

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019



GGMG

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magazine

Down & Dirty



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Table of Contents

4 Letter from the Editor: Got Filth?

A dirt-embracing mom discovers her inner squeamishness

Sonya Abrams

5 Letter from the Board: Glitter Glitter Everywhere

Volunteering to save your sanity

Virginia Green

6 Out and About

Urban Gardening Opportunities

Veronica Reilly-Granich

Li'l Kid, Big City: Dogpatch

Tenessa MacKenzie

Messy Art

Christine Chen

8 Ask the Expert: Fighting as a Couple

The dirt on couples counseling

Fiachra "Figs" O'Sullivan

10 Dadlands: Taming the Mane

Ruminations on follicle self-expression and self-maintenance

Mike Johnson

11 Member Profile: Karin Wertz Gooch

A look inside the life of a GGMG member

Catherine Symon

12 Books for Kids: Down and Dirty

Books about the dirty aspects of life

Laure Latham

13 Books for Parents

Tips for parenting inflexible children

Gail Cornwall

14 From Womb to World: Waste Not, Want Not

Using your afterbirth, after birth

Anna Gracia

16 The Down & Dirty on Dirty Play

The benefits of getting dirty

Tara Hardesty

20 History in the Dirt

Ditch the textbook, explore the city

Beth Ryan

24 Save the Earth!

How to get to zero waste

Lani Schreiberstein

26 Cleaning the City

Will San Francisco ever be clean?

Lani Schreiberstein

39 I ♥ Mom: Let's Not Talk About Sex

How not to talk about "doing the dirty"

Sandy Woo

GGMG at Work

4 Housekeeping

9 Community Outreach & Contest

15 New Arrivals

28 Committees

34 Events

Letter from the Editor:

Got Filth?

By Sonya Abrams



Sonya is mom to three dirt-embracing kids, three dirt-embracing cats, and one dirt-embracing dog. She has more Dyson vacuums than children.

Parenting is a filthy business. From the moment you're confronted with that first fully loaded diaper to the inaugural arc of projectile vomit (the unofficial parental baptism), you're fully immersed in the fetid, funky, feces-laden world of raising children. This is a career shift often more akin to crime scene cleanup technician than the life

coach/nurturer/teacher role you'd always envisioned.

Seven years deep into this experience, I've come to identify—in the broadest of generalizations—two types of parents. There are the parents who fight valiantly to stem the tide of fluids and foreign pathogens. They keep their wipes in a holster, wash hands at the slightest provocation, and carefully sanitize surfaces, toys, and skin. Dropped food is abandoned; crowded play spaces are avoided during cold and flu season, and expiration dates are carefully adhered to.

And then there are parents like me, for whom there is no five-second rule—there is only the “dog got to your dropped Cheerio first, so you'll need to pry it out of her mouth if you want it back” rule. Who, when seeing our children lick a Muni bus pole, just shrug our shoulders with a smile and gently redirect. Who have been known to leave children face down on the floor of Grand Central Station during a tantrum, watching decades of commuter grime adhere

...there is no five-second rule—there is only the “dog got to your dropped Cheerio first, so you'll need to pry it out of her mouth if you want it back” rule.

to tear-streaked cheeks. And when our toddler drops her lovey on a public restroom floor, we give it back to her without the slightest twinge of guilt, confident that the body's immune system was designed to spring into action at times like these.

Our writers in this issue view dirt as a source of wonder, discovery, and as an opportunity for creative problem-solving. On page 16, Tara Hardesty embraces all things messy in an examination of the psychological and physiological benefits of playing in dirt. Former archeologist Beth Ryan takes us on a journey beneath the topsoil to marvel at the wonders that occupy more of San Francisco than most of us knew. On page 20 she shares some specific sites to visit as well as opportunities for families to partake in archeological discoveries themselves. And on page 24 Lani Schreiberstein rides along on the journey of trash in San Francisco—where it goes, what exactly OUR part is in helping it on its way, and what the city is doing to be a better steward of the earth.

Postscript: I wrote this letter on a transpacific flight and was poised to wrap it up with a smug reiteration of my un-squeamish nature. But then an odor filled the cabin and my daughter bashfully

announced she needed a change. Looking down, I saw she had managed to poop down her legs and on the floor. It's impossible to overstate my disgust and horror at trying to surreptitiously clean up this mess without letting it spread

to my own body, our neighbors, or draw the attention of the staff. We spent 20 minutes in the tiny bathroom, where I discovered I had only five baby wipes. By the end, I longed for the cleansing flames of a plane crash. So, it turns out that even this germ-embracing mom has her limits.

Housekeeping

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COMING NEXT: April/May: Animal Instincts

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

THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY: Enjoying how uncrowded SF is during Christmas break through New Years; teenage anorexia, sadly; lots of date nights, holiday festivities, and fun trips around the city/Bay Area; the end of winter break; extreme jetlag and middle-of-the-night child visit to parental bed; trip to Pismo Beach to escape the smoke; trip to see family on the East Coast; visit to Disney World; meeting Kylo Ren; classical music; new job and baby with RSV/double ear infection!

Letter from the Board:

Glitter Glitter Everywhere

By Virginia Green

There are certain things about my pre-kids life that I mourn the loss of frequently. Sleeping all night, running errands solo, having copious amounts of me-time, and not constantly stepping on LEGO bricks all make the list. But what do I actually mourn the most? A glitter-free home.

I loathe glitter. It imbeds itself so deeply into every carpet and car seat fiber, every crack in the bathroom tile grout, every tiny space between the floorboards, that even the most powerful vacuum is no match. It is never completely cleaned up, washed out, or destroyed. Like cockroaches, glitter will undoubtedly outlive us in a nuclear blast.

Bring on the dirt; I find that straightforwardly easy to clean and maintain. But all my preschooler needs to do is step inside the front door and somehow the glitter from her most recent rainbow unicorn painting has already magically spirited itself from the entryway to the kitchen counters to the bedrooms.

Like cockroaches, glitter will undoubtedly outlive us in a nuclear blast.

But I cannot forbid glitter from entering our home. It would crush my children's spirits if their mean old mommy banned the art medium they love most. Instead, like Sisyphus rolling his boulder up a hill for all eternity, I too will continue to wage a losing battle with my shiny, miniscule archenemy, and I will try not to sweat the (literal) small stuff. There are more important things to focus on, after all—my family, my friends, and the precious moments of me-time I get every day.

Part of my me-time is spent volunteering for GGMG. I have been a volunteer for five years, happily giving back to the community that has been such a lifesaver to me as a mother.

Perhaps, like me, you are looking for a way to make friends and briefly take your mind off the glitter, dirt, germs, and other child-related minutiae invading your home. Perhaps you are looking to stay active and boost your resume if you've leaned out of the workplace. Or perhaps you're interested in the extra perks, discounts, and free membership (after one year of service) that come with being a volunteer.

GGMG is completely volunteer-run; more than 180 volunteers coordinate and manage every single aspect of the organization, including this amazing magazine, all of our wonderful kid and parent events, and the indispensable forums. Almost all of our committees—Careers & Entrepreneurs, Community Outreach, Diversity & Inclusion, Just for Moms, Kids Activities, Magazine, Member Support, Membership Approvals, Membership Engagement, Neighborhood Meetups, Parent Education, Partnerships, Public Relations, Social Events, Social Media, Volunteer Engagement, and Web Team—currently have openings, many of which can be done for only an hour or so per week from the comfort of your own home.

If you are interested in using some of your me-time to volunteer for this wonderful community of moms supporting moms, please reach out to us at recruiting@ggm.org.



Virginia and her husband are parents to glitter-loving Eloise (age 5) and Margaret (age 2). They live North of the Panhandle and can often be found exploring and getting dirty in Golden Gate Park.

Virginia Green

Cover Outtakes



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

Cover Photo by Marie Hamonic Photography
Cover models: Mariel and Asha (5) Jacobson-Ahluwalia

Urban Gardening

By Veronica Reilly-Granich

If you don't have a backyard or don't want to commit to your own garden, these community gardens offer opportunities to try out your green thumb.

Alemanya Farm

Anyone is welcome to volunteer at regular work days here, which occur either Saturday or Sunday every weekend. They'll even try to send you home with a few veggies.
www.alemanyfarm.org

San Francisco Botanical Garden

There is a story time and family walk (suitable for children 4 to 8) here every first and third Sunday at 10:30 a.m.
www.sfbotanicalgarden.org

Presidio Trust Community Garden Stewards

People of all ages can volunteer to tend one of seven community gardens in the Presidio. Every Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon, meet at the Presidio Transit Center.
www.presidio.gov

Garden for the Environment

Located in the Inner Sunset, open dawn to dusk most days of the year. You can volunteer on Wednesdays and Saturdays.
www.gardenfortheenvironment.org

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

Volunteer to help maintain this beautiful national park right in our city. Every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9 a.m. to noon. Locations vary.
www.parkconservancy.org

Golden Gate Park CommUNITY Garden

Located at 780 Frederick St., this is primarily a community garden with assigned plots. It is open to the public and houses demonstration beds and a native plant nursery.
ggpgarden.wordpress.com

