvd.

Imagination Playhouse at 5628 Geary Blvd.

Peekadoodle at 900 North Point St., Suite F100

Peek-a-boo Factory at 2 West Portal Ave.

Or purchase from the Amazon wishlist:
<http://a.co/hCh9t4T>

Contest

Romantic Dinner for Two



On Woodworking and Parenting

By JJ Stein

If not for Norm Abrams, I probably wouldn't have tried to build my kitchen table. Not sure who Norm Abrams is? I'll clue you in. Abrams was the flannel-clad host of "The New Yankee Workshop," a woodworking program that aired from 1989 to 2009 on PBS. For years, I watched Abrams effortlessly create beautiful furniture, generally within 30 minutes. Federal-style game table: no problem. Greek revival bookcase: easy. Victorian kitchen table: child's play. It was mesmerizing programming.

Over the last decade, my wife has sought to rid our home of my bachelorhood furniture. She denies this, but she would have been justified in purging our home of such furnishings; early-twenties me had shockingly terrible taste. I shopped for replacements but found prices justifiable only if the tables were

made of gold and assembled by skilled unicorns. The path forward slowly began to emerge: I would build a table. Perhaps I would not be able to produce a table in 30 minutes like I had watched Abrams do, but how hard could it be?

I learned woodworking from an extraordinarily relaxed guy named Tim. After taking a couple of classes from him, I "graduated" to open shop, where I could build anything I wanted. Tim's advice was to keep my first solo project manageable. That was great advice that I promptly ignored, instead embarking on my table.

It quickly became apparent that my cavalier attitude was misguided and that, in a shocking turn of events, what television had made look easy was not, in fact, easy. Problems arose early

It turns out that being a parent is significantly harder than building a table.

and often. How do I design a massive table to fit down the narrow hallway in my apartment? Which boards, in which order, will render the most aesthetically pleasing grain pattern for the top? What should I do about that little bit of dry rot on that otherwise beautiful piece of lumber? Over time, these problems began to occupy more and more of my mental bandwidth both in and out of the shop.

While I initially thought building a table would be easy, a more troubling thought started to creep into my head: had I bitten off more than I could chew? It was an overheard conversation in the

shop that helped me manage the mounting stress of my project. As I dutifully hunched over my table's top, entering hour six of the ten hour process to remove a significant imperfection that had mysteriously appeared, I heard Tim explaining that he was able to remain relaxed when working on major projects because he long ago learned that, no matter your skill or effort level, things almost

certainly were going to go wrong, and whatever went wrong could almost always be fixed. Put differently, woodworking was hard for just about everyone, and the sooner you got comfortable with that fact—and that things going awry was no big deal—the happier you would be.

Two-plus years after I started, and shortly after my daughter was born, the table was completed. The table, besides being a source of pride, has

become a place where my family regularly gathers. It is truly a family focal point. In fact, as I write this, my daughter is at the table, jabbing her fork into it while giggling uncontrollably. As each jab leaves a small dent in both the table and my soul, I realize the lesson that helped me with my woodworking-induced stress also helps me as a parent.

It turns out that being a parent is significantly harder than building a table. For me at least, it is easy to worry about all the problems that may come up and whether a particular fix I've implemented will create new ones. Occasionally, I even find myself worrying about things I know are not really problems. I know as well as you do that it's crazy to think the only preschools worth going to are the ones that require three generations of SAT scores and a credit report. Then again, what if I'm wrong?

But like woodworking, no matter how hard you try and how good a parent you are (and of course, any *Dadlands* reader is beyond reproach), parenting will still be hard, things are still going to go wrong, and, generally speaking, they will be fixable. I cannot help but feel that keeping this lesson in mind allows me to be calmer, more confident, and more present with my daughter, which is when I am at my best as a parent. I also cannot help but feel I'm going to need to refinish the top of my table, but maybe I'll wait until this fork-jabbing phase passes. ❖

JJ lives and works as a lawyer in San Francisco. He is most often joined at his kitchen table by his charming 3.5-year-old daughter, beautiful wife, and small, white, fluffy dog.



MEMBER PROFILE: Julie Watts

Photograph by Anna Psalmond Photography

HOW DO YOU JUGGLE WORKING AND MOTHERING?

I'm lucky to have an unconventional Wednesday to Sunday work schedule so I get to be home with the kids two days a week. On weekends I anchor the morning show, so I get afternoons with the family. But honestly, I couldn't do it without help. I have an amazing husband. He is a Mr. Mom when he is at home, super hands-on. And we have an amazing nanny. I love her like a mother and consider her a co-parent. We feel blessed to have found someone we trust with our children when we are at work.

BIGGEST SURPRISE OF MOTHERHOOD?

I think the biggest surprise was how much it changed me. Being an investigative journalist is my work and my passion. When I was planning my first maternity leave, I thought I would be bored at home and desperate to get back early. Boy, was I surprised at how hard it was to leave my daughter and how much becoming a mother changes you. I can honestly say I'm a different person—both personally and professionally.

FAVORITE PARTS OF RAISING A CHILD IN SF?

The culture, the people, the vast opportunities, and places to go. My daughter came home from preschool recently and asked to go see the Stuart Davis exhibit at the DeYoung. My husband regularly takes her to museums; I imagine this is unique to children growing up in a city. There are also infinite opportunities to learn about diversity. There have been several occasions on our 'Mommy and me Mondays' where my daughter and I will buy lunch for a homeless person and sit and chat for a bit. It leads to conversations about how everyone is human and being different doesn't mean being less.

WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU DID SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF, AND WHAT WAS THAT?

While I was pregnant with my 4-month-old, I scheduled a pregnancy massage. It was a good week and a half before my due date, but my ankles had been swollen for weeks and I'd been dreaming about a good foot massage. Oops! About 30 minutes after that massage, my water broke in a parking lot—near the Tenderloin! There I was, stuck in traffic, dodging shopping carts and jay-walkers, trying to get to the hospital. That was the last thing I did for myself. But I do have more maternity leave coming and am hoping to finish the book I have been working on.

CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THE BOOK?

Well, the working title is *The Consumer Reporter's Guide to Paranoid Parenting*. It's easy to become a paranoid parent when you read the headlines and marketing claims that prey on our fears. I've investigated a lot of those topics and products for CBS and my *NewsMom.com* blog (@NewsMomDotCom on Facebook and Twitter). What I've found has shaped the way I parent—and helped me let go of some of my irrational fears.

THREE WORDS OR PHRASES TO DESCRIBE MOTHERHOOD?

Inspirational, all-consuming, and life-altering. ❖



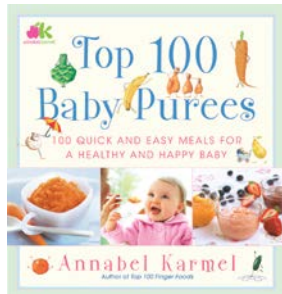
This month's mom, Julie Watts, may be a familiar face to many. A KPIX news anchor and investigative journalist, Julie lives in the Outer Richmond with her husband and two children, a 4-year-old daughter and 4-month-old son.

GGMG writer Tara Hardesty had a conversation with Julie about mothering and working in San Francisco.

Know a mom you want to spotlight in the next issue?

Email editor@gmg.org with her name, email, and a few sentences about what makes her an awesome mom for our next Member Profile.

In our world, we can find almost anything ready-made in stores, from unicorn wigs to customized dolls. There is, however, one thing that we can't buy, and that's our imagination. The power of DIY is to make something yourself or with your kids, something that doesn't exist in a million copies on a shelf. Enjoy this exploration into the world of DIY and find your creative freedom!



