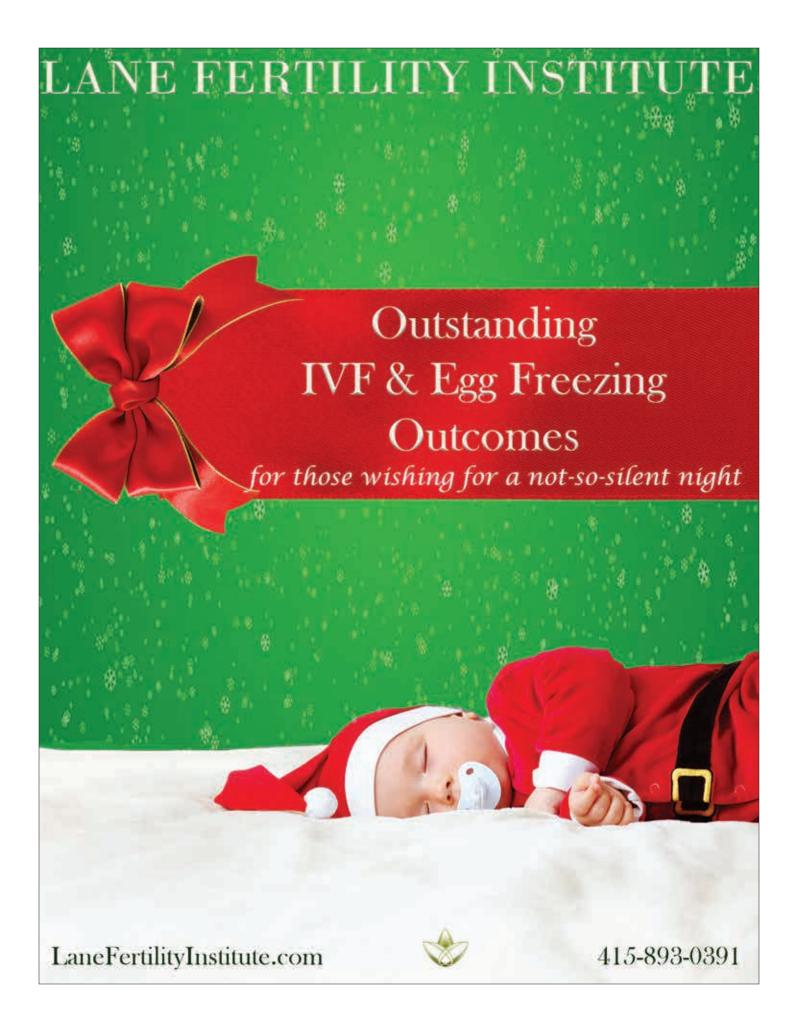


Food For Thought





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair	Cathy Tran
Vice Chair	Sasha Fahimi
Secretary	Kristen Marsh
Treasurer	Kristen McGuire
Community Support	Corinna Lu
External Communications	Addie Bjornsen
Internal Communications	Virginia Green
Kids Events	Emily Jenks
Member Engagement	Karen Brein
Operations	Laura Kim
Parent Education	Rebecca Andersen
Partnerships	Shikha Goyal-Allain
Technology	Sarah Soto

COMMITTEES

Careers and Entrepreneurs Operations Community Support Parent Education Diversity & Inclusion Partnerships Just for Moms Playgroups Kids Activities PR/Marketing Magazine Recruiting Membership Social Events Web Team

MAGAZINE

Editor-in-Chief Sonya Abrams Managing Editor Megan Bushnell Senior Editor Jenny Shaw Art Director JoJo Rhee Chevalier

Writers Stephanie AuWerter, Shaheen Bilgrami, Jennifer Butterfoss, Tara Hardesty, Laure Latham, Catherine Symon

Copy Editors Sarah Brandstetter, Emily deGrassi, Anna Gracia, Arwen Griffith, Neha Masson, Jessica Williams, Sandy Woo

> Advertising Sherri Howe Designers Juliana Egley, Jessica Franklin,

Lani Schreibstein, Lora Tomova

Photographers Petra Cross, Anna Psalmond, Aviva Roller

For information regarding how to advertise in this magazine, contact advertising@aama.org. For questions or comments regarding magazine content, contact editor@ggi For questions or comments regarding all other aspects of GGMG, including how to advertise an event to our membership, please contact feedback@ggmg.org.