White Crane Springs Community Garden

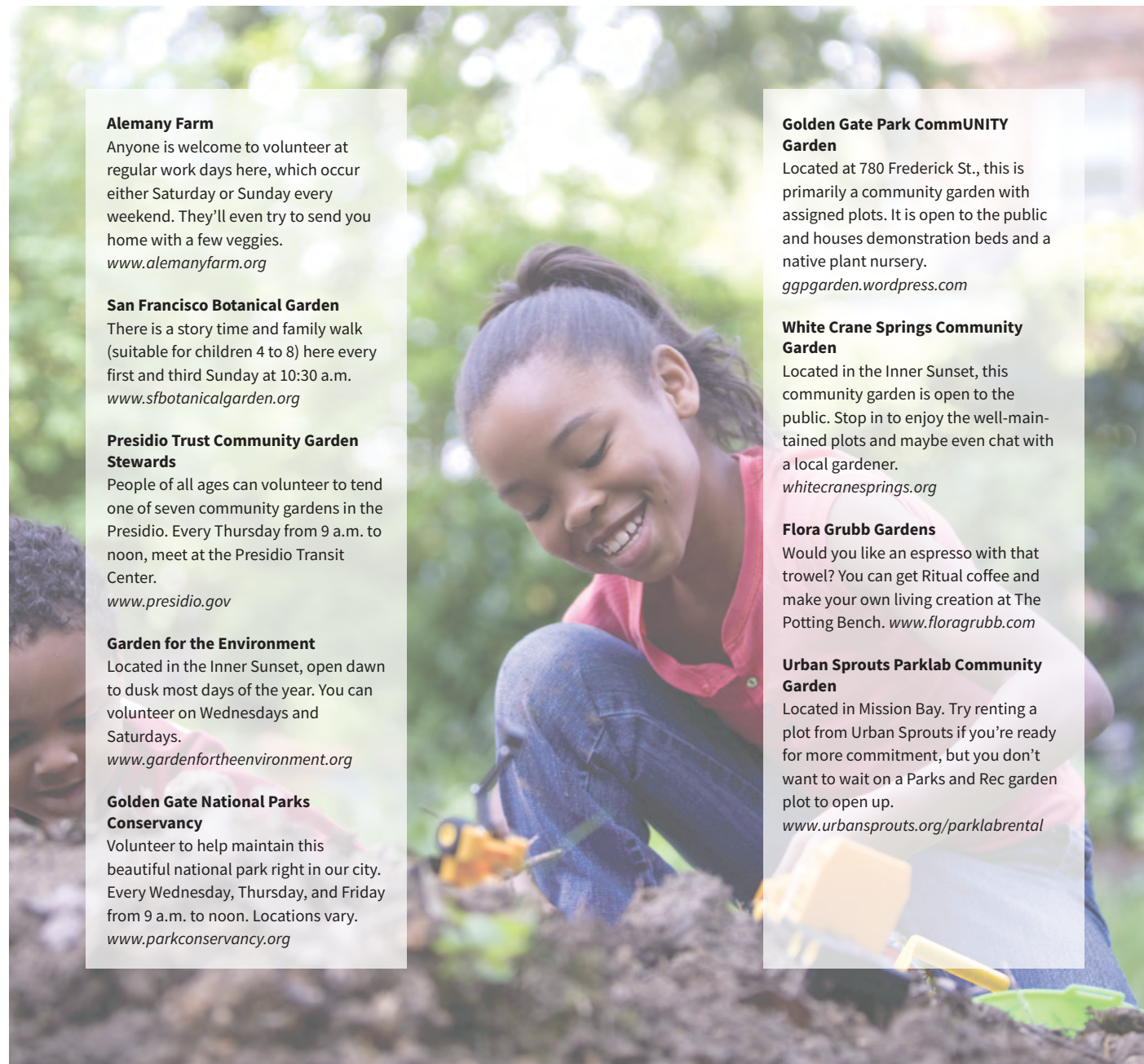
Located in the Inner Sunset, this community garden is open to the public. Stop in to enjoy the well-maintained plots and maybe even chat with a local gardener.
whitecranesprings.org

Flora Grubb Gardens

Would you like an espresso with that trowel? You can get Ritual coffee and make your own living creation at The Potting Bench. www.floragrubb.com

Urban Sprouts Parklab Community Garden

Located in Mission Bay. Try renting a plot from Urban Sprouts if you're ready for more commitment, but you don't want to wait on a Parks and Rec garden plot to open up.
www.urbansprouts.org/parklabrental



Veronica grew up helping her mother garden in the backyard. She is an educator living in San Francisco with her husband and two girls, ages one and four.

Ask the Expert

Fighting as a Couple

With Figs O'Sullivan



Fiachra "Figs" O'Sullivan is a 5-star licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in San Francisco. He is a certified EFT Couples Therapist and the creator of the Empathi Method. Contact him at empathi.com

Is there truly a way to "fight fair"?

When it comes to fighting, there are a few key ground rules:

(1) Violence or threats of violence are forbidden. That includes any physical intimidation or threat to hurt yourself. Once any violence is a factor, it's important to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1.800.799.7233). (2) There should be no existential threats to your relationship. Even while you are furious, it's not okay to call the very existence of the relationship into question. So, no comments such as, "I am so done with you," or "If you are so unhappy with me, why don't you find someone else?" (3) Accept that struggles in love are normal and inevitable. It doesn't matter who kicks off a negative reaction that fuels a cycle of hurt feelings and reactionary protests. Once you are fighting, both of you feel hurt, misunderstood, and reactive. Neither of you is a bad person for that. It's critical to know that you are just two people who love each other deeply, who momentarily got scared and reactive.

Having kids makes it more important to do your work as a couple and to attend to your emotional bond.

Can fighting ever be beneficial to a relationship?

Actually, a certain amount of fighting is healthy—it brings to the surface the parts of us that most need to be loved. You and your partner need to recognize that right underneath the protest behavior—be you a blamer, question asker, shutter-downer, exiter, minimizer, or whatever your preferred protest poison—are these sweet vulnerable parts that are hurting badly while you are disconnected from each other. Once you can see this dynamic, you can stop fighting and care for those most vulnerable parts in each other. If you didn't have fights these vulnerabilities would not have come into view. Fighting can help lead us ultimately to more love and intimacy.

What are some common reasons you see couples in counseling?

The simple answer: Suffering! This suffering comes from what we term as attachment injuries—something which happens in your relationship that injures your emotional bond with each other and feels impossible to repair. A classic cause of attachment injury is an affair. But even more common is one partner not showing up for the other at a time of need. For example, you decided it was more important to play golf than to go to your husband's mother's funeral... ouch... couples therapy may be in your future!

The list of potential incidents that could cause an attachment injury are endless—and what would be a big emotional bonding injury for one person may not be a big deal for another—so you can imagine how this could create injuries that can be hard to repair.

Other than attachment injuries, it's common for people to come to counseling to feel the love they once had but lost, whether in the bedroom or in their hearts. And some couples get into the same fights over and over again.

Are any relationships beyond repair?

There may be relationships that are beyond repair, but I start from a place of hope if two people come to see me. We have to assume there is something inside both of them that wants to make their love work. Even if they are behaving as if it's hopeless, I will keep working to find a way for them to bond in their joint suffering. If successful, we will have achieved what appears to be a miracle—a couple that seemed beyond repair will love again, feel emotionally safe together again and have a better relationship than ever.

That said, there are some circumstances that will make repair very difficult—if not downright impossible—such as an ongoing affair, ongoing substance abuse or addiction, or domestic violence.

How does having kids affect a relationship?

Parenting increases the opportunities to get into negative cycles. With children in the mix, there is more emotional intensity and an unending stream of potential triggers. There are more chances to feel your partner is not there for you and a greater possibility your partner does not understand or appreciate you in ways you need. Having kids makes it more important to do your work as a couple and to attend to your emotional bond. My wife and I know this all too well—we are right there with you in the parenting trenches. ❖

Community Outreach

2018 Accomplishments

Community Outreach held two fund drives, one diaper drive, and one book drive. We hosted three group volunteer events and two CPR classes. Our community event, co-hosted with the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, was a movie night at Homeless Prenatal Program (HPP). GGMG and HPP families watched *Moana*, munched on pizza and popcorn, and received a gift of Mem Fox's book, *Whoever You Are*.

DRIVES

1. Our first drive of the year raised \$600 for Safe & Sound, an organization that works to prevent child abuse and reduce its devastating impact.
2. We collected 3,800 diapers in our spring diaper drive! Half went directly to HPP and half went to Help a Mother Out to be distributed via its partner agencies.
3. In the fall, we collected 118 books for Reading Partners to distribute to struggling readers to start libraries in their homes.
4. In our winter/holiday drive, we raised \$8,900 for HPP, which helps families struggling with homelessness purchase groceries, portable cribs, 3-night hotel vouchers (for families on a shelter waitlist), diapers, and more.

FAMILY VOLUNTEER EVENTS



We love to get the littles involved with volunteering when we can. In 2018, we volunteered twice at the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank, where we sorted fruit so it could be given out to the hungry. One of our favorite annual volunteer activities is California Coastal Cleanup Day. On September 15, the group picked up trash on Ocean Beach and had lunch afterwards at Park Chalet.

If you are looking for an opportunity to donate or get involved, please contact drives@gmg.org.

Contest

Good Hair Day!



Refresh your look for spring with a 15-minute consultation and a 60-minute haircut and blow-dry valued at \$100 with Caitlin Boehm at Grey Salon (835 Divisadero St.).

Caitlin has more than 10 years of industry experience and has trained with educators from Bumble and Bumble, Toni and Guy, Vidal Sassoon, KMS, Kevin Murphy, Rene Furterer, Goldwell Color, Redken Color, and L'Oreal Professional. Aside from cutting and styling, her focus and affection for color has made her a favorite among clients for beautiful, natural-looking highlights, dimensional color, and natural ombre/balayage techniques. Making people feel beautiful, comfortable, and confident is of the utmost importance to Caitlin and is what drives her to follow her passion for hair every day.

Enter the contest by emailing contest@gmg.org with "Good Hair Day" in the subject line by February 28, 2019. Winners are selected at random.

Thank you to our generous prize donor, Caitlin Boehm at Grey Salon. Find Caitlin at www.caitlinboehm.com and Grey Salon at www.greysalonsf.com.

And congratulations to **Nikki Lopez**, winner of the December contest prize, a Nordstrom spa gift certificate and gift set.

DADLANDS

Taming the Mane

By Mike Johnson

When I volunteered to take on bath duty as a first-time parent, it seemed like a fun, relatively easy way to bond with my newborn.

Seven years (and two more children) later, for better or worse, this nightly task has become one of my parenting specializations. Though my wife and I would love to be the kind of laid-back, “let kids be kids” parents who are relatively unconcerned with how recently our children have been bathed, their love of the “mud kitchen” at school and frequent sand-filled beach adventures have made daily bathing necessary. It’s less about our uptight nature (we’re not) or germophobia (definitely not), and more about damage control for our house (those Mr. Clean Magic Eraser sponges can only do so much). On any given day, I find myself scrubbing food, mud, glue, paint, and various other art supplies, mixed with sand (so. much. sand.) as well as a generous dose of “I don’t think I even want to know” off our kids’ bodies. Naturally, much of this accumulated detritus ends up in their hair.

Our third child and only daughter spent her entire first year sporting hardly any hair at all. This made my job a little easier since her brothers were keeping me plenty busy removing residual debris from days spent in an endless loop between the sandbox and art room. When her hair finally did start growing in, we quickly realized that she had inherited my intense curliness (though in more volume than I’d had since I was a teenager), along with the fine texture of her mom’s hair. This is the perfect recipe for endless tangles. My wife quickly suggested we keep our daughter’s hair short. My mother-in-law had done the same when my wife was young since she couldn’t bear the daily tears that came with trying to comb such tangle-prone hair. I had other ideas. I love long hair, and I felt relatively well-positioned to manage it. Since age 12, I’ve kept my own hair no shorter than shoulder-length (but usually much longer).