Top 100 Baby Purées

Written and illustrated by Annabel Karmel
British television personality and children's nutrition expert Annabel Karmel's creations will go down in a generation of parents' memories as the gold standard for baby food and baby purées. Budget-friendly

and guaranteed 100% homemade without chemicals, DIY baby purées lay a solid foundation for your little one's healthy nutrition. You will be amazed at the range of purées that exist out there. *Ages: 6 months and older*



Tinkerlab: A Hands-On Guide for Little Inventors

Written and illustrated by Rachelle Doorley
Palo Alto blogger Rachelle Doorley inspires new parents to set up creative spaces at home for kids. Whether you're ready to go with minimal planning or looking to understand the creative process in

young minds, this book is sure to make you rethink, in a positive way, the idea of play at home. *Ages: 2 to 5 years*

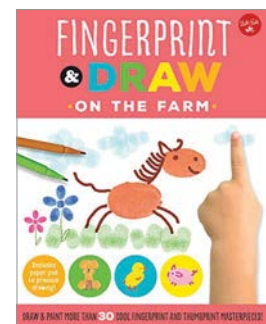
The Artful Parent: Simple Ways to Fill Your Family's Life with Art and Creativity

Written and illustrated by Jean Van't Hul
Connecting with your kids through art is one of the best ways to spend quality time with your little ones. Even when they enter preschool and elementary school, art remains a great way to have fun together and to be creative. Providing supply lists, instructions, challenges, and group activities, this book features ideas for a range of abilities and will inspire you to get started as soon as possible. *Ages: 1 to 8 years*



The Pocket Scavenger

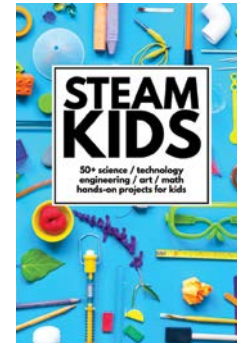
Written and illustrated by Keri Smith
Guerrilla artist Keri Smith inspires older kids and teens with this free-spirit journal that includes 72 challenges. Part pocket project, part scavenger hunt, The Pocket Scavenger may be thin on pages, but it might still take a few years for any reader to complete the list. Rather than a structured how-to, the book encourages kids to push their creative boundaries and experiment. Perfectionists, abstain. This book encourages you to look at the world in a different way, not to create a conventional masterpiece. Above all, have fun! *Ages: 10+ years*



Fingerprint & Draw: On the Farm

Written and illustrated by Maite Balart
Drawing with fingers can be a lot more exciting than making smileys on a foggy car window. These farm animal art ideas come illustrated with step-by-step tutorials and, as the title implies, require no paintbrushes or crayons. Preschool kids will love tracing shapes with their bare hands and seeing them come to life as they follow easy instructions.

Ages: 3 to 6 years



STEAM Kids: 50+ Science / Technology / Engineering / Art / Math Hands-On Projects for Kids

Written and illustrated by Anne Carey and the STEAM Kids Author Team
Weekly planners, field trip ideas, STEAM journal pages—this book gathers more than 50 experiments for curious young minds in a fun and colorful format. Written by an MIT engineer, award-winning bloggers, and designers, STEAM Kids will inspire young makers to create exciting STEM projects with an art angle. Perfect for homeschoolers, after-school, or rainy days.

Ages: 4 to 10 years

Unofficial Minecraft Lab for Kids: Family-Friendly Projects for Exploring and Teaching Math, Science, History, and Culture Through Creative Building

Written and illustrated by John Miller and Chris Fornell Scott



For school-age kids, Minecraft is a wonderful virtual world that keeps reinventing itself, and its iconography is part of their everyday life. This activity book connects the virtual

world with our physical world with fun and engaging activities that kids (and parents) can do together. Whether it's electrical experiments or hands-on crafting, this clever book will keep you busy a long time. *Ages: 8 to 12 years*

A Kid's Guide to Sewing: 16 Fun Projects You'll Love to Make & Use

Written and illustrated by Sophie Kerr, Bill Kerr, and Weeks Ringle

Written from a kid's perspective, this fun sewing book includes simple and not-so-simple sewing projects for crafty school-age kids. With tips on how to choose a fabric (always a tricky choice), how to use a sewing machine, and how to fix mistakes, this will get any young sewing enthusiast on a lifelong track of DIY fashion. It's easy to get lost in the world of sewing, but this book uses simple language and, more importantly, heavily illustrates the basics of sewing. Whether you're in for a comfy pillow, a blanket, or a pool cover-up, this kid's guide is a great starter book. *Ages: 8 to 14 years*



The Star Wars Cookbook: BB-Ate: Awaken to the Force of Breakfast and Brunch

Written by Lara Starr, Illustrated by Matthew Carden

Jedi chefs need to train from a young age to reach the mastery of their elders, even in the kitchen. With this Force-inspired cookbook, you can finally enjoy the whole grain goodness of C-3PO pancakes, the no-cook efficiency of BB-8 energy balls (what Jedi doesn't need energy for physical activity?), or the golden power of Luke Skywaffles at home. With easy instructions and Star Wars references, this cookbook is sure to please any young Padawan.

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.

From Womb to World

DIY Baby Food Made Simple

By Christine Chen

Contrary to popular belief, homemade baby food can be easy and practical, especially if you make it in bulk and freeze it. Overpriced equipment and storage containers are unnecessary. You'll only need a small juicer or blender that purées well (I like the BELLA Personal Size Rocket Blender), and ice cube trays that easily dislodge individually frozen cubes. (I discovered the hard way that most baby food freezer storage trays are ridiculously difficult to remove individual portions from.)

Veggies are usually the first solids introduced after oatmeal or rice cereal

Carrots, sweet potatoes (and regular potatoes), and butternut squash can all be boiled, sautéed, or baked until soft then puréed in a blender and frozen in bulk to be defrosted later. To salt or not to salt? I chose not to salt to let my kids appreciate the sweetness of the orange veggies. Breastmilk and formula can also be added to the purée, but note that freezing is not advised if you add breastmilk or formula. Green vegetables can be problematic since they turn color once frozen, and they never seemed to taste as good after defrosting. Peas, in fact, were the bane of my existence: no matter how long I puréed them or how much milk I added, I never attained the smoothness of store-bought baby food peas in a jar, and my son gagged on the tiniest bit of my homemade baby peas. I had a similar problem with green beans. Puréed zucchini, on the other hand, froze well.

You can blend more than just fruits and veggies

Meat purées are surprisingly easy, something I didn't realize until my second child. To this day, I feel terrible my son ate jarred chicken and beef. Again, the blender is your friend, and a piece of boiled, grilled, or roasted chicken, turkey, or beef can be puréed smoothly and enhanced with broth or seasoning of choice. A meat purée will last two to three days in the refrigerator and, in theory, could be frozen. If your child doesn't like meat, mix the meat purée with a vegetable or fruit purée, similar to what is found in packaged baby food pouches or jars.

Fruits should be introduced last so babies eat their vegetables and meat

White fruits (apples, pears, and bananas) tend to be the first fruits introduced and are easy to make yourself. Bananas are the easiest to purée though they brown quickly and do not defrost well. If your child is a good eater, mashing them with a spoon will suffice.