4 Letter from the Editor: Full Plates Laying out a smorgasbord of food writing Sonya Abrams

5

Letter from the Board: So Long, 2017 Closing out the year with a look back Sasha Fahimi

6

Out and About Savor the Season Stephanie AuWerter Li'l Kid, Big City: North Beach Juliana Egley Kid-Friendly, Family-Run Wineries

8

Christine Chen

To Eat Organic Parsing out the benefits and hype of organic food Louise Greenspan

IO

Dadlands: connection Michael Laukert

Π

Member Profile: Courtney Graham A look inside the life of a longtime GGMG member Tara Hardesty

I2 Books for Kids:

holiday reads Laure Latham

Table of Contents

Ask the Expert: To Eat Or Not

Cooking Up Traditions Cooking with family is the ultimate

Winter and Holidays Enjoy the shorter days with great

I4

From Womb to World: Postpartum Care Around the World

Celebrating motherhood by taking care of mom Juli Fraga

16 How to Survive Parenting a Picky Eater

Turning picky eating into less of a problem Catherine Symon

20

The World on a Plate

Traveling via food Shaheen Bilgrami

22

Rethinking the School Lunch Experience

SF schools' creative approaches to lunch hour Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss

39

I ♥ Mom: I'll Have a Bowl of Normal, Please The long road to cultural acceptance Neha Masson

GGMG at Work

4 Housekeeping

9 Community Support & Contest

I5 New Arrivals & Volunteer of the Month

32 GGMG Events

34 **Committee Updates**

Letter from the Editor: Full Plates

By Sonya Abrams



Sonya is a part-time photographer and a full-time lover of adventurous cuisine. She can often be found shoveling most anything into her mouth. Except mayonnaise. Gross.

Sometime in my early 20s, I was standing in a supermarket checkout line, flipping through US Weekly, idly glancing at a toddler in the cart ahead of me happily popping pieces of sushi into his mouth. I have to remember to have a kid like that someday, I thought. As if it were that simple, that I could simply request "cosmopolitan eater" in my birth plan.

Fittingly, I was blessed with three children who find salt too spicy and rice too slippery. My struggles to broaden their tastes have been met with strong resistance. Rarely are new foods tried and when I dare to offer up something new on the plate, the offending item is usually met with sneers or screams of horror.

I've successfully convinced myself that yogurt and carrots are a well-balanced meal.

My 3-year-old usually removes new items from the table entirely and into the mouth of our eagerly composting canine. His siblings aren't much better. My fantasies of Family Pho Night have given way to Mac 'N Cheese Tuesdays (and Wednesdays, and Thursdays). At restaurants and special events, my kids reach for the bread, ignoring most everything else. I've successfully convinced myself that yogurt and carrots are a well-balanced meal.

Our writers in this issue serve up a smorgasbord of ways to think about food: how to make it fun, palatable, and keep kids engaged and interested at home, in the classroom, and beyond. On page 20, Shaheen Bilgrami discovers ways in which food can offer a passport to the world for children and shares suggestions on how to bring international flavors into your own home. On page 16, Catherine Symon assures parents everywhere that their children won't be eating only plain buttered noodles at their weddings, offering up tips on how to coax picky eaters into trying new things and exploring the science behind the widespread phenomenon of fussy palates. Jennifer Butterfoss peers into the educational system on page 22 and takes a tour through schools that are innovating how and where lunchtime happens. Her observations are encouraging; they reveal that the next generation is being raised with a thoughtfulness that extends beyond reconstituted mashed potatoes served under fluorescent lighting.

And don't forget to check out our new blog, City Blocks, at *www.ggmg.org/blog*, where fresh content is posted several times a week on a range of topics on parenting in the city, from finding the work you love to secret city spots to take your kids.

With three kids, four pets, three schools, two jobs, and numerous activities and volunteer commitments, our family has a lot on its plate. Food is a battle I'm not willing to put up much of a fight over. I cling to the hope that given time and patience, my children's resistance will soften and slowly melt away. But until that happens, I am never more than an arm's reach from a box of raisins.

Sor Ano

Housekeeping

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

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

THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY: Stolen credit card, Halloween candy OD, a 40th birthday, a law school reunion, a trip to Fairyland, pumpkin patch fails, too much coffee and not enough wine, hateful soon-to-be-ex-husband, peace and acceptance, friends with sewing machines, a never-ending stream of Daisy Girl Scout iron-on patches, endless preschool tours, health issues, my two-year-old's cuddles, dipping my toes into entrepreneurship, discovering a 130-year-old family chronicle, glue gun costume making, coping with my daughter's medical condition taking a turn for the worse, kindergarten viruses.

COMING NEXT: February/March: Past/Present/Future

CONTEST: Congratulations to **Brittany Larsen**, the winner of a Lemonshoots maternity photography session.