I am no stranger to being defined by my hair. After I finally got the green light to grow my hair out, the awkwardness of my middle school years was intensified by constant taunts of “get a haircut!” My older sister suggested I see her stylist to complete the “rock and roll” look, which resulted in a body wave that pushed my semi-curly hair into perm territory, and highlights

that left me more blond than brown. This look guaranteed I would not blend in when I arrived at high school, though being dubbed “the kid with the hair” worked out for me on balance. Positive attention (mostly from females) outweighed the teasing (mostly from males). It finally grew out (in the nick of time, as Nirvana ushered in a very different MTV era), but I remained committed to making the most of my hair. My college roommate worked in a salon with a grunge aesthetic, and the long-haired male employees with carefully cultivated tough-guy appearances would often hang around after closing time to deep condition each other’s hair and sit with a beer and a magazine under a dryer. Though I’ll admit it felt a little unusual for a bunch of male friends to kick back by shampooing one another, I jumped at the chance when the burliest stylist

said, “Hop in the chair, princess, your ends look a little dry.”

Our daughter’s hair has posed challenges that I did not anticipate; for instance, who knew that sand and maple syrup could make such a durable epoxy? I quickly realized that most products marketed for children were no match for her mane, and so I started experimenting with my own products, my wife’s, and products my stylist recommended. I’ve even tried that secret deep-conditioning formula I learned years ago (keratin conditioner plus hair products from the ethnic hair care aisle plus heat). For allowing products to penetrate more deeply, I found that a microwave-heated cap is more practical and suited to a three-year-old’s patience than a bonnet dryer. I’ve found that brushes designed for wet hair are a lifesaver, and iPads, color-changing bath bombs, and lots of bubbles can buy valuable extra minutes before her patience wears thin.

While I try not to make vanity the focus, I must admit a measure of satisfaction (and a touch of parental pride) when I say to another parent, “Mine’s the one with the long curls,” and they know exactly the one I’m referring to. The kid with the hair. ♦

A native New Yorker, Mike now calls San Francisco home, where he lives with his wife, Sonya, and their three children. An accomplished guitarist, after a two-decade detour working in tech, Mike recently returned to school to study music production.



I am no stranger to being defined by my hair.

MEMBER PROFILE: Karin Wertz Gooch

Photograph by Marie Hamonic Photography

Karin Wertz Gooch, a former professional ballet dancer, lives in San Francisco and juggles a packed schedule as a full-time pediatrician at the nonprofit Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Saturday morning “Baby Basics” instructor for new parents, school volunteer, passionate home cook, wife to Gary, and mom to 5-year-old son Gaelen. She spoke with *GGMG Magazine* writer Catherine Symon.

WHAT IS YOUR SECRET TO BALANCING CAREER AND FAMILY?

Follow your passions, and create the best fit! Family absolutely comes first, and I have had to fine-tune my work schedule so I don’t feel stretched beyond having adequate time at home with “my boys.” But I am at my best when I have part of my life to myself, which is how my career fulfills me.

HOW HAVE THE DISCIPLINES OF DANCE AND MEDICINE INFLUENCED YOUR PARENTING STYLE?

I strive to teach Gaelen to follow through on his endeavors, to enjoy hard work, and to feel proud of his accomplishments, whether that’s learning to write his name, swimming just a little farther than he did last time, or trying a new vegetable. I try to instill joy in the process as well as of the victory—both to me are very motivating and I hope my son will feel the same.

YOUR ULTIMATE DATE NIGHT?

Dinner at an SF restaurant we haven’t tried yet, a good movie, and to bed not too late! The San Francisco Ballet opening night gala is an annual event we look forward to as well. Yes, I have turned my husband into a ballet fan!

BIGGEST LESSON LEARNED AS A MOM?

It takes two to tango! Raising a child with a partner takes more compromise and communication than I ever imagined. Until becoming a parent, my own way of doing things led to success, but cooperating with someone else to guide a precious human through life has given me some comeuppance. Especially when my husband’s way is the better way on many occasions!

THREE VALUES YOU WANT TO TEACH YOUR SON?

Work hard/play hard, follow your heart, be a good listener

FAVORITE FAMILY DESTINATION IN THE BAY AREA?

The Botanical Garden! It has grown with us through the years. From my first Mother’s Day brunch on the Great Meadow, to watching Gaelen toddle on the grass just after learning to walk, to barely keeping up with him now as he races up Heidelberg Hill, it holds so many memories. It’s a short bus ride away and the go-to place for all of us.

MOST VIVID MEMORY FROM WHEN YOU WERE GAELEN’S AGE?

Starting kindergarten! I remember the outfit I wore on the first day of school, the lunch box I carried, and, most of all, the excitement of starting elementary school with the realization that I was a “big kid” now.

FUNNIEST THING GAELEN HAS EVER SAID OR DONE.

I just loved his emerging language: Laster-night/yester-night, eleven-teen/twelve-teen, “Granolico’s” for nearby Andronico’s, “Gooble Urf” for Google Earth (he might still say that one, actually...) ❖



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

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

Dirt and getting dirty: are they bad things? Our society is somewhat obsessed with germs, yet we need germs to thrive. Kids exposed to dirt and germs have stronger immune systems and get sick less often than if they were living in sterile environments. But where do you find down and dirty stuff when you're a city kid? From a trash-eating truck to icky bugs or a city dump, these books all discuss dirty aspects of life and how kids can learn (or grow) from them.



I Stink!

Written by Kate McMullan, illustrated by Jim McMullan
Toddlers will love the humor of this very smelly truck that eats their trash at night. Loud and ravenous, rowdy and hungry, the New York City garbage truck stops at nothing to rid city streets of trash. Apple cores, dirty diapers—you name it. If the truck's ABCs of "ingested" trash don't gross out your little ones, they will

thoroughly enjoy the adventures of this nighttime hero without whom city streets would be very, very dirty. *Ages: 2 to 4 years*



The Rainbow Colors of Pee

Written by Ashley Titan, illustrated by Thérèse Merchant
In our world obsessed with germs, we sometimes avoid conversations about bodily fluids, including pee. Beyond the basics, this book is a fun way for kids to learn about what makes pee change color in a non-embarrassing manner. Combining science, pharmacology, and art, this rainbow of pee explains urine in an educational way. Even adults will probably learn a fun fact or two about pee in this book. *Ages: 3 to 6 years*



The Fly: The Disgusting Critters Series

Written and illustrated by Elise Gravel

Part of a series of funny books about disgusting critters, *The Fly* is a great introduction to this common insect seen around our homes. From the insect's disgusting food habits to its germs to its superhero ability to walk upside down on the ceiling, the book shares silly and educational facts about a disgusting critter. Who knew flies could be so fascinating? They're still dirty, though. *Ages: 4 to 7 years*



Start Now!: You Can Make a Difference

Written by Chelsea Clinton, illustrated by Siobhán Gallagher

A great guide for scouts, community-minded kids, and nature-lovers, this book covers many middle-grade topics such as eating healthy, fighting bullying, and protecting the environment. In accessible words, each chapter explains the issue before offering suggestions about what kids can do to make a real difference. If your pre-teens need any motivation to take action, this book should give them the confidence to let their voices be heard. *Ages: 5 to 10 years*



The Vanderbeekers and the Hidden Garden

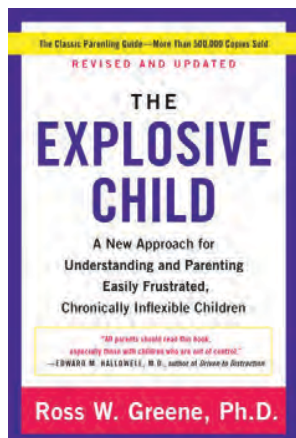
Written by Karina Yan Glaser

Living in Harlem, the Vanderbeeker children are very fond of an elderly neighbor. When this neighbor suffers a stroke that sends him to the hospital, the children decide to create a surprise for his homecoming—a healing garden! They have 17 days to turn a dirty, abandoned church lot into an oasis. Breaking into the padlocked lot, the Vanderbeeker children discover it has been used as a dumping ground and needs cleaning up. Getting down and dirty in the garden, they embark on an adventure that's going to bring the community together and reveal challenging enemies. *Ages: 8 to 12 years*

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

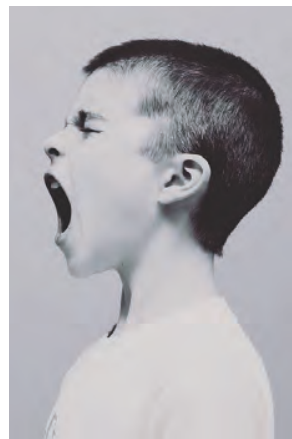
The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children

Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.



The Explosive Child is ostensibly a book for adults dealing with “kids who become frustrated far more easily and more often, and communicate their frustration in ways that are far more extreme than ‘ordinary’ kids,” but any caretaker or educator can make great gains using the mindset and methodology of Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.

Greene’s central tenet is that “kids do well if they can.” Internalizing this philosophy is important, Greene explains, because an adult who believes a kid will do well whenever they want to will use “conventional reward and punishment strategies aimed at making him want to do well,” strategies that often backfire both pragmatically and emotionally. Parents who instead understand that “challenging episodes occur when the demands being placed on [a child] exceed his capacity to respond well”



are more likely to “solve problems collaboratively and proactively rather than unilaterally and emergently.” They’re also better at choosing their battles (in Greene’s words: by removing “low-priority demands and expectations”).

In clear, well-organized text, Greene walks us through the process of identifying the child’s lagging skills (e.g., frustration tolerance) and unsolved problems (e.g., difficulty making transitions) that lead to undesirable behavior. His three-step process includes 1) the **Empathy Step** or “gathering information from your child to understand his concern or perspective about a given unsolved problem”; 2) the **Define the Problem Step** which entails “communicating your concern or perspective about the same problem”; and 3) the **Invitation Step** “when you and your child discuss and agree on a solution that is realistic (that is, you and your child can actually do what you’re agreeing to do) and mutually satisfactory (it addresses the concerns that you [both] voiced).”

For each juncture, Greene offers up specific phrasing, such as “I’ve noticed that...” and “My concern is...” He details common pitfalls (like using “maladaptive communication patterns” including overgeneralization and sarcasm) and

what to do when the process goes off the rails in one way or another. Ready for the coolest part? By engaging your kid using Greene’s method, you indirectly teach the very skills that will enable them to meet behavioral expectations without it.

Though *The Explosive Child* is written with an eye toward verbal, school-aged children, much of the approach works with toddlers and in adult relationships. My sole complaint is that Greene goes overboard in the accessibility department. “I know I’m being a little redundant here,” he writes, “but this is important.” And he’s right about that last half, but there’s so much repetition in *The Explosive Child* that I wished I could click an “I get it” button on my Kindle that would advance to the next new information. That said, I happily and easily read every word in this valuable take on parenting—and I recommend you do, too.