Apples are easy to purée raw but turn an unappetizing brown color (think apple juice) though they taste fine. Cooking them first fixes the discoloration but removes the convenience factor. So, instead of puréeing apples, just serve unsweetened applesauce—an easy substitute. Pears, cooked or raw, can be puréed and do not brown. (Additionally, they can help soothe a cough and sore throat!) You can also add yogurt or milk to any fruit purée for a homemade smoothie. Berries, however, are difficult to purée to complete smoothness because of their seeds (strawberries, raspberries, blackberries) or skin (blueberries). For first-time eaters, the seeds also could provoke a gag reflex. Avocados—yes, they are a fruit—are wonderful convenience foods as they mash

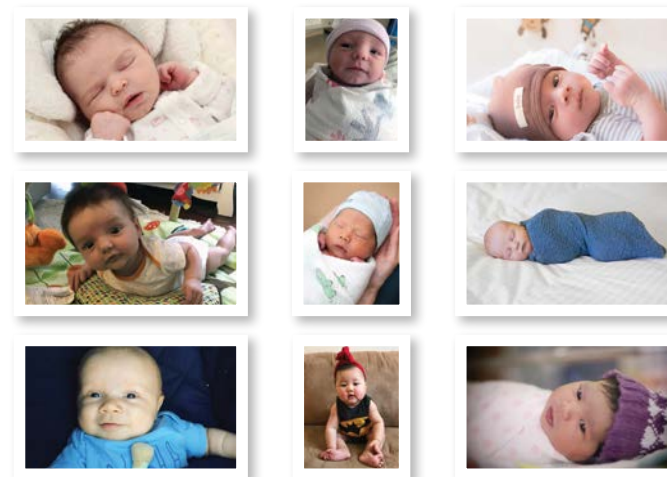
DIY meat purées are surprisingly easy, something I didn't realize until my second child.

easily with a spoon and are portable enough to take in a diaper bag. To use, leave unripe avocados on the counter until slightly soft to the touch and then refrigerate to stop the ripening process. Avocados can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, providing nutritious, instant baby food. Once cut, they do brown quickly, so refrigerate the avocado, cut-side down, in a sealed container or Ziploc to reduce browning. ♦

Christine has analyzed and advised consumer companies for a career. She is sad that her 4-year-old son is now a picky eater despite eating everything as a baby, which she supposes is offset by her 2-year-old daughter who eats almost anything though she wanted nothing do with baby food, homemade or from a jar.

GGMG AT WORK

New Arrivals



Karissa Lilley **Baby Clara Jane**
Nathania C. **Baby Calvin Stanley**
Laura Brady **Baby Camila Victoria**
Yoko N. **Baby Elliott Rei**
Anne M. **Baby Noelle Elizabeth**
Connie C. **Baby Mia Chung Song**
Anne P. **Baby Patrick Xavier**
Ashley S. **Baby Everett Valentine**
Karen T. **Baby Russell**
Marzi W. **Baby Vera Joule**
Katie C. **Baby Miles Andre**

Congratulations to Ashley Scatena! She will be pampering her little one with products from Babyganics. These plant-based, tear-free, hypoallergenic cleansers and lotions clean and protect skin from head to toe.

To announce your new arrival in the magazine and for a chance to win a Babyganics gift set, fill out the form at <http://tinyurl/ggmgnNewArrivals>.



Forum Q&A

Still trying to figure out how things work on the new GGMG website? You're not alone. Here are some questions and answers from a recent online thread.

Q: Will there ever be an app?

A: An iPhone app is underway. We've started with the iPhone app because the vast majority of mobile users are on iPhones. Once that is done, some of that code can be used to develop an Android app.

Q: Is there a way to not have the renewal fee be a recurring payment? I would rather manually submit my payment each year.

A: Yep! In the "My Account" section, you can manage your membership and payment. It can be found if you click on your user name on the right hand side of the top toolbar.

Q: How do you request to have a [forum] comment of your own removed?

A: You can copy/paste the link and forward it to the Web Team (webteam@ggmgn.org) and they can remove it.

Q: How do you send a private message to another member?

A: There are a couple of ways. In the menu on the left of the page (if you're on mobile, click the "hamburger menu" icon on the top left of your screen to reveal it) there is a Mail option that will take you to your messages. You can also click on any user's name, and it will take you to their profile page where you can see the option to "Send Message" under their screen name at the top of the page.

Spring Cleaning for Modern Moms

No time to clean? Here are ways to make that overwhelming task more manageable.

By Stephanie AuWerter



Ahem, gentle readers, when was the last time you dusted your ceiling corners? Washed your curtains? Vacuumed your refrigerator coils?

Yeah, I've never done any of those either. Truth: most moms are too busy scraping food off the floor to consider whether today is the day to clean light fixtures. And when precious "me time" arises, grabbing a mop (rather than a wine glass) or working up a sweat while scrubbing your shower curtain (rather than at the gym) can be hard to prioritize.

But as I gaze at the teetering stack of adorable kid art, catalogs, and 2017 magazines taking over our back kitchen counter—and my eye then wanders to the impenetrable stain on the rug where the cat

barfed last week—I admit that the idea of a good spring cleaning does hold a certain appeal.

Sure, the idea may seem old-fashioned. In fact, it is: spring cleaning was essential back in the days when homes had dirt floors or families huddled around soot-producing wood-burning stoves, says Becky Rapinchuk, author of *Simply Clean* and founder of the website Clean Mama (www.cleanmama.net). But even today, she says, you just might find the urge to purge and polish starting to percolate once the various family illnesses of the winter months are over, the days are longer, and the windows flung open to take advantage of springtime weather.

More seriously, if your home's general sense of disorder or uncleanliness bothers you, clearly you should do something about it.

Your home—even one with the chaos of kids—should be a source of comfort and contentment. "It should be the place you return to and feel good," says Beth McGee, author of *Get Your House Clean Now*. "Having it be clean is a big part of that."

So while most of us are unlikely to achieve a Martha Stewart-level of organizing and cleaning perfection, many of us will get a meaningful mood boost by decluttering at least some surfaces and knowing that, for a short period of time, the dust bunnies under the couch have been banished. "I hate cleaning," says Melissa Maker, host of the *YouTube* channel "Clean My Space" and author of the book of the same title. "[But] I don't regret the time I spend on it. There really is a good feeling when you've accomplished that work."

Assemble your cleaning crew

For simplicity's sake, I'm using the word "you" here, but that doesn't mean spring cleaning involves a cleaning crew of just one. You can—and should—get your kids involved. Sure, they might be ridiculously ineffective, but they will get the message that caring for their home and possessions is part of their family responsibilities. Eventually, the annual ritual of spring cleaning will "become part of their memory and personal story," says Maker. Be sure to assign duties that are age-appropriate and short in duration. For example, what toddler doesn't love a good spray bottle? Fill it up with water and a touch of soap and have him hit the baseboards.

Finally, if finances permit, don't be ashamed to hire out tasks that seem unmanageable. When it comes to deep cleaning rugs, for example, you can either rent a carpet cleaning machine or you can skip a dinner out and hire a pro instead. "Some things make sense to do yourself and some don't," says Maker.

Create a game plan

For most of us, spring cleaning will involve two phases: decluttering and then cleaning. "You first need to get to your surfaces and spaces," says Dana K. White, author of *Decluttering at the Speed of Life*. "Once you

get the stuff out that doesn't need to be there, the cleaning doesn't seem so daunting."

Break large tasks into a series of small ones. "If I have five minutes, maybe I can take care of a few items before I'm interrupted because someone is bleeding and needs help," says White. Dedicating a few minutes per day to tackling one drawer or one pile can yield satisfying results and will help establish the habit of squeezing in a quickie clean when opportunity arises. And when you do have a bigger chunk of time, go ahead—have a little "fun." Light a candle that smells fresh and listen to a podcast or crank up those '80s pop hits.

Phase one: declutter

Decluttering can be surprisingly hard for many people—often because getting rid of items that are still theoretically useful can feel wasteful. But too much stuff renders a space useless, says Cassandra Aarssen, author of *Real Life Organizing*. So if you aren't using it or enjoying it, donate it. The mistake was buying in the first place—hanging onto it now doesn't make it better.

...many of us will get a meaningful mood boost by decluttering at least some surfaces...

Begin with "garbage bag therapy," says Aarssen. Grab a garbage bag and tackle those items that you are unlikely to have any sort of sentimental attachment to such as expired medications and food, old magazines or catalogs, and freezer-burned food. "It's painless purging," she says.