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

Letter from the Board: So Long, 2017

By Sasha Fahimi

t sounds cliché, but I truly can't believe that we are wrapping up yet another year. This one really seemed to fly by and was filled with incredible growth and change within our organization. Foremost in my mind is the new website, *ggmg.org*, which finally rolled out in late spring. The GGMG Board was thrilled to be able to deliver on this exciting new site and move away from BigTent.com, after years of member feedback. We appreciated our members' patience as we worked through unexpected bumps at the outset of the launch. Our website transition team did an amazing job fielding member questions and issues, and I cannot thank them enough for their tireless efforts as we got the site up and running. The site is intuitive, user-friendly, and completely GGMG-owned and run. As always, if you have any suggestions on how we can improve it, please email the website team at *website@ggmg.org*.

We held many incredible events for families this year, including Preschool Preview Night in September, where attendees met and

Thank you all for being part of this community and making it exceptional.

talked with representatives from dozens of local preschools and kindergartens. In October, we danced, bounced, ate, sang, picked pumpkins, took photos, and laughed our way through the Fall Festival at Sharon Meadow. Notably, our new Diversity and Inclusion Committee was extremely active as they rounded out their first year, and, among other things, they launched their author series, with a reading and signing of the book *A Is For*

Cover Outtakes



Activist by children's book author Innosanto Nagara. The Diversity and Inclusion team also participated in community outreach events in Japantown and SoMa in their efforts to make GGMG more visible and available in locations where GGMG events are less frequent. On the training and education front, they spearheaded the efforts to train our volunteers regarding diversity and inclusion issues, and they have already scheduled Part



Sasha is a Senior Family Law Associate at Sucherman Insalaco, LLP. She is mom to one rambunctious little girl, Mila, and rescue pup, Norman Joe Biden Fahimi. She and husband Jahan love to travel and spend as much time outdoors as possible.

2 of the "How to Talk To Kids About Race" series, which will take place in March 2018.

Sadly, we will be losing a number of board members who will have served out their terms at the end of this year, so please keep an eye out for postings regarding those positions if you are interested in getting involved!

Thank you all for being part of this community and making it exceptional. I wish you and your families a happy, healthy holiday season and new year, and I am excited for what next year will bring.

Jacka Fahim



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

Cover Photo by Aviva Roller Photography Cover model: Vivienne (5)

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

Savor the Season

Celebrate the culinary delights of the holidays with your kids: bake, decorate, share with others, and, of course, indulge.

By Stephanie AuWerter

Bag Lunches at GLIDE

Give back by assembling bagged lunches for those in need. Volunteers must be 9 or older. WHEN: Weekends, 9 to 11 a.m. WHERE: 300 Ellis St. **COST:** FREE www.glide.org/volunteer

The Great Dickens Christmas Fair

Time travel to Victorian London and enjoy roasted chestnuts, traditional English pub food, tea rooms, lamplit streets, dancing, performances, and more at the Cow Palace. WHEN: Weekends, November 18 through December 17

WHERE: 200 Geneva Ave., Daly City **COST:** \$30 adults, \$14 kids 5 to 12; free for kids under 5

www.dickensfair.com



The Ritz-Carlton's Teddy Bear Tea Hot chocolate, teddy bear cookies, assorted sandwiches, a holiday show, and a teddy bear gift is hard to beat. WHEN: November 25 through December 23 WHERE: 600 Stockton St. **COST:** \$115 (child), \$125 (adult)

www.tinyurl.com/sfteddybeartea



The Fairmont's Giant Gingerbread House

Drool over the two-story, life-size house made with 10,250 edible bricks and 3,300 pounds of icing.

WHEN: November 25 through January 1

WHERE: 950 Mason St. **COST:** FREE (Holiday tea offered at additional cost with reservation)

www.tinyurl.com/fairmontholidayhouse

Museum of Craft and Design: **Gingerbread Pavilions**

Garner inspiration from the Architecture Pavilion exhibition then decorate your own unique gingerbread house. WHEN: December 2 WHERE: 2569 Third St. **COST:** \$5 per person plus \$10 per house www.sfmcd.org/events/category/kids

SF Public Library: Buñuelos & Mexican Hot Chocolate

Enjoy a tasting of these traditional holiday favorites from Mexico and other Latin American countries at the Potrero branch. WHEN: December 11, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. WHERE: 1616 20th St. **COST:** FREE www.tinyurl.com/sanfranlibrary

Stephanie is a San Francisco-based freelance writer and editor, whose work has been published in The Wall Street Journal, Real Simple, Parents, Money Magazine, and more.