By engaging your kid using Greene’s method, you indirectly teach the very skills that will enable them to meet behavioral expectations without it.

Gail is a former public school teacher and recovering lawyer who now works as a stay-at-home mother and freelance writer in San Francisco. You can find her on Facebook (@gailisalwayswrite) and Twitter (@gailcornwall), or read more at gailcornwall.com.

From Womb to World

Waste Not, Want Not

By Anna Gracia

Who says the baby is the reward after all that labor? Each baby comes with its very own companion that neither cries nor demands food after its birth... the placenta! Some very enterprising moms throughout history have come up with a variety of uses to make sure this organ's purpose doesn't end at birth. So if you're loath to toss out a perfectly good placenta on account of a little blood and goo, here are some ideas to extend its service:

Eat it

Believe it or not, placentophagy is both the most straightforward option and one gaining in popularity, thanks to celebrities like Hilary Duff, January Jones, and Mayim Bialik, who all talked publicly about their experience with this culinary trend. Most blend it bit by bit into smoothies to stretch over the course of several weeks, but it can also be eaten raw in small pieces (think oysters), or cooked and seasoned like your average steak. No scientific studies show health benefits; in fact, consuming placenta carries risk of contamination and illness. However, placenta-eating advocates insist it can help with everything from boosting milk supply to warding off postpartum depression.

Encapsulate it

If the thought of biting into a still-squishy internal organ is too much to handle, you can still consume it by way of pills made from the dried and powdered remains. This is overwhelmingly the most popular option, with even bigger celebrities like Kim and Kourtney Kardashian stumping for its benefits. The CDC does not recommend this as a safer option since no standards are in place to ensure properly treating the placenta for consumption, but that hasn't stopped providers from offering the service at a cost of several hundred dollars.

Bury it

If consumables aren't your thing, or if you're worried about the risk of illness, another option is to bury the placenta in the ground, where it can feed trees and other vegetation in your yard. This tradition dates back centuries, with cultures like the Maori and Navajo using it to signify the new child's connection to the Earth.

Print it

Like veggie prints, but for grown-ups! Unlike encapsulation, this project can be DIY and savored for longer than a few weeks. Creativity shines through as moms can choose any combination of colors to blend, with some even twisting the umbilical cord to spell out a word before printing. All recommendations point to using a heavyweight paper to minimize the chance of seepage.

Wear it

Still wanting to get further away from the meaty, bloody reminder of a human organ? Try placenta jewelry, which suspends small bits of your placenta in a hard resin and can be fashioned into anything from necklaces to bracelets to rings. This is by far the priciest option, with the added logistics of shipping the placenta to the jewelry maker, some of whom are overseas and require customs declaration forms.

Wash it

There is already an array of products available, like skin creams and shampoos, that are made with animal placentas. Devotees of the products swear by their deep nourishing properties, so why not take the next step and turn your own placenta into a conditioning hair mask to get back that pre-birth shiny mane? While an initial Internet search didn't turn up any recipes, a determined mom could likely whip up a concoction with just a blender and some hot oil.

Stuff it

Last, but certainly not least, the crown jewel of the placenta options: the teddy bear. Though there was much buzz about it online when it debuted in 2009, the purported DIY kit doesn't seem to be available to buy anymore, which may speak to its lack of popularity. But if you are determined to make this keepsake, write-ups explain the bear is crafted by cutting the placenta in half and curing it with salt before softening it with a mix of emulsified egg yolk and tannin so that it can be stitched into the teddy bear shape. While the final product isn't meant to be cuddled (pictures show it preserved in a glass case), it is a build-a-bear of sorts, and with more personalization than you can pay for. ❖

Anna is a writer who did absolutely nothing with her placenta. When she's not telling everyone she meets about the existence of the placenta teddy bear, she blogs about movies and books at TheSnarkyReviewer.com.



New Arrivals



Krupa Antani **Baby Aashvi Krupa**
 Dana C. **Baby Maya Christine**
 Roongtip C. **Baby Sirinya Amelie**
 Teresa Greenip **Baby Chloe Alexandra**
 Casie McCarthy **Baby Rudi Zayouna**
 Devon N. **Rhys Matthew**
 Christina S. **Baby Camden Theodore**

Congratulations to Roongtip C.! 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.



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The Down & Dirty on Dirty Play

Embracing germs and dirt may have more benefits than you imagined

By Tara Hardesty

Photographs by Marissa HB Photography



My oldest son spent the first 15 months of his life in SoMa near the Bay Bridge. We brought him home from the hospital to a 7th floor condo, surrounded by concrete. His nursery was a large closet, and his play area all wood floors and yoga mats. During walks, we mostly encountered more concrete. There was no shortage of action for my firstborn to take in, but there was a complete absence of something I took for granted as a child: dirt.

Prior to becoming a parent, I hadn't given much thought to dirt (or germs for that matter) or being outside. Now, as the mother of two boys, ages 5 and 2, we log significant

outdoor time, so it's something I think about several times an hour. Dirt is everywhere—in the house, under fingernails, between toes. Even when my boys do not go outside (but especially when they do), I marvel at how much dirt is around and how they seem to attract it like magnets through everyday activities.

I sometimes cringe when I think of the germs my children come into contact with. I have my wipes at the ready in busy public environments, during flu season, or when they've touched something disgusting. But my caution may not always be warranted. It turns out that day-to-day germs and dirt

provide a good workout for kids' little immune systems. Exposure is not only good for the soul, but it is good for the body and mind as well.

The benefits of dirt

Dirt is good for your brain. Types of bacteria found in soil can activate neurons and produce serotonin, a key chemical in bodily functions as well as a natural antidepressant. When children are outside, they tend to be happier, and happier kids tend to be healthier. And the novel and unpredictable elements of playing outside in nature encourage adventurousness, which is beneficial in

growing confidence. Research has shown that time outside also increases children's environmental awareness. In *Last Child in the Woods*, journalist and environmental thinker Richard Louv discusses what he dubs "nature-deficit-disorder"—the psychological and cognitive costs of alienation from nature, especially for children. Being outside in nature requires us to unplug, prompts our children to get creative, and allows them start developing a relationship with nature.

It turns out that day-to-day germs and dirt provide a good workout for kids' little immune systems. Exposure is not only good for the soul, but it is good for the body and mind as well.

Dirt is also helpful for the immune system. Children benefit from exposure to the microbes in soil—it helps them build stronger immune systems. Numerous studies suggest the tendency to try to disinfect and sanitize all surfaces with antibacterial sprays, wipes, and gels is possibly harming both our children and us by creating environments that are too clean, removing the natural bacteria that trigger and strengthen our immune systems.

In short, a mounting pile of evidence points to the benefits of something we used to do naturally but for varying reasons is now more planned. Being in nature, getting dirty, and being exposed to the right kind of germs allow children to use more imagination and become more adventurous and self-motivated. Playing outside also exposes kids (and us) to full-spectrum light, which helps stimulate the production of vitamin D and serotonin, crucial components for a healthy brain. Activities that involve dirt engage the senses, and research shows that when multiple senses are engaged, the brain learns how to better process and problem solve. And it allows for our children to develop their own unique relationship with the environment around them, a benefit that will last their whole lives.

Ideas for down and dirty play

While we have endless outdoor opportunities available in the Bay Area, many of us don't have access to large backyards with lots of dirt. The good news is, with a little creativity and some basic equipment, any space can be turned into a dirty, outdoor play zone.

Plan a messy party

When planning my son's fifth birthday, a friend suggested an unusual theme—a messy party in our backyard. After my husband stopped twitching at the idea of a group of children and a large mess, we got to planning. Everything from the cake (chocolate with crumbles to resemble a pile of dirt) to the activities was designed to be messy and encourage dirty play. One section of dirt (enhanced by a few bags of potting soil we had left over from gardening) was filled with shovels, spoons, trucks, and buckets. Another area was covered with sand. We also stuck a long stretch of canvas to a fence and provided paint, brushes, and buckets. We encouraged kids to come ready for some "messy fun."

A few hours later, everyone was dirty and happy. The kids made great use of the dirt and left exhausted. The parents who attended shared that they loved being able to let their kids loose to get wild outside.

Garden

Whether you have a small strip of soil in a backyard or space for a few pots, gardening with your child is a practical and fun way to get dirty and teach your child a new skill. Herbs are a simple way to start; many will grow and survive well in San Francisco's climate. Our favorites are rosemary and mint.

Mud play

Backyard or not, grab a bucket and kitchen tools for some mud baking. Consider mud pies or cupcakes, and top off your creations with rocks, acorns, leaves, or whatever dirt-related item you have handy. Mud baking will delight your child. Plus, your child can practice for baking in the kitchen, and you won't have to worry about a mess.

Another way to cook with dirt is to make dirt soup. You'll need a bucket or tub, dirt and

water, and assorted ingredients for a delicious dirt soup. Think grass, weeds, rocks, flower petals; the choices are endless.

San Francisco soil tends to be heavy in clay or sand (and sometimes many other things... city moms know what to watch out for), which is perfect for mud building! Get out ice cube trays, sand buckets, or anything to help form bricks to build sand castles made of mud. From there, get to work creating.

Toys can also be important tools. If your house is anything like mine, you have pieces and parts of toys and small figures scattered everywhere. Gather those little pieces and parts and launch a hide-and-seek mission in the dirt. Let your children hide different toys and encourage them to bury a few in different places. Then appeal to their inner archeologists (or detectives) and ask them to find their hidden treasures. Time them to see how long it takes. A bonus idea is to have a bucket of water ready for a "toy bath" at the end.



Painting

Grab your painting supplies, but instead of using paint, find some dirt and water. Your canvas can be cut-up grocery bags, old shirts, concrete—as long as it's flat. Your child can flex her inner artist with mud painting.

Sculpture

Molding and sculpting with dirt is great tactile play. Start with dry mud and a spray bottle and begin to squeeze. You'll want to stick to basic shapes (think mud balls for a mud man with stick arms and rock eyes), and let your child's imagination run wild.

Dirt learning

Who needs a chalkboard or paper? Find a small patch of dirt (preferably hard soil, so this is a good one for drier months), smooth it out, and use it to practice letters or numbers or drawing. You can use a pencil or a twig as a writing implement and your hand as an eraser.

And for those rainy or cold days, use a show about dirt to your advantage. The PBS series "Sid the Science Kid" has an episode titled *The Dirt on Dirt* that will pique your child's curiosity.

Dirt for beginners

While my first son has now fully embraced dirt and dirty play, my two-year-old finds it offensive. For those littles who are a more squeamish about getting dirty, consider starting slowly. Get some kitchen measuring cups and a stainless bowl and let your little one transfer and scoop dirt to his heart's content.