Next, tackle your most visible areas, says White. Go to your front door and see what clutter people first see when they first walk into your home. Is it the pile of papers on the kitchen counter? A tangle of backpacks, jackets, and shoes in your entryway? Reduce and organize it. Taming your most noticeable mess first provides immediate gratification and offers results that everyone will see, likely inspiring you to do more. Once your entryway is tidied-up, move on to the living area, then kitchen and so on.

Spring Cleaning Checklist*

Seasonal cleaning

(to be done 4x per year)

- Clean appliances
- Clean bathroom counters
- Clean walls/touch up paint
- Clean washer + dryer
- Dust all surfaces
- Dust corners + edges
- Laundry bedding
- Polish furniture
- Rotate/flip mattresses
- Scrub tubs + showers
- Vacuum all floors
- Vacuum edges
- Vacuum/wash vents
- Wash baseboards
- Wash all floors
- Wash throw rugs
- Wipe switches
- Wipe doorknobs

Deep cleaning

- Clean carpets
- Clean ceiling fans + lights
- Clean fireplace + hearth
- Clean under appliances
- Dust door tops
- Vacuum lampshades
- Wash doors

Classic once-a-year to-dos

- Clean + organize pantry
- Deep clean oven
- Defrost + clean freezer
- Oil furniture
- Switch out winter clothes for spring
- Wash curtains + draperies
- Wash windows inside + out
- Wash window tracks
- Vacuum/wash porch

**Source: www.cleanmama.net*

Make sure every item in your house has a home, says Aarssen. If you like a minimalist look, this means that most everything is tucked away somewhere, or, if you like to be able to see and enjoy your things, have items on display, but in a way that's organized and calming. Pay attention

to where clutter accumulates, and try new solutions for organizing to keep it from gathering.

Phase two: clean

The internet abounds with spring-cleaning checklists, including the one mentioned here. Take them as suggestions, not required tasks. “I am yet to meet one person who does all of that each year,” says Maker.

Go around your home and see what genuinely needs to get done. Do the drapes really need to be washed? “If it’s not obviously dirty, don’t worry about it,” says Maker. Figure out what your priorities are for Spring 2018. “Sure it might be good for Martha [Stewart] to clean her window screens, but literally no else I know does that every year,” she says. “Just do what there is a good reason to do.”

Put together a cleaning caddy so you’re ready to spring into action when a small window of time opens up. (You can make a small one for your kids, too, if you’re hoping for some “assistance.”) Making your own less-toxic cleaning solutions is actually super simple and the products work great, says Leslie Reichert, author of *The Joy of Green Cleaning*. (See sidebar.) Be sure to load up on microfiber cloths, which can be used with just a little water to shine any surface.

When cleaning an entire room, operate methodically. First, open the windows to let in fresh air, says Samara Geller, a database and research analyst at the Environmental Working Group. Doing so will reduce cleaning



Petra Cross Photography

fumes and also lower the moisture level in your home, inhibiting the growth of mold and mildew. Then, while working in a circle, go around the room, cleaning surfaces from top to bottom and back to front, says Reichert. Finally, clean the floors.

Job well done

Given all that you have on your plate, are you likely to achieve an Instagram-worthy level of cleaning perfection? Probably not—and that’s

okay. Praise yourself for what you did do, rather than criticizing yourself for what you didn’t. “Do what you can handle,” says Maker. “And then be really freaking proud of it.” ♦

Stephanie is a San Francisco-based freelance writer and editor, whose work has appeared in Parents magazine, Real Simple magazine, The Wall Street Journal and more. Reporting this article was enlightening, although her refrigerator coils remain unvacuumed.

DIY Green Clean

All-Purpose Liquid Cleaner

Can be used on countertops and floors. Good for all-around cleaning.

- 16 oz. club soda
- 1 tbsp. baking soda
- 4 drops dish soap
- 6 drops any essential oil for fragrance

Mix dish soap and baking soda together and then add the club soda. Place in spray bottle. To make it stronger, add 3 tbsp. borax.

Green Gentle Scrub

For cleaning stains from countertops and sinks.

- 1 cup borax
- ½ cup salt
- Olive oil or dish soap to create paste
- 6 drops essential oil for fragrance

Create a paste. Rinse thoroughly after use.

Tile Cleaner

- 1 cup vinegar or hydrogen peroxide
- ¼ cup borax
- 1 gallon hot water

Heat the vinegar until boiling. Dissolve the borax into the vinegar. Mix entire solution into one-gallon bucket. Use a stiff brush to clean.

*Reichert, Leslie. *The Joy of Green Cleaning* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).



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Bethany Petrik/Flickr

Home Birth: Not Exactly a DIY Project

Exploring the rising trend of birthing at home

By Sandy Woo

Early Christmas morning some five years ago now, I wet the bed. My water broke, unexpectedly, about five weeks too soon. Confused and in denial, I laid down a thick towel, called my doula, and went back to sleep. Fortunately, my doula’s saner head prevailed, and she roused me to check myself into the hospital. I begrudgingly took her advice as I had planned on staying home until the last possible minute. After the quick, uncomplicated birth of my son, a friend of mine gently teased, “You nearly had your baby at home.” What would that have been like, I began to wonder.

What is home birth?

To put it simply, home birth is defined as giving birth in your place of residence. The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) reports

that 0.9 percent of all births happen at home. This number has steadily increased in recent years, with high-profile celebrities such as Gisele Bundchen delivering in her bathtub. Nearly one in four home births is unplanned or unattended. Most are attended by a midwife, occasionally by a physician, and some include family members or medical professionals such as EMTs.

Please note that not one expert or literature reference I consulted recommends actually attempting a do-it-yourself birth. Even so, part of the desire for home birth is perhaps explained in the sentiments of Mark Frauenfelder, the editor-in-chief of *MAKE*, who wrote that one of the reasons people are drawn to DIY projects is because they offer “a deeper connection to the things that keep us alive and well.”

Why birth at home?

Birth, of course, is not a project per se, but a natural process that some people argue has been over-medicalized. In 2009, researchers at University of Illinois interviewed 160 women in the United States about their reasons for considering home birth. The top five reasons included: believing home births were safer than hospital births, a previous negative hospital incident, desire to avoid unnecessary interventions, control over birth decisions, and having a comfortable environment.

In a documentary about her and other midwives, Ina May Gaskin, one of the founders of The Farm Midwifery Center in Tennessee, described “making our own culture about birth, in which fear wasn’t going to be a big part. If a woman’s afraid, she won’t be relaxed.”

the baby at home was amazing...This was before husbands/fathers stayed in the [hospital] room overnight.”

What does it cost?

Contrary to popular belief, insurance will cover some costs of home birth, with some plans paying the entire amount. In the Bay Area, the going cost of a home birth is somewhere between \$5,500 and \$8,000. Some states allow licensed midwives to be reimbursed by Medicaid; because a home birth usually costs significantly less than a hospital birth, it saves the government money.

How to physically and mentally prepare

Almost any place can work so long as it is “appropriate and safe for a baby to be born,” according to Maria Iorillo, California Licensed Midwife & EMT with 32 years of experience.

For someone who values the experience of a home birth more, calculating risks and benefits will be different than someone who is programmed to think about...the worst-case scenario.

Laura Swaminathan, a mother of three, described how she knew she wanted to have a home birth as soon as she became pregnant with her first child. “My desire was driven by fear of the hospital rather than love of home birth. To be clear, I am not generally afraid of hospitals or medical procedures, but harbor a strong belief that obstetric care in the US is wildly misguided. In an ideal world, women could be safely supported in a hospital environment. I wish that were an option in 2008, but it just wasn’t.”