Interested in learning more about the benefits of dirt? Check out the TedxNaperville talk by Jack Gilbert, "Why Getting Dirty is the New Clean." Or, if you have a little more time, try Gilbert's book, *Dirt Is Good: The Advantages of Germs for Your Child's Developing Immune System*. ❖

Tara is the owner of The Marketing Method Group, Inc., a boutique marketing firm in San Francisco. When she's not working or parenting her two- and five-year-old sons, she enjoys writing freelance about things she is passionate about: the hairy underbelly of life, motherhood, and entrepreneurship.



No Child Left Inside Act

Originally passed in 2009, and again in 2015, the No Child Left Inside Act was written in response to a movement with the same name. The goal of both the movement and the act is to encourage and provide funding for environmental education and enhance environmental literacy between kindergarten and 12th grade. The legislation sought to address several findings, including:

- Children are playing, exploring, and learning outside less, creating a disconnect from the natural world around them;
- Play and learning in nature are key to children's intellectual, social, and physical development;
- Environmental education, when part of pre-k through 12th grade curricula, creates opportunities for youth to be outside and learn about the world and the environment, which has positive impacts on achievement in all subjects.

Many indicators reveal that the U.S. is behind other nations in providing students with the educational tools to compete for opportunities in sciences, including those related to the environment, natural resources, and energy-related careers.

- Several agencies have called for a systemic approach to environmental education to improve the environmental literacy of youth and better prepare them for college and the workforce.
- Forty-eight states are developing environmental literacy plans to integrate environmental education into the pre-k through 12th grade curricula.

Source: [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov), H.R. 882



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History in the Dirt

By Beth Ryan

Photographs by Mini Anna Photography

Not all history lessons are found in textbooks. Inspire empathy and awe in your children as they discover historical treasures underneath our sidewalks.

In 1849, the San Francisco Bay had become what historians have called a “forest of masts.” The throng of ships had just brought eager prospectors to the gold fields, but had no cargo or passengers to warrant a return trip. They sat idle. Some became hotels, warehouses, or stores. Ships even housed a church, an insane asylum, and prisons. Some stayed anchored in the water, while others were run aground and used as semi-permanent buildings. Many were damaged in the string of fires that plagued the new city, and upon the city’s rebuilding, they were sunk among the matrix of landfill to create new blocks where there was once water.

We know a lot about these ships because a combination of state and federal preservation laws mandate archaeological survey and excavation whenever development threatens a historical area. In 1978, archaeologists discovered the Niantic in advance of construction for the Mark Twain Plaza, outside the Transamerica Pyramid. Much of the ship still rests below, but you can see a section at the Maritime Museum and another piece at the Maritime National Historical Park Visitor Center. At the visitor center, you’ll also find a bottle of nineteenth-century French champagne excavated from the ship and a map of the 40 other vessels underneath downtown.

In small things forgotten

The historical treasures underneath our sidewalks are not limited to these ships but include smaller finds. Famed historical archaeologist James Deetz called them “small things

forgotten”: buttons, marbles, cups, clay pipes, plates, and discarded pig and cow bones. They help us learn about the daily lives of past people, especially those people that don’t make it into the history books.

In recent years, excavators digging in advance of construction projects in San Francisco have located a cache of sewing machines from pre-earthquake Chinatown, indicating an industrious business, likely controlled by Chinese families. They have excavated toys and teaching supplies from the remains of Silver Street Kindergarten in SOMA, the city’s first public kindergarten, showing that the teachers there used a curriculum that stressed quality toys and a beautiful environment for the city’s poor.

Learning about these locations, and visiting

artifacts in display cases all over the city, offer you and your family an opportunity to experience history in a visceral way. While pamphlets and plaques are interesting to some, the real artifacts allow you and your kids to foster an incredible sense of imagination, conjuring the past buildings and places. They engender empathy for past people of different races, ethnicities, and ages who handled these objects.

And luckily, there are opportunities for you and your family to work with archaeologists, helping them find more of these small things forgotten.

Getting down and dirty

The Presidio of San Francisco was founded as a Spanish garrison in 1776, controlling access to the Bay and offering military support to Mission Dolores. It served briefly as a Mexican fort and then as a U.S. Army base until 1994. Nowadays, many San Franciscans know it as a place to enjoy hikes and food trucks on Sundays, as well as the Walt Disney Family Museum. But a rich history exists beneath.

The Presidio Trust operates an extensive archaeological research program on the grounds. Archaeologists are currently excavating a section of the western wall of the fort, which they think served as an officers' barracks in the early nineteenth century. Starting in the spring, they dig on Fridays and Saturdays near a bus-stop-looking structure off Moraga Avenue. Visitors are

encouraged to stop by and watch the dig, and they can also attend tours of the site and the archaeology lab every Wednesday, year-round. Archaeologists and student interns hold open lab hours after the tours, where they explain what they are working on, answer questions, and show visitors around the archived collections.

Learning about these locations, and visiting artifacts in display cases all over the city, offer you and your family an opportunity to experience history in a visceral way.

You don't need to be intimidated when you show up with your brood. "We're fine if someone just wants to come to the site and talk to an archaeologist, sit at a trench, look and talk," says Presidio archaeologist Kari Jones. "But then there are various levels of involvement after that."

Under the direction of staff archaeologists and student interns, 200 regular volunteers support the field research at the Presidio. They screen the excavated dirt in large tubs using a laborious process called wet screening, dissolving the hard clay soil to reveal the artifacts. The volunteers identify, sort, and label the finds, and then they tell visitors all about the research. Children older than 11 are welcome to join the drop-in volunteer program with parent supervision, while children older than 15 can participate on their

own. Parents can, of course, come without their kids if they're searching for a new hobby.

"It's really important that our volunteers are involved in meaningful work," says Jones. Claire Yancey, coordinator of volunteer and education programs at the Presidio, agrees. "We are really chugging along because of the volunteers," says Yancey. "When we have kids and families come work with us, they're not just getting surface-level access to our research, they're actually researching with us. They are the ones making the discoveries and handling the artifacts. It's so fulfilling to see them get just over-the-moon

excited about a piece of ceramic, or a clay pipe fragment, or a bit of glass."

Yancy believes the program helps volunteers connect with history in a profound way. "I think it's rare for kids to have that sort of tangible experience, and it really helps them to connect on a deeper level not only to our work but also to this place."

The real deal

If you're not able to participate in the volunteer program or visit the excavation and lab, you can still expose your children to the archaeology of the city. At the Presidio, the Officers' Club features a large gallery in the back where you and your kids can explore the history of the fort and its surrounding area.

"Rather than try to tell it all, we picked individual episodes, and used a storybook structure," explains Jones. Chunky wood flaps open to reveal vignettes. Tables with animal pelts and shells allow kids to touch some things. Large cases display the artifacts recovered from the nearby excavations.

In the gallery, you and your kids can find an awl, likely used by an Ohlone woman to weave baskets or do leather work. A mortar and pestle was probably used to grind acorns, a major source of nutrition for Native populations in the area before and immediately after the arrival of the Spanish. In the large vertical case at the center of the room, you can find small artifacts that your kids might especially relate to—toy soldiers, marbles, doll pieces—left behind by kids living on the base sometime in the earlier twentieth century. Three game pieces,



whittled down from ceramic vessels, reflect the way people in the past repurposed old items, just as we sometimes do today.

Even though your kids aren't excavating these artifacts, just seeing these originals may still engender awe and gravity, which can initiate deeper engagement. Researchers in recent museum education studies have interviewed children after their experiences in museums and concluded that viewing the "real thing" helps young museum visitors connect with the objects. And if those objects have any parallels to things in their own life—like toys, food, cooking vessels, crafts, tools, jewelry—they'll be hooked.

Imagining what is below and what was above

All the "small things forgotten" can be meaningful, but not necessarily helpful, in imagining what buildings and landscape looked like in the past. Luckily, there are sometimes structural clues that can help you and your family as you move about the rest of the city and try to imagine the layers of history beneath you and the structures that once extended above you. Perhaps one of the best places to experience this is the city's most prominent ruin, the Sutro Baths.

Nestled in an inlet between the Cliff House and Lands End, the ruins of the Sutro Baths appear positively ancient, though they only burned down in 1966. Adolph Sutro, businessman and San Francisco mayor, built the structure in 1894 to accompany his pleasure garden at Sutro Heights. As you hike with your family around the ruins, you can imagine the building that rose up above the pools and think of the trapezes, slides, springboards, and high dives that once perched above the water. As you look down at your feet, you may see a small surface artifact. Enjoy the find, but explain to your kids that you are not supposed to remove the cultural artifacts from a site.

Between 2004 and 2011, archaeologists with the National Park Service conducted a large-scale excavation of Merrie Way, the row of concession and souvenir stands that accompanied the baths and rides. The new parking lot and visitor center was going up, and the area needed to be surveyed. The archaeologists, with an army of 250



community volunteers, excavated the remnants of the stands. Some of the artifacts are now on view at the new Lands End Visitor Center, including a copper pendant with two kissing cherubs. Pieces of copper and crucibles found in the same vicinity indicate that the souvenirs were made right at the stands by artisans. Locally-manufactured ginger-ale, cola, and soda-water bottles were numerous at the site. Medicine bottles, likely carried by the visitors, tell us that the men and women brought such cures with them, even on recreational days to the beach. Based on kitchen tools and food waste found during the investigation, the visitors were probably eating a lot of candy and oysters, among other things. It was not all that dissimilar to many of our own trips to beachside attractions.

Stay on the lookout

As you and your family continue to think about the past underneath your feet, look for archaeological research accompanying new construction. Check frequently for notices of public digs conducted in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which has used community volunteers at Merrie Way, Alcatraz, Angel Island, and other sites within its jurisdiction.

"History isn't already finished in the telling. We're still actively figuring out what happened," says Jones, of her work with archaeology volunteers at the Presidio. It is exciting to think that you and your family can be part of that process of discovery.❖

Beth is a former academic but remains a compulsive researcher. You can find some of her obsessive deep dives in history and art in the Mom Docent column on the GGMG blog.

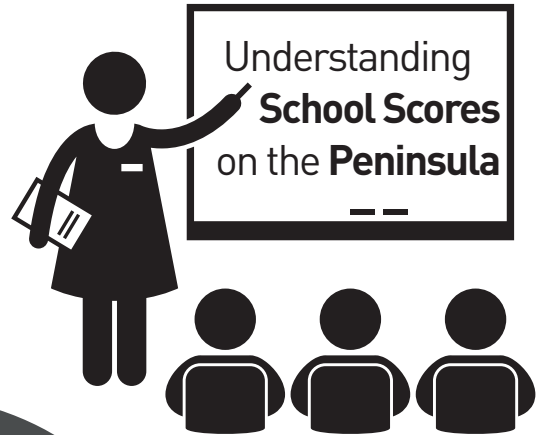


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Save the Earth!

By Lani Schreiberstein

Reduce, reuse, recycle

When I was Bat Mitzvahed at age 13, my party theme was “Save the Earth.” Then, in college, I used some of my limited dorm space as storage for recyclable materials to use them for my art projects. In my mid-twenties I bought an old Mercedes so I could use biodiesel instead of gasoline. Then, when I moved to San Francisco, I was excited to learn that the city collected compost—and it was mandatory! So you could say I’ve been eco-conscious throughout my life. Now that I am a parent, I ask myself, “Can I do more?” and, “How can I share this with my daughter?”

Waste Zero?

San Francisco has been able to divert 80 percent of garbage from landfills and incineration since 2012, more than any other U.S. city. Currently over half of what goes in the landfill (20 percent of our garbage) could be recycled or composted if placed in the proper bins. In other words, if every person placed all recyclable and compostable items in the blue and green bins, San Francisco could reach 90 percent waste diversion. The difficulty in diverting the last 10 percent from landfills is the many items that are not recyclable.

Due to a lack of substantial progress towards San Francisco’s lofty goal of zero waste by 2020, Mayor Breed announced new targets to reach by 2030: reduce total waste generated per person by 15 percent and reduce total landfill disposal by 50 percent. Together, we can do it!

How we got here

San Francisco reached the 80 percent diversion rate by adopting several policies. The Mandatory Recycling and Composting Ordinance passed in 2009 required all residences and businesses to recycle, and compost was the most significant. San

Francisco banned environmentally harmful plastic shopping bags and commonly used foam products, and a new law banning plastic straws and other plastic items such as sticks, stirrers, and toothpicks will go into effect in July 2019. The city also employs behavioral nudges—trash collection rates are higher for black-barrel landfill trash than recycling and composting and residential trash bins are smaller. Businesses receive discounts for recycling and composting and they can be fined if recyclables or compostables are found in the trash.

The recycling systems we have today were developed as a reaction to toxins from trash incineration and landfills leaking into the water and being absorbed into the air. Recycling programs began as a way to cut down on garbage, but by necessity, recycling became a commercial endeavor. China took the lead in the mid-1980s by importing and using recycled plastics, metals, and cardboard in its manufacturing and packaging of goods. For three decades the world has relied on China to do the bulk of its recycling, but in November 2017, China stopped importing most used plastic and paper, leaving cities scrambling to find alternate recycling plants. Recology now sends a portion of the recyclables to Southeast Asia. It is also working on a system to collect and recycle film plastics.

Where we can go from here

We can’t rely on recycling and composting alone. We need to be proactive to produce less waste to begin with (hence the order of the three Rs—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). A large portion of the responsibility is on the manufacturers’ shoulders. However, as consumers, we have the power to affect what is made (less demand equals less supply). So what can we do? Change the way we consume and shop and try to develop new habits.

Here are changes you can make to send less waste to the landfill:

- Avoid/refuse single-use items. Go for durable rather than disposable;
- Avoid/refuse single-serve containers;
- Buy in bulk (a large amount that is not divided into separate containers). Go for bigger quantities in a single box or package;
- Look for items that have easily recyclable or compostable packaging or better yet, no packaging at all;
- Try to avoid food waste by buying only what you will use before it goes bad;
- Buy concentrates rather than diluted products;
- Buy local when possible;
- Buy and use reusable cups, cutlery, bags, straws, bottles, and to-go containers;
- Use cloth diapers (not trying to guilt trip anyone, just stating a fact that using cloth diapers sends a lot less to the landfill);
- Don't buy new plastic toys ;
- Think twice before giving out goody bags filled with plastic toys.

Here are some ways to teach our children about the three Rs:

- Encourage dramatic play where your children pretend to be recycling truck drivers picking up items from the blue bins. Or pretend they work at the recycling center separating the different items;
- Hunt for litter at the park;
- Imagine together what items the recyclables will turn into;
- Find alternative uses for recyclables in your home, e.g. turn a glass jar into a pencil holder or use it for art;
- Discuss where foods come from and how much processing occurs before they get to your table;
- Pack waste-free lunches—all inedible items must be reusable;
- Donate toys and clothes you are no longer using;
- Explore the EPA's Recycle City online at www3.epa.gov/recyclecity;
- Participate in SFUSD's Earth Day Every Day Challenge;
- Tour Recology with your children ages 9 or older;
- Go to a recycled art exhibit at Recology.

When asked for tips on talking to kids about the three Rs, Recology Waste Zero Coordinator and father of two Dan Kling said, "I often cite the projection that there will be more plastic in the ocean, by weight, than marine life in the ocean by 2050, assuming our current practices continue. That often gets their attention."

Dan also advises reminding kids that there is no "away." "When you are done with an item, it doesn't just disappear. It has to go somewhere and people have to deal with it. This goes for landfill, recycling, and composting bound material. When we put material into the trash, it's going straight to the landfill, so we really want to avoid this." ♦

Lani is mom to 5-year-old Beatrice and freaks out a little when she spots recyclables or compostables in the trash bin.



How to be a better recycler

- Don't be a wishful recycler by putting everything in the recycling bin hoping that it is recyclable; It's important to only to put in items that are accepted in the recycling program. When in doubt, check www.recology.com/recology-san-francisco/what-goes-where or download Recology's WhatBin app;
- Empty soda cans and bottles of all liquids to keep the paper in recycling bins dry;
- Leave caps on plastic bottles. Metal caps and lids are accepted unattached;
- Empty food containers before recycling. Try to get the majority of food out but you don't need to rinse plastic tubs perfectly clean. SF Environment suggests removing food remnants from containers by scraping out the food with a spatula into your compost bin;
- Check your corks—plastic corks go in recycling and cork corks go in compost.

These should go in the blue recycling bins*:

- Shredded paper (Place in sealed paper bag and label "Shredded Paper.")
- Linens and clothing that are not in donation condition. No sneakers, boots, belts, or purses. Place laundered clothes in clear bag;
- Molded plastic packaging;
- Empty, clean ice cream containers, soup cartons, juice boxes, and paper milk cartons;
- Clean, dry, empty plastic bags including packaging material like plastic wrap, bubble wrap, and pillow packaging. These must be placed inside a clear plastic bag roughly the size of a basketball;
- Empty paper coffee cups plus the plastic lid.

Do not put any of these items in recycling bins*:

- Soiled paper plates, napkins, tissues, towels, takeout boxes, and greasy pizza boxes—They all go in compost;
- Aerosol cans that aren't empty;
- Light bulbs (Note that only incandescent and halogen light bulbs go in the black bin. Compact fluorescent bulbs must be disposed of at special locations);
- Electronics;
- Ceramic dishware or glassware;
- Coat hangers;
- Glass mirrors and windows;
- Tampons and menstrual pads;
- Shiny food wrappers;
- Toothpaste tubes.

*These apply to San Francisco. Every city has different rules about what can be recycled.

Cleaning the City

By Lani Schreiberstein

A look into San Francisco's efforts to clean up

When you hear the word “clean,” you probably think about cleaning your home—doing the dishes and the laundry. You may also think about cleaning your body or how to get the kids to clean up their toys. It all seems doable (though interminable). But what does it take to clean an entire city? Is it possible to keep San Francisco clean? Well, at this point, with the media comparing certain areas of the city to some of the dirtiest slums in the world, no one would call San Francisco clean.

Though San Francisco is continually being cleaned, it is also continually being dirtied. Like in our homes, it is easier to make a mess than to clean it up, and in the case of San Francisco, the culprits outnumber the resources the city has to combat the problem. However, San Francisco's new mayor, London Breed, is actively working on changing that.

In a September 3 *Washington Post* article, writer Scott Wilson describes Mayor Breed's “down-and-very-dirty approach” governing style. He quotes Breed: “I want people to walk around this city and think, ‘Wow, it's so clean here.’” Breed has been touring the streets without giving a heads-up to San Francisco Public Works, so they don't have a chance to clean up ahead of her visits, and she sees it all... litter, broken glass, feces (human and dog), and needles.

The San Francisco Department of Public Works (DPW) budget for Street Environmental Services has steeply increased in the past few years. It was \$34 million in the fiscal year 2014-2015 and \$65 million in the fiscal year 2017-2018. DPW has 302 staff positions

allocated to street cleaning. “Street cleaning” encompasses routine motorized street sweeping, routine manual street cleaning, response to service requests (311), illegal dumping removal, and homeless encampment cleanup. There is a special squad dedicated to cleaning up needles and another to feces. (*The San Francisco Chronicle* reported that members of the “poop patrol” will make an annual base salary of \$71,760.)

Maybe we can do our own part, and even more than our share, by picking up litter as we are walking down the sidewalk or playing in the park.

The Department of Public Health also has a needle cleanup squad.

Public bathrooms (toilets, sinks, used needle receptacles, and dog waste stations) called Pit Stops are available at 25 sites in 12 neighborhoods to provide an alternative to using sidewalks or the sides of buildings as toilets. Homelessness and public housing are also high priorities for Mayor Breed, in part because the associated effects of the large homeless population on the look and smell of our city streets. Breed has a robust proposal to spend \$181 million in windfall funds on affordable housing and homeless services like expanding and funding Navigation Centers, which are homeless shelters that also include case management. This proposal is set up to mirror the goals of Proposition C (passed in November 2018) because Prop C funds could be tied up in lawsuits due to a less than two-thirds margin victory. Breed's windfall spending plan is slated to be voted on by the Board of Supervisors soon.