On the other hand, home birth may be less expensive depending on insurance or lack of insurance coverage. Susan Schreiberstein talked about an era in which insurance unfairly discriminated against women, leading her and her husband to consider home birth because it was half the cost of a hospital birth. They were also turned off by the sterile hospital rooms where only ice chips were available to birthing moms. Home birth with a doctor and midwife was a “more inviting way to do it. The comfort of having

Must-haves include running water, a clean and tidy space, and heating. “Use common sense. Three flights of stairs—not safe. On crutches—not safe,” she stressed. Of major importance, a residence should not be more than 30 minutes to the hospital.

Iorillo also stressed the importance of building a relationship. “Build confidence in all realms. Help empower women to get to a place for them to achieve what they want to achieve...if you don’t trust the experience, it’s not going to happen.”

Pamela Hunt, CPM, a midwife at The Farm Midwifery Center, who has over 40 years of experience, discusses diet as another important factor in having a successful home birth. She spends over an hour on diet with a pregnant woman during a prenatal visit and can rule her out from their service based on the woman’s response. She advises following a low-sugar, low-fat diet and “stay[ing] away from cannabis except for morning sickness...eating dark leafy greens and leaving out lattes.”

The necessary safety talk

In parsing through the dizzying array of limited data (it being difficult to conduct randomized clinical trials) on the safety of home births, I came to one conclusion: this controversial topic is saddled with confounding information, and how data are interpreted depends on the lens through which the statistics are viewed. Elizabeth Kwan, mother and emergency physician explains, “For someone who values the experience of a home birth more, calculating risks and benefits will be different than someone who is programmed to think about the ‘what ifs’ and the worst-case scenario.”

To briefly summarize, some studies were



Courtesy of Maria Iorillo



Courtesy of Maria Iorillo

limited by size, others by how they selected control populations, and others by how data were “massaged” to fit a conclusion. Based on data used by the American College of Obstetrics (ACOG), the absolute risk of neonatal death is about 0.4 per 1000 births for planned hospital births. For planned home births, there can be more than a two-fold increase in risk (1-2 per 1000 births).

Essentials to safety include that a home birth is planned, a skilled attendant is present, and medical intervention/backup is readily available. Some of the best studies cited by both midwives and the medical community include articles in a *British Medical Journal* paper published in 2011 and one in *The New England Journal of Medicine* published in 2015. Both conclude that planned home births result in lower maternal interventions, and that home birth is as safe as hospital birth when nothing goes wrong.

Notable are studies from the Netherlands, where one third of women routinely have planned home deliveries. Multiparous women showed universally lower intervention rates but if an intervention occurs, the risk of dying substantially increased. First-time moms had more problems in general. Additionally, delay time to the hospital (20 minutes or more) increased adverse outcomes, such as infant mortality.

The midwives I spoke to stressed the importance of being careful and safe in their practice, and of always having two experienced midwives attend a birth. In Tennessee, where The Farm was conceived, midwives had the benefit of friendly country

doctors who could help out. Even though a low transfer rate is often touted in home birth statistics, Iorillo advises that “a super low transfer rate should be a red flag.” A normal transfer rate is 15 to 25 percent. This rate doesn’t necessarily mean emergency procedures; some laboring women need an epidural or pitocin.

It is a good idea to clarify training and certifications of your midwife if you are considering home birth. The training is different for each of the three types of midwives most commonly associated with home births: Certified Nurse-Midwife (CNM), Certified Midwife (CM), and Certified Professional Midwife (CPM). A CNM is trained in a medical setting and attains both a nursing degree and midwifery training. CMs have similar training as a CNM, and conform to the same standards as well as a masters level midwifery program, but are not required to have a nursing degree. CPMs requires knowledge in out-of-hospital settings, focusing on providing midwifery model care in homes and freestanding birth centers. The majority of midwives in the U.S. are CPMs.

What about all the bodily fluid? AKA how do I prepare my space for birth?

Many websites offer extensive advice on this topic. The midwife will likely bring all the medical necessities, although chux (the blue hospital absorbent paper) is handy to have around the house in general. Have a plentitude of clean towels and sheets. Do a trial run in a birthing pool if you will be using

CONTRAINDICATIONS FOR HOME BIRTH

- Serious medical conditions (heart disease, kidney disease, blood clotting disorders, type I diabetes, gestational diabetes managed with insulin, preeclampsia, or bleeding)
- Placenta previa at beginning of labor
- Active genital herpes
- Thick meconium
- The American College of Obstetrics (ACOG) considers prior c-sections and breech presentation absolute disqualifiers

Source: Evidence Based Birth and ACOG Committee Opinion, April 2017

one. Clean out the washer and dryer. Stainless steel bowls are also necessary to collect bodily fluid and the placenta. Make your bed as a “sandwich”: that is, clean sheets on the very bottom, a waterproof sheet above that, and an old worn sheet on top. Once delivery is complete, the first two layers can be stripped and the bed is already made for relaxing.

Not for everyone

Despite my personal misgivings about delivering in a hospital, I had an amazing experience, and felt fully supported in my decisions. (Except when they advised against my misguided attempt at leaving the hospital to labor at home). The medical staff recommended pitocin; I declined. Every doctor and nurse listened to my wishes, though they may have questioned my sanity in declining the epidural. Perhaps there has been a cultural shift brought on by the increased interest in home births and the midwives that advocate for a better birthing experience. Today, expectant women may be more confident in their desires as well. This increase of confidence in both a woman and her birth environment can only lead to a more positive birth overall. ♦

Sandy survived her son's birth but in an alternate universe, had wished there was the option her husband could have done it instead.



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How to Write a Fairy Tale About Your Child

Want to stoke your child’s imagination but feeling creatively uninspired? Here’s a handy fairy tale template to get you started.

By Rhea St. Julien

Photographs by Aviva Roller Photography

For all of human history, storytelling has been a vital way to pass down knowledge about how to face problems, build courage, and stoke imagination. Albert Einstein is widely quoted as having said, “If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales. If you want them to be more intelligent, read them more fairy tales.”

However, if you have even a cursory knowledge of common fairy tales, you already know their many glaring issues. First, there are the abysmal parents: Rapunzel’s mom sold her to a neighboring witch for radishes. Cinderella and Snow White were apparently raised by woodland animals after their parents shunned them. And Hansel and Gretel? Sheesh, call Child Protective Services on that neglect!

Second, if you have a sensitive kid like

mine, fairy tales are scary! Just one mention of a giant, witch, or dragon in a story and my daughter wants to close the book. G.K. Chesterton, however, makes the case for keeping the story going in the face of fear: “Fairy tales do not tell children the dragons exist. Children already know that dragons exist. Fairy tales tell children the dragons can be killed.”

Why are stepmothers always so evil—and where are the fathers in those scenarios?!

Finally, the gender-normative stereotypes that abound in fairy tales are restrictive. Does every story really need to end with a wedding? Can’t Cinderella’s Fairy Godmother give her more than just fancy clothes and a sweet ride? Why are stepmothers always so evil—and where are the fathers in those scenarios?!

A few months after my daughter started

attending a Waldorf-inspired school, which relies heavily on folk tales and puppet shows for learning, she came home and started acting them out for me. She carefully set a table, found a lilting cadence with her voice, and told me that day’s story, from start to finish. It didn’t always make perfect sense, but it was her way of telling me what it was like to be at school that day, and I was in awe of how much she retained.

Soon after this, she started requesting of me and her father, “Tell me a story with your mouth.” We spun wild yarns of improvised adventure; the ones she liked best starred her and her friends. On some days, I had the required energy, but on others, I felt like I lost my magic wand in the pile of dishes in the sink. So I decided to develop a fairy tale structure to rely on, for those days I couldn’t quite hack it as Fairy GodMama.