Breed points out that it is everyone's responsibility to keep the city clean through their own actions. Maybe we can do our own part, and even more than our share, by picking up litter as we are walking down the sidewalk or playing in the park. Another way you can involve your kids is to attend a beach cleanup event—they are held a couple times a year. Join in at a Community Clean Team volunteering event for all ages with tasks such

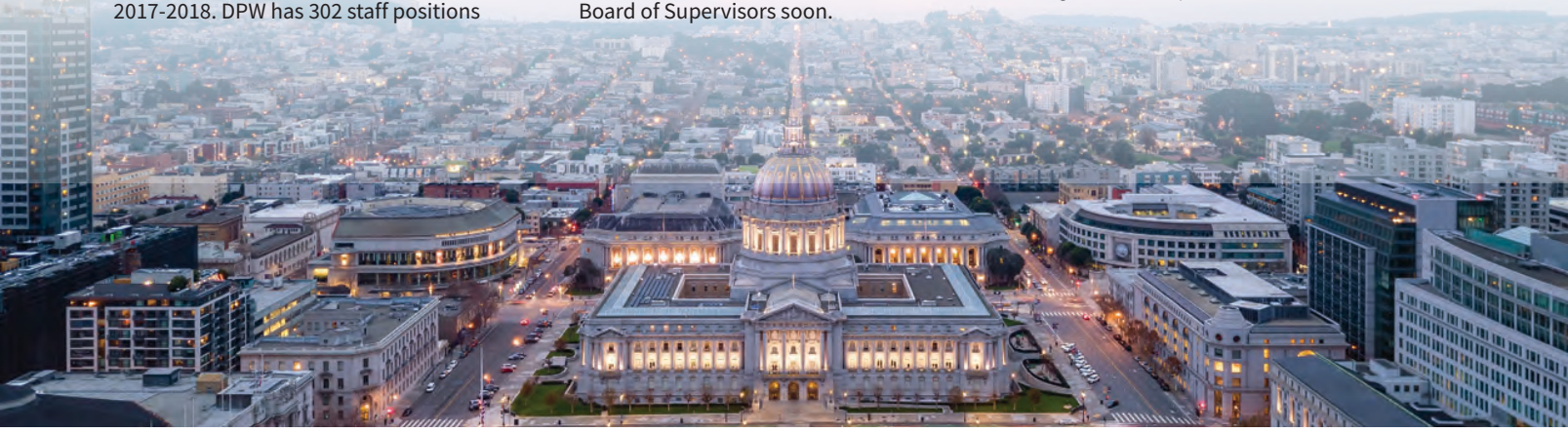
as landscaping and gardening projects and litter cleanup. You can also check out the Giants anti-litter campaign and sign the Giant Sweep pledge at www.sfgiantsweep.org.

And don't forget to sing the handy cleanup songs along the way—“clean up, clean up, everybody do your share...”

Did you know?

- Sweeping litter or debris into the street is prohibited by law.
- Leaving unwanted items on the sidewalk is illegal—even if you put up a sign that says “free.”
- You can schedule two free bulky item pickups per year to get rid of large items like furniture or appliances that don't fit in garbage cans.
- You can report graffiti, illegal dumping, needles, and medical waste or human waste by visiting 311 online, using the SF311 app, or calling 311. ❖

Lani is mom to 5-year-old Beatrice and has been volunteering for GGMG since Beatrice was 3 months old. In 2018 she started Color Explorers, where she holds events for families to explore nature and art together. colorexplorerssf.com





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COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: KIDS ACTIVITIES

Who are your current volunteers?

Currently we have three committee members: Lily Brotherton, Brooke Spillberg, and Semmantha Chie, who is the committee chair. Emily Jenks is our Board liaison and works closely with us as well. We are always looking for new moms to join us!

What's next for your committee?

Our first event for 2019 will be a Valentine's Day event. Details will be forthcoming, so keep an eye out for it on the GGMG calendar.



How do you come up with ideas for events?

We really just throw out whatever crosses our mind at meetings. We sit down and hammer out the details and assign a lead for the event. Sometimes we organically come up with a new idea while we're in the midst of discussing a totally different event.

How can interested GGMG members get involved with Kids Activities?

Please email us at activities@ggm.org. We're always looking for enthusiastic moms to join us and put on fun events for the kiddos!

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Managing Microaggressions

*"Wow, your English is so good."
"Two men shouldn't hold hands in public."
"You must be the nurse; where is the doctor?"*

Microaggressions (like the common examples above) are statements or actions that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudices toward members of a marginalized group. The first example comes with the insinuation, "You are not a true American. You are a perpetual foreigner in your own country," writes Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D., in "Microaggressions: More Than Just Race." The subtext of the second example is that same-sex displays of affection are offensive and should be kept private. In the third, a patient assumes a female doctor is a nurse, implying women are less capable than men.

GGMG's Diversity and Inclusion Committee participated in a social justice workshop on microaggressions with Alex Locust, a certified rehabilitation counselor and biracial amputee (self-titled as "glampu-tee") in November 2018.

Many GGMG moms can easily conjure up memories of sexist microaggressions endured at work, school, and social gatherings. But while we experience these microaggressions in one context, we may just as easily be perpetuating them in another. It is worthwhile to continuously question how we can express sensitivity to others as we navigate life with children in an increasingly diverse world.

Locust recommends paying close attention to our own word choices and thinking about who could be excluded or impacted by seemingly harmless comments. For example, a speaker may ask an audience, "Can everyone see this screen and hear me?" while adjusting A/V equipment, failing to realize some audience members could be blind or deaf. Challenge yourself to consider how to include and welcome everyone in a space or situation.

On the flip side, when you are experiencing a microaggression, Locust recommends trying to respond in a way that is concrete and helpful (if safe and appropriate to do so in the situation). He suggests that humor can be a useful tool and that the key is to develop a response that feels honest and authentic to oneself. Of course, it is also completely acceptable to choose not to respond.

For parents, Locust suggests that questions from children are usually coming from a place of genuine curiosity and that it is best to answer in plain and simple terms. However, some questions from children might signal to parents that greater exposure to diversity is needed. Parents can help children (and themselves) build their "open mind muscle" by choosing books, activities, experiences, and relationships that support the growth of their family beyond a baseline zone of familiarity.

Resources on the subjects of microaggressions and disability justice may be found on Alex Locust's website, www.glamputee.com/resources. To contact the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, email diversity@ggm.org.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Make a Connection

The Membership Engagement Committee helps members meet other moms face to face, turning online connections into real-life friendships. There is nothing quite as rewarding, bewildering, and isolating as being a new mom, but having the support and kinship of other mothers going through the same experiences can make all the difference. We are excited to help you find that support system and build your mom village! We also organize mom-only mixers throughout the year so you can unwind and make new friends.

Stay tuned for our ever-popular Newborn Playgroup Formation event at Presidio Sports Basement (held every three months), perfect for first-time moms or those who've just had another baby. We realize maternity leave can be short, so if you can't wait for the next formation event, please contact us to be placed into an existing playgroup.

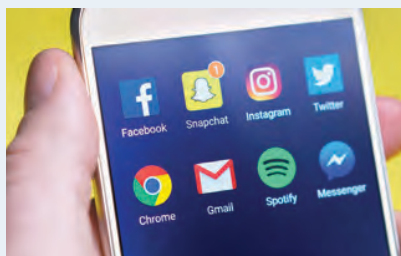
For moms of babies older than 12 months, we are happy to place you into a playgroup with older babies. Two other options are the GGMG Mom & Toddler Playgroups (ages 2 to 3 years old) and the GGMG Neighborhood Meetups. These playgroup events are posted on ggmg.org and on our Facebook page. Please RSVP through ggmg.org to attend.

Finally, remember to check out the membership perks on ggmg.org. We have great partnerships with vendors and service providers who offer special pricing or discounts to GGMG members.

Our goal is to serve every mom at every stage of motherhood. Please don't hesitate to contact us at playgroups@ggmg.org.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Happy New Year from the Social Media Committee!



This past year, we were thrilled to be on the ground to document several GGMG-sponsored events. From Spring Fest to Fall Fest (and everything in between), you may have seen us lurking around and hiding behind cameras (or, more likely, behind phones).

And we were happy to keep you in the know on interesting happenings throughout San Francisco—from charitable causes to wellness activities to fun gatherings.

Our top “liked” posts, however, were undoubtedly our attempts to add humor into your lives with cartoons, memes, and illustrations. Thank you for your appreciation of our efforts! We'll be on the lookout to bring you more in 2019.

We're here to help you, not just as a resource but as a forum as well, so please don't forget to send post requests for Facebook or Instagram to socialmedia@ggmg.org. And if you take pictures at any GGMG events, send those along to us as well... your photos may be featured on our social media outlets!

We're looking forward to another fabulous year.

—Esha, Anna, Cristina, and Christine

MEMBER SUPPORT

Getting to a Clutter-Free Mind

The new year is a time for purging and reorganizing. Finding new homes for once-loved toys and cleaning up after the last guest leaves are just two of the many chores that arise every January. However, it's also important to clear the clutter from your brain, which can reduce stress and increase productivity and overall well-being. Here are a few ways to start:

- Go on a social media diet: Install a time-limit app and unfollow or unsubscribe from “friends” or brands that clog up your feeds with negative, false, or unnecessary information.
- Set your priorities: What matters most to you this year? Be strict about your time and the demands that fall outside of these priorities.
- Write it down: Keep a journal. Keep a notepad next to your bed or even your shower... seriously! Get it out of your mind. Act on it, defer it, or forget it!
- Practice mindfulness: We know; meditation isn't for everyone. But even taking the minutes you use to brush your teeth or wash your dishes to pause and reflect can help you slow your pace in a positive way.
- Let it go: Elsa was on to something. Recognizing the negative feelings that crop up is the first step toward freedom. Deciding to let them fly away takes practice.

If you're feeling extra stressed this new year, please reach out to us at member.support@ggmg.org.

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

On December 3, 2018, GGMG honored our hardworking volunteers at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event at Le Colonial. With countless (wo)man hours put toward organizing 700-plus events, from small neighborhood get-togethers to huge celebrations like GGMG's annual Fall Fest, our volunteers truly power our community.

We are grateful for the following raffle and goody bag donors who helped us give back to those who give so much of themselves. Without their generosity, our incredible gifts of appreciation would not be possible!

Alamo Drafthouse	Friendshop	Music for Aardvarks	Sketchbook Studios
Aldea Home & Baby	In Harmony Music	My Gym	Sports Basement
Ambiance SF	It's Yoga Kids	One Less Thing	Stagecoach Greens
Amour Vert	Little Bears Music	Paper Cape	Super Soccer Star
Balanced Life Concierge	Little Feminist Book Club	Parabo Press	SusieCakes
Bass Note Sangria	Little Folkies Concert	Pearachute	Tartine Manufactory
Bella Smiles	Lovejoy's Tea Room	Rabbit Hole Theater Company	ThirdLove
Celsius and Beyond	Mapamundi Kids	Rothy's	Tiny Tots
Culinary Artistas	Michelle Sibrian Photography	SF Children's Art Center	Tutu School
Enrich Play Learn	Mudpie	SF Tots	UrbanSitter

Volunteers of the Month

Congratulations to **Connie Lin**, our October volunteer of the month; **Viorica Ciobanu**, our November volunteer of the month; **Diana Chuang**, our December volunteer of the month; and **Shuyi Zhang**, our volunteer of the year! Connie volunteers for the Operations Committee; Viorica is chair of Membership Approvals; Diana is an ambassador for Neighborhood 2; and Shuyi volunteers for the Membership Engagement Committee.

Connie and husband Patrick are parents to Evelyn (5) and Lucas (2). Viorica and husband Dorin are parents to Eva (12) and Adam (6). Diana and husband Kurt are parents to Evan (2 1/2). Shuyi and husband Steve are parents to Ruby (9), Lucy (6), and Kate (1).