*“Start at the very beginning. It’s a very good place to start.” —Maria, *The Sound of Music**

Here is one template I created:

Once upon a time, there was a child named *(insert your child’s name here, and in any place further in the story where I use They, Them, or The Child in reference to your child)*. They were living in the land of *(insert locale: San Francisco, the country of ethnic origin of your family, or a made-up place)*. One day, they decided to go on a journey. They were sure to pack their *(magical implement: a wand, a sword, or cape)*.

On the road, they encountered a magical creature *(a fairy, a troll, or unicorn)*. The magical creature said, “Hurry! Your friend, *(insert name of your child’s friend)*, needs your help! Here, hop on my *(fairy wing, troll wagon, unicorn back)*, and I’ll help you get there.”

They reached a rushing river, but the bridge was broken. “Oh no! How are we going to get across?” The child remembered their magical implement, and pulled it out of their bag. “I know! I’ll use this!”

“Be careful,” the magical creature counseled, “for you can only use it three times today, and you can only use it on yourself. I cannot follow you across the bridge, but I know you can do it on your own.”

The child used their magical tool to get to the other side of the river, shouting a magic word to activate it: *“(Abracadabra, Hocus Pocus, or something silly that will make your child laugh!)”*

Up ahead stood a castle from which they heard their friend screaming, “Help! Help!” They ran in and found their friend, who was doing a headstand. “Oh, I’m so glad you are here! I’m stuck in this headstand and I can’t get down!” The child helped them down, and their friend said, “Oh, thank heavens. Now you can help me fight the dragon!”

“The dragon! Why were you in a headstand

when there is a dragon around?”

“Keeps me limber. Let’s go.”

The kids ran out to the backyard, where they encountered a dragon pacing in front of a cage, containing the magical creature that helped them earlier!

“*(Name of magical creature)*! How did you get in there?”

“Help! I’m trapped! And that dragon looks hungry!”

“Oh no! I am really hungry!” the dragon said, his stomach growling.

“Well, do you eat anything else?” the child said.

“What do you have?” he asked.

“*(Insert all of the child’s favorite foods here: pizza, sundaes, apples, etc.)*,” the child told him.

“Yuck! I can’t eat those! What else do you have? Maybe a kitten?” he said.

“No, you can’t eat kittens! I also have some *(insert all of the child’s least favorite foods here: salad, broccoli, spicy beverages, etc.)*.”

“YUM! Bring me all of that! With a side of puppy!” the dragon yelled.

“You can’t have the puppy, but I will bring the rest,” the child said and went into the castle to cook it. The friends shared a big meal with the dragon, who they released from the cage once he was well-fed and promised never to try to eat them again.

“Now I am full enough to fly home! I’m sorry I tried to eat you. I get grouchy when I am tired and hungry. I’m going home to take a nap!”

The dragon flew away, and they all lived happily ever after. The End.

I suggest writing out that entire story, personalizing it for your child in all the places I prompted. Then, let your child illustrate it! A collaborative, imaginative effort from parent and child is a truly magical experience.

Once you’ve got the hang of this one, create your own story from scratch.

Be sure to include challenges, magical helpers, problem solving, and a bit of humor. Send your little prince or princess on valiant adventures and ride right along with them, on your trusty unicorn. ❖

This article originally appeared in our July/August 2014 issue.

Rhea, MFT, is an Expressive Arts Therapist in San Francisco. She is mama to a 7-year-old, and due in May with her second child.



The dragon said, “Hahahaha! I’m going to eat well today! This magical creature, washed down with two human children!”

“Not if we can help it!” the kids said. The child used their magical tool to make a magical tool for their friend, and then they both used their magical tools together to pluck the cage off their creature friend and deposit it on the dragon.

FEATURETTE: //

Refurbishing the Soul By Juliana Egley

I grew up in Alaska, where almost everyone is a DIY-er out of necessity. Living in one of the most isolated states in the country, parts or materials were rarely a few blocks or one mouse click away. I've re-grouted our bathtub, replaced the car radiator, and planted vegetable gardens in raised beds that I built myself. All this I did without much prior experience or guidance. These days, it seems everyone and their sister has a DIY blog or YouTube channel, with topics ranging from repurposing mason jars to building entire houses. With video tutorials and Pinterest boards on any subject under the sun, the time has never been better to take on a project of your own.

But why should you DIY? Wouldn't it make more sense to pay a professional to install a range hood or rotate your tires? Not necessarily. For projects completely outside of your expertise or that you just don't have the time for, it may be worth it to have someone else do it. But for the vast majority of home repairs, refurbishes, and vehicle maintenance, doing it yourself not only saves you money, but equips you with a host of new skills. Not to mention the pride in what you accomplish. Travis J. Carter, a psychology professor, coined the phrase the "IKEA Effect," which suggests that you will value anything you put together with your own hands over something that you just go out and purchase.

Home repair

Is there something about your home that you'd like to fix? Maybe the carpets are an unappetizing oatmeal shade that shows every speck of dirt, and you really want hardwood floors. Or perhaps you'd like to finally put up curtains instead of the cheap vinyl shades that were there when you moved in. Whatever the project, odds are there's a blog post or tutorial to walk you through. Brittany Bailey of Pretty Handy Girl (prettyhandygirl.com) has loads of ideas, guides, and encouragement on her site. Her mission, as stated on her blog, is "to break stereotypes and empower you to take on your own DIY project." Brittany is also adamant about being prepared before starting any project by watching or reading

tutorials, gathering the correct tools ahead of time, wearing proper protection, and not taking unnecessary risks. **Make it go vroom** Vehicle maintenance and repair is consistently listed as a major source of stress for most people, especially women. Being able to accurately diagnose vehicular issues is a skill that will save you time and money, and will allow you to either make the repair at home, or clearly communicate with the repair shop. Audra Fordin, on her blog *Women Auto Know* (womenautoknow.com), recommends that every vehicle owner should read the owner's manual. It should give you a broad overview to understand your vehicle's correct fluid levels and where things should be. She also

recommends that the annual budget for vehicle maintenance should be around \$800; consistent maintenance will reduce the amount spent on emergency repairs. The website RepairPal (repairpal.com) is a great resource for estimating what repairs and maintenance should cost in your area. If you want to learn how to work on your vehicle yourself,

Pat's Garage (patsgarage.com) has Women's Auto Clinics for your car, and Moto Guild (motoguild-sf.com) has space and instructors for you to work on a motorcycle or scooter.

Passing it down

If not for yourself, do it for the kids. Watching my parents and grandparents fix our home and vehicles gave me the confidence to not only tackle my own home projects, but to take on almost anything life chooses to throw at me. If you know what to do in a repair situation, you'll be calm and collected, and your kids will pick up on that. They'll see your creativity and resourcefulness in solving the problem, and if they can help out, they'll get a great feeling of achievement. DIY is an excellent way to boost your creativity, improve your self-confidence, and bond with your kids. ❖

Juliana Egley lives in North Beach with her husband, daughter, and two cats. A lifelong DIY-er, her next home project is refinishing the kitchen cabinets.



Julien Dumont/Flickr

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It is a common dilemma among young families living in San Francisco, to stay in the City or venture across the bridge to Marin.

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PLAYGROUPS

Playgroup Formation Event at Sports Basement

Are you a new mom looking to build your mom village? Join us to meet and mingle with other new moms while we help to organize you into playgroups based on your neighborhood and child’s age. Bring your pre-crawling baby, or just bring yourselves. We’ll provide the mimosas! This event is targeted to moms with babies 0-12 months old, but all moms are welcome. Ultimately this event is about building those friendships that will support you during this most joyful, sleepless, heart wrenching, bewildering time of your life.

DATE: Saturday, April 14
TIME: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
PLACE: 610 Old Mason St., “Big room”
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org



NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS: NEIGHBORHOOD 3

GGMG Neighborhood Meetup Group 3 has hosted playdates at Presidio Playground, a Valentine’s Day card-making event, wine night at Tofino Wines, and regular visits to the elderly at Providence Place. These have proven to be fun and incredibly rewarding opportunities for our members.

In the coming year, we are planning more wine nights for moms to socialize, a preschool primer over the summer, and a variety of playdates.

All are welcome to participate in our events, even if you do not live in this area! If you are interested, join our group at www.ggmg.org/groups to receive a monthly email summary of events.

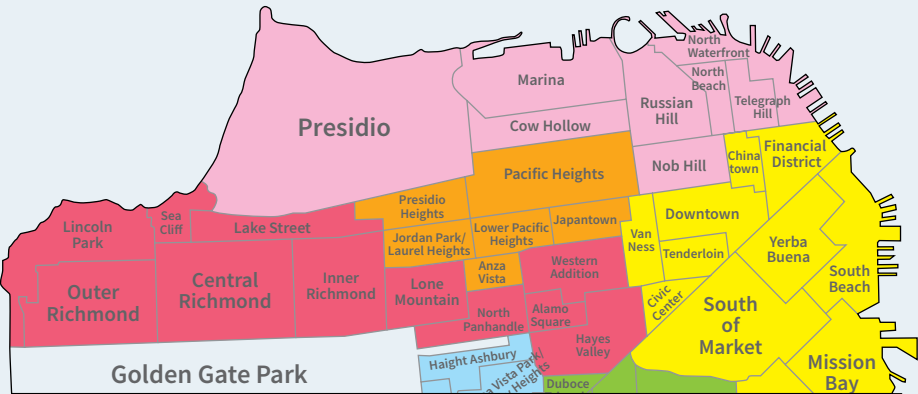
We are always looking for volunteers to bring new ideas to the group! Have a passion for exercise? Start a workout or walking group in the Presidio. A regular at JCC Kindergym in

Laurel Heights? Invite others to meet you there. Enjoy planning social events? Set up a wine night or yoga event.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact the Heights Director, Kelly Dwinells at kellydwinells@gmail.com.

Neighborhood 3

The Heights - Cathedral Hill, Fillmore, Japantown, Laurel Heights, Pacific Heights, Lower Pacific Heights, Presidio Heights, and surrounding neighborhoods



CAREERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Working Moms Downtown April Lunch at Cafe Venue

Come join us for lunch with other working moms at Cafe Venue. Look for our GGMG sign on the table. Please keep your RSVP current.

DATE: Tuesday, April 3
TIME: Noon to 1 p.m.
PLACE: 70 Leidesdorff St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org/calendar/event/275613/2018/04/03

Working Moms Downtown May Lunch at Specialty’s Cafe

Come join us for lunch with other working moms at Specialty’s Cafe. Look for our GGMG sign on the table. Please keep your RSVP current.

DATE: Tuesday, May 1
TIME: Noon to 1 p.m.
PLACE: 100 California St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org/calendar/event/275616/2018/05/01

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Member Mixer at Yerba Buena Bowling Center

Thursday is the new Friday! Come unwind with fellow moms and make new friends while bowling. No bowling experience necessary. We will have reserved lanes, bowling shoes, appetizers, and drinks to help everyone’s game! Reserve your spot early and see you there!

DATE: Thursday, April 19
TIME: 7 to 9 p.m.
PLACE: 750 Folsom St.
COST: \$5

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org



COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: MAGAZINE

Why do you do what you do? What has been an unexpected benefit of being involved with GGMG Magazine?

We want to give voice to the issues that matter to the GGMG community, and the magazine offers a high-visibility venue to do that. We want to draw on our natural talents and experience—from writing to photography to marketing—in order to achieve a top-notch product that readers look forward to receiving.

What types of activities or projects do you undertake?

We publish six issues a year, each centered around a different theme that we brainstorm at fun monthly meetings.

How do you know when you are making a difference?

We love getting feedback from readers. Positive or negative, our goal is to provoke thought and conversation among our readers. And we love seeing our articles re-published elsewhere on the web.

Who are your current volunteers?

Sarah Arestia, Sarah Brandstetter, Emily deGrassi, Anna Gracia, Arwen Griffith, Neha Masson, Sandy Woo, Jessica Williams, Jessica Franklin, Lani Schreiberstein, Lora Tomova, Juliana Egley, Sonya Abrams, Megan Bushnell, JoJo Rhee Chevalier, Jenny Shaw, Anna Psalmond, Aviva Roller, Stephanie AuWerter, Shaheen Bilgrami, Jennifer Butterfoss, Tara Hardesty, Laure Latham, Catherine Symon, Veronica Reilly-Granich, and Gabriella Judd Cirelli.

What’s next for the magazine?

We have recently launched a Member Profile feature and are taking new steps to include and reflect the diversity of voices and backgrounds among our membership.

How can interested members get involved in your committee?

Email editor@ggmg.org.

VOLUNTEERING

Join GGMG as a Volunteer

Contact recruiting@ggmg.org if you are interested in helping the largest and best parenting organization in the Bay Area. Meet new mom friends, make GGMG even better, and give back! As a volunteer with GGMG, your membership dues will be waived after the first year of service. The following positions are open:

COMMUNITY OUTREACH 1 co-chair (Events)	MAGAZINE Designer
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION 6 volunteers	NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS Directors for Neighborhoods 1, 5 & 7
KIDS ACTIVITIES 2 co-chairs, 5 volunteers	PARENT EDUCATION 1 volunteer
JUST FOR MOMS 2 co-chairs, 2 volunteers	PARTNERSHIPS 1 Business Development Manager
MEMBERSHIP APPROVALS 1 co-chair	PR/MARKETING/BRANDING 1 chair
MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT (INCLUDES PLAYGROUP FORMATION EVENTS) 2 co-chairs, 2 moderators, 1 roster specialist, 1 volunteer	RECRUITING 2 co-chairs, 1 volunteer
MEMBER SUPPORT 1 co-chair, 2 forum volunteers, 3 resource list volunteers, 2 support group volunteers	SOCIAL EVENTS 3 volunteers
	WEBTEAM 1 co-chair, 2 moderators, 1 roster specialist

PR/SOCIAL MEDIA

BROADEN YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK

GGMG is here for you in person, on our private online forum on the “Discussion” page of ggmg.org, and online on whatever platform you prefer. Find us, socialize with us, and stay connected to get the most out of your GGMG membership!

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ggmgssf
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LinkedIn: Golden Gate Mothers Group

CAREERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Attention Working Mamas: GGMG is on LinkedIn

We’ve created a brand new LinkedIn group! We will share news, events, facilitate conversations, and engage you in all things related to career and entrepreneurship. We hope you will use this space to connect, recruit, learn, and share with your fellow GGMG moms. Please go to www.linkedin.com/groups/1209591 to join, or search for GGMG under “Groups,” and then introduce yourself.

Meet your chairs leading the Careers and Entrepreneurs group this year:



Emily Beaven

“I’m in my second year as co-chair of the Careers and Entrepreneurs Committee. Like many of you, I’ve had several careers: pro chef, food and wine marketer, and now realtor at Compass. I work with buyers and sellers in SF and Marin County. My background in marketing has been essential to my success as a real estate agent, and I love

the flexibility it gives me as I raise my 2-year-old son and new daughter (arriving this spring)!”



Julie Houghton

“I’m a mom to two girls, ages 5 and 6, and a life and career coach who specializes in helping other moms find the courage to do work they love. Prior to launching my business in 2013, I spent 15 years in marketing and strategy and have my MBA from UC Berkeley. This is my fourth year on the Careers and Entrepreneurs Committee and my second year as co-chair.”

Our committee has seven active volunteers. We aim to put on one to two events a month ranging from panels and webinars, talks with CEOs and other Bay Area leaders, to working moms’ lunches. We are planning more mixers, tech events, and skill-building workshops for you in 2018. We will also be bringing back our popular headshot sessions. Contact us on LinkedIn or email entrepreneurs@ggmg.com if you’re interested in volunteering or have an idea for a future event.