CONNIE, WE WANT TO KNOW... Your favorite **piece of baby/kid gear** you could not live without: It's a tie. I loved our Fisher Price Rock 'n Play and our Beco Gemini carrier that lets babies face in and out.



VIORICA, WE WANT TO KNOW... Your favorite **parenting advice**: Give each other a break from time to time and credit for all the parenting work.



DIANA, WE WANT TO KNOW... The **place in the world you would most like to visit**: Japan. Kurt and I made a pact to go on our 10-year anniversary. We didn't clarify if it was 10 years of being together or 10 years of being married. We are now 12 years into our relationship and haven't gone to Japan!



SHUYI, WE WANT TO KNOW... Your favorite **restaurant**: Really tough choice in SF, but I was recently blown away by Lazy Bear.

Our winners will enjoy gift cards to International Orange Spa (2044 Fillmore St.). Book yourself a massage today at www.internationalorange.com.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Volunteer to sort donations at SF Smiles

SF Smiles collects donations of new and gently used essentials for individuals and families in need throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. SF Smiles redistributes donations directly to families and also works with many local organizations to reach their programs' clients.

SF Smiles is run on a volunteer basis by Chad Christensen out of his family home in the Inner Sunset. This event is an opportunity to help out by sorting donations while socializing with Chad and other GGMG members. Adults only.

DATE: TBD

TIME: TBD

PLACE: 1380 16th Ave.

COST: FREE



NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS

Outdoor Mandarin Playgroup

Join us every other Friday at the Randall Museum for our Outdoor Mandarin Playdate. We will sing a song, read a book together, and play games outside. We will meet in the lobby at 10 a.m. and share snacks at 10:30 a.m.

DATES: Fridays, February 1 and 15, March 1, 15, and 29

TIME: 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

PLACE: 199 Museum Way

COST: FREE

LGBTQ Family Monthly Meetup

Join queer families at Community Well for our monthly gathering which includes casually mingling/chatting, a snack "potluck" (where people bring something light to share), discussions on agreed-upon topics, and just sharing unique experiences and issues we have encountered as queer families.

DATES: Saturday, February 2 and Saturday, March 2

TIME: 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

PLACE: 78 Ocean Ave.

COST: FREE

REGISTER FOR EVENTS AT
GGMG.ORG/CALENDAR



Children's Yoga & Music Class

It's "Yosic" time for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers! Join us for yoga and music on a Saturday morning for kids 12 months and up. Parents and caretakers welcome. GGMG will provide coffee and light snacks. During the class we will practice Yoga poses along with music. Fun games and yoga stories are incorporated. Balancing boards are provided to help children improve their balance while they are having fun. Coach Eleandra is originally from Brazil and her "Yosic" class at Chant Yoga Studio is a favorite among families in the Castro neighborhood. Spots are limited. Please RSVP. Remember to bring your yoga mats and water.

DATE: Saturday, February 16

TIME: 10 a.m. to 10:40 a.m.

PLACE: Basketball Court at Douglass Park

COST: FREE

Dandelion Chocolate Factory Tour

Do you like chocolate? Curious about the process of how chocolates are made? Join Neighborhood 2 for a private chocolate factory tour at Dandelion. Space is limited so RSVP early!

DATE: Thursday, February 28

TIME: 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

PLACE: 740 Valencia St.

COST: FREE

Mother's Day Tea Service

Join GGMG Neighborhood 2 for a Mother's Day tea party at SIP Tea Room, where we will honor all the women who take the time to nurture and oversee the well-being and development of others, often sacrificing their own needs, dreams, and sleep. Moms try their very best every day to make this world a better place! Mother's Day should be every day... so let's celebrate!

DATE: Sunday, May 5

TIME: 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

PLACE: 721 Lincoln Way

COST: \$15 (includes a traditional English afternoon tea service)

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS

Neighborhood Meetups is looking for a co-chair to oversee a team of dedicated Neighborhood Ambassadors and Directors who put on wonderful events for our membership, including playground play dates, wine nights, book clubs, yoga classes, stroller walks, and other social events. Volunteering with GGMG is an opportunity to meet other fun and dedicated mothers, give back to the community, and also strengthen leadership skills! We're looking for candidates with strong communication, organizational, and leadership skills who are self-starters and enthusiastic about making a difference. Please email neighborhoodmeetups@gmg.org with questions.

Mamas Walking and Coffee Group

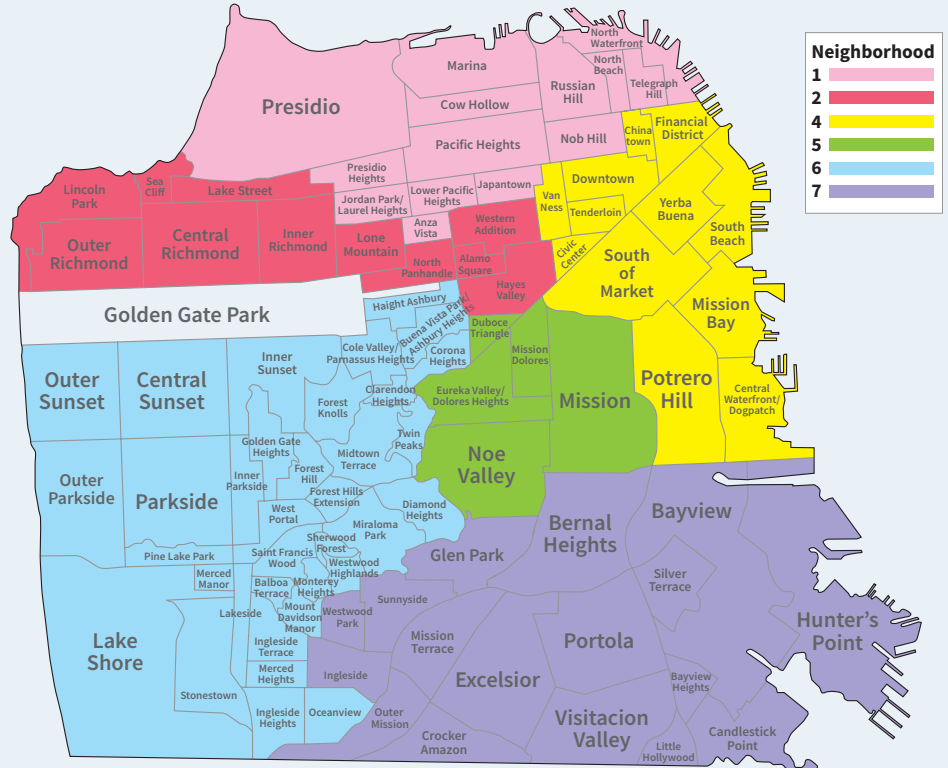
Weekly on Mondays, 10 a.m.
Bernie's (3966 24th St.)

Mom's Night Out

February 12
At a member's house. Details TBD.

Mom's Night Out

February 15, 8 p.m.
VinoRosso (629 Cortland Ave.).



Check the GGMG calendar for more events in your neighborhood!





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Let's Not Talk About Sex

By Sandy Woo

Sex was not a topic *de rigueur* under my parents' roof. Forget about the birds and the bees, the stork, or other hushed euphemism. They firmly subscribed to the *don't ask, don't tell* policy when it came to sex. I thought peanut was the actual name for penis until fifth grade when the beet-red nun uttered it in Family Life class. Incidentally, this class was also where I learned the mechanics of sexual intercourse (where a man *places* his penis in the vagina...).

Sex was forbidden, *dirty*, and whispered only in scandalous delight.

So I did what every deprived child does in these circumstances: I snooped. I dared not ask about any of it. Finding my uncle's porn stash filled me with a horrified curiosity; it would be years before I was reassured by mostly average length and girth. Then there were the strange slippery "balloons" and squishy disks stashed away in my parents' drawers. My heart beat rapidly not just due to the fear of being found out. Even at 6 years old, all of it was titillating and so very confusing.

Determined to be more open with my son, I thought it best to simply tell him the truth about sex, albeit in limited terms. I figured I couldn't possibly be *less* open.

After all, it wasn't until the first month after I left for college that my father initiated the sex talk with, "You're not doing anything bad, are you?" Since technically none of it was bad, I answered "no" and that was the end of that. To his credit, he completed this conversation when I was 34, while driving me to the airport to see my now husband. He was as to the point as possible, with his opening salvo of "safe sex," as he gripped the steering wheel tightly with both hands. Nearly speechless (because what I really wanted to say was that he was **years** too late), I sputtered, "Stop—embarrassing!" I can happily report that we do not discuss such matters anymore.

In contrast, my son has regaled his preschool friends about eggs and "spermies" without any knowledge of the actual mechanics despite an amazing sense of hearing. At 3 years old, he asked my friend if she kept her penis in her leggings. We had to explain that women typically don't have penises. To which he responded, "Oh, that's where your "magina" goes." He learned

the proper terminology for testicles after asking me about "these balls" while playing with them, but prefers to call them "eggs" or "huevos."

This slow introduction to sex seemed to be going swimmingly well. He hadn't yet asked how the egg and the sperm meet, so why tell him? Would he really be ready for that? Or would I be?

Now we get to the part that I am squeamish to share, as no one has heard it before now. And if you've gotten this far, just pretend you don't know this story if you talk to me. As with all children, mine has the darndest hearing. One night, long after my kiddo should have drifted off into dreamland, some hanky panky may have ensued. Suddenly, a "What are you guys doing?" rang out down the hall. Even worse, "I hear (insert embarrassing sound of your choosing)." My husband, in a moment of clear thinking, yelled out, "Cleaning the bathroom!" My son must have been tired since that response satisfied him. Furthermore, to our relief, he

hadn't come to investigate, as many traumatized adults will attest to regretfully doing in their youth.

My father would be proud of my husband's quick thinking. It was my father who famously told me in a random spurt of openness that making babies are like planting watermelons—and I believed him.

Every child reaches a point in his young life when he realizes what his parents do behind closed doors and that they have been told many "necessary"

lies. Some will recoil, or share their war stories to laugh it all off with their friends. My child is, so far, clueless. One day though, the truth will hit him like a ton of bricks. For now, I'd like to revel in that innocence a bit longer. I don't want him to look at me yet with the disgust that I had for all my relatives after learning about sex in fifth grade. Maybe he won't think we're gross or feel dirty. We did tell him we were cleaning. ❖

Sandy is older but perhaps not too much wiser about sex and just amused now about the voluptuous snow woman her uncle made in the above picture. She's hoping that her son will forgive her or at least understand why he was told the bald-faced lie.



Sex was forbidden, dirty, and whispered only in scandalous delight.



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