MEMBER SUPPORT

School Daze

Preschool decisions and SFUSD and private school kinder letters have recently been delivered, a process that can mean stress levels reach an all-time high. With much of the process out of your control, the impact on your child’s future feels magnified. Those who do not receive their school(s) of choice may struggle with depression as their friends pore over multiple acceptances and complain about their difficult decisions.

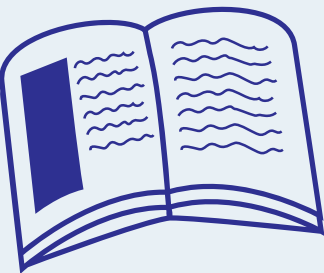
Our team has been through it all and has supported many of you coping with the process. Whether you received no options or a school too far from home to be practical, we listen with a kind ear and encourage all members to reach out.

While you are stressing, try to keep a positive outlook and not share your stress with your child. Though it’s challenging to answer your child’s, “Where am I going to school next year,” with an, “I don’t know,” try adding, “there are so many great schools that we haven’t decided yet.” Remember that families move

over the summer. Children delay school. And yes, some folks actually hold more than one school.

To those in the last category: please don’t! This is our annual reminder, begging parents to please not hold more than one school. While you can theoretically hold a public school without financial impunity, even while planning to attend a private school or charter, remember your fellow parents who need a spot.

If you need support while you wait, reach Member Support via email or post on the forums. We are your village. We promise to listen when you want to talk, and to advise when you want to strategize. Whatever it is you need to get off your chest, it’s better to do it in front of us than your kids. member.support@ggmg.org



SOCIAL EVENTS

GGMG’s Annual Spring Fling
at the Bay Area Discovery Museum



10 a.m. to 1 p.m. • Fort Baker, 557 McReynolds Rd., Sausalito

Join other GGMG families at the Bay Area Discovery Museum for a morning of fun as we celebrate spring! In addition to full access to the museum’s regularly scheduled activities and exhibits, GGMG will have exclusive use of the Discovery Theater where your family will enjoy:

- Jumping around in a big bounce house
- Face painting
- Tactile Table and Play Corner
- Musical entertainment by **Music for Aardvarks** (www.musicforsf.com)
- Child care information from the **Children’s Council San Francisco** (www.childrenscouncil.org)
- Coffee and fruit from **Good Eggs** (www.goodeggs.com)
- Crafting with **Urban Sitter** (www.urbansitter.com)
- Light bites provided by GGMG
- Goodie bags to the first 50 members
- Raffle prizes (must be present to win)

RSVP information will be available the last week of March on ggmg.org.



VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Come Bowl with Us

Need another reason to volunteer for GGMG? We’ve added more opportunities to meet and build relationships with your fellow mom volunteers. GGMG sponsors monthly volunteer get-togethers, and in 2018 we will have a team-building outing every other month, in lieu of a traditional meeting. This effort launched on February 5 when volunteers racked ‘em up and knocked ‘em down in a fun evening of comfort food and bowling at Presidio Bowl. Thanks to our Operations team for making this possible!

GGMG could use more dedicated, community-spirited volunteers on our team, so if you’d like to find the role that’s perfect for you and enjoy all the benefits of being a volunteer, email volunteer@ggmg.org. Bowling skills not required.



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MORE FUN TOGETHER

GGMG & JCCSF are partnering for another year of exciting member benefits.

Your Golden Gate Mothers Group membership opens the door to activities for you and your child, and our partnership with the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco enhances those benefits even further. GGMG members receive exclusive discounts on a variety of their programs. Visit jccsf.org to discover all the exciting activities happening at the JCCSF!

Summer Camp

Another exciting summer of camp is ready to go, where preschoolers to teens will explore a wide variety of camps and make exciting new memories. Whether it's robotics or gymnastics, skateboarding or volunteering, the JCCSF caters to your camper's unique passions and thirst for discovery.

Summer camps run June 7 – August 17 and GGMG members get **10% off** any JCCSF camp (valid for up to four weeks of camp per child). Register today at jccsf.org/camp!

How to Redeem

GGMG members may redeem their benefits by registering in person at the JCCSF with proof of GGMG membership, which can be either:

- A recent copy of the GGMG Magazine showing member's name and address
- GGMG homepage on BigTent showing member's name and address

GGMG members are eligible for the above discounts through February 28, 2019.



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I ♥ Mom

Keeping the party going

By Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss

What's the point in throwing a birthday party if there's no clown? Every good birthday party has a clown. At the age of 5, this was my thinking. On the day of my

sister Michelle's eighth birthday party, I had the perfect plan: my mother helped my best friend and me hide in the basement, throw on some wigs and white face paint, and "surprise" the party guests. Michelle was mortified. I felt like a hero.

My mother has always been a party enthusiast. For as long as I could remember, she was the most fun-loving and hard-working host, and I, her trusted creative sidekick. No idea was too wild. Can I turn my bedroom into Santa's Workshop for our holiday party? Yes! Can we make a haunted house for our October dinner party? Go ahead!

Can I be the entertainment for my sister's birthday, despite her objections, because every birthday girl needs a couple of kindergarteners in white face paint running around making fart noises? Absolutely!

Throughout college and my twenties, I continued this party-planning habit. From classy shrimp cocktail and Cosmopolitans in my dorm room to epic Halloween food competitions featuring cake pops frosted into bloody eyeballs, I was the first to jump into a toga, space suit, superhero cape, and even a Snuggie for various themed events.

The birth of my daughter brought a whole new world of creative possibility. Friends scoffed at her elaborate Minnie Mouse first birthday, complete with a "Minnie Bar" and homemade felt mouse ears for each guest. She won't even know what's going on, they pointed out. I was not fazed. Since then, we've thrown a luau, a pirate extravaganza, a Frozen adventure, and last Memorial Day, a unicorn event that capitalized on the trend taking the city by storm.

We start with a theme idea, which is usually me convincing my daughter what she wants sometime around the end of March. Wouldn't a unicorn party be so cool? Aren't unicorns awesome? I will ask. Hey Mommy! I have an idea! Let's have a rainbow unicorn party for my birthday! Bingo. Then we get to the photo shoot. In this case, she wears her rainbow sweatshirt and holds a stick up to her head. Gripping my iPhone, I snap away. Presto! We now have

instant themed invitations, thanks to the free photo card options on Paperless Post.

April and May find us preparing for the big day. To the

uninitiated, the partygoers arrive to Lindley Meadow and are in awe. One guest even asks, "Seriously? Do you do all this just to make the rest of us feel bad?" My response is an enthusiastic "Welcome!" followed by a big hug and a paper unicorn horn. In my heart I know my true reasons: It is not about outdoing anyone. It's my creative outlet. I love birthday parties, period.

My over-the-top DIY kid birthday parties are an act of love and a way I celebrate my own mother, who filled our home with magic, play, creativity, and spontaneity. Her encouragement and validation of my ideas have shaped my psyche and the way I tackle other areas of

my life: career, family, even a book I'm writing.

The other day my daughter spent several hours cutting paper in her room, assembling individual blobs with limbs and a tail and stuffing them into envelopes. "They're invitations to my next birthday," she explained. "We're having a monkey party." My

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daughter is getting older and clearly has opinions beyond whatever party themes are trending that year (mermaids, anyone?). I must learn to loosen my creative grip if I am to truly follow in my mother's footsteps.

Now if you'll excuse me, it's time to get to work planning this year's Monkey Spectacular... ❖

Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss is a school leader, speaker, writer, Pinterest enthusiast, and mother of two very energetic party animals. Find out more at jenniferkuhrbutterfoss.com.





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