Light the tree, sing with the Golden Gate Carolers, then head to the nearby YMCA for popcorn, brownies, warm apple cider, and holiday crafts.

WHEN: December 8, 5:30 to 7 p.m. WHERE: Main Post, corner of Lincoln Blvd. and Funston Ave. **COST:** FREE

www.presidio.gov/presidio-trust



The JCC's Hanukkah Shabbatikah **Fryday**

Award-winning chef Michael Solomonov shares his fried-food techniques plus candle lighting, drinks, latkes, and live music. WHEN: December 15, 4:00 p.m. WHERE: 3200 California St. **COST:** FREE www.tinyurl.com/jccfryday

Culinary Artistas' Holiday Baking Time Camp

Kids 5 to 7 years will bake gingerbread, sugar cookies, and more from scratch. WHEN: December 18 through 22, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

WHERE: Ghirardelli Square, 851 Beach St. COST: \$550 for week; discount available to **GGMG** members

www.tinyurl.com/artistascamp



Li'l Kid, Big City: North Beach

By Juliana Egley

orth Beach has so many great meal options to enjoy with visit will be meeting Nola, the adorable winery cockapoo. your little one! If pizza beckons, check out Tony's Pizza In Carneros, "Bring a picnic, make a memory" is the motto at Larson Napoletana (1570 Stockton St.) or the Slice House next door Family Winery (www.larsonfamilywinery.com). This family-friendly (1556 Stockton St.). For some of the best Italian food outside the winery (dogs welcome, too!) has a picnic area, a bocce ball court, and country, go to the Italian Homemade Company (716 Columbus Ave.). goats to visit. Betty Lou's Seafood & Grill (318 Columbus Ave.) offers fresh seafood Miner Family Winery (www. and pasta; at Sodini's (510 Green St.), enjoy dinner as a family affair.

If you want a more casual experience, Sushi on North Beach (745 Columbus Ave.) has great small plates. Awesome sandwiches are available at **Alimento** (507 Columbus Ave.); grab lunch for a picnic with the kids at Joe DiMaggio Playground or Washington Square Park.

Dessert options abound of course. **Stella Pastry** (446 Columbus Ave.) is a favorite and **Z Cioccolato** (464 Columbus Ave.) offers homemade saltwater taffy and chocolates, while XOX Truffles (754 Columbus Ave.) is internationally recognized.

Now more than ever, Napa and Sonoma need visitors to jumpstart For your shopping needs, stop at Little Vine (1541 Grant Ave.) for their economic recovery from recent wildfires. If you're interested in food, gifts, and wine and why not a treat for yourself? Lola (1415 Grant making a donation, the Redwood Credit Union North Bay Fire Relief Ave.) has cards, toys, and baby gifts. **Carmel Blue** (1418 Grant Ave.) is a Fund (www.redwoodcu.org/northbayfirerelief) supports the immediate one-stop shop for everything pre- and post- baby. City Lights needs of those most impacted by the fires, with 100 percent of all Bookstore (261 Columbus Ave.) carries a variety of books for every donations going to fire victims and relief efforts. taste. Bon Appétit!! 💠

Christine has analyzed and advised consumer companies and is a frequent visitor to Juliana loves living in North Beach and is excited about raising her daughter in such wine country. As a result, her two kids have been to more wine release parties than a vibrant and historic neighborhood. birthday parties, though sadly that will likely change.

Kid-Friendly, Family-Run Wineries

By Christine Chen

rine Country has been a special place for me since my days at UC Berkeley, but now with two toddlers in tow, hitting multiple wineries a day is a distant memory. Instead, we visit one winery, maybe two, for more relaxed tastings.

Off the beaten path on Sonoma Mountain, Belden Barns (www. beldenbarns.com) offers kids a bucolic setting to safely explore nature while parents taste the fabulous wines. Bring a picnic lunch so you can linger while the little ones are entertained by the wishing tree, a scavenger hunt, or various outdoor games and toys on property.



In Healdsburg, **Papapietro** Perry (www.papapietro-perry. com) specializes in singlevineyard Pinot Noir and Zinfandel. Move from the tasting room to the patio, where kids can draw with winery-provided crayons. For most kids, the highlight of the

minerwines.com) in Oakville is a destination in and of itself, with a subset of the 27 amazing wines available in the tasting room. Take your glass and kids to the seating area on the terrace, which offers expansive views of the valley.





Ask the Expert

To Eat Or Not To Eat Organic



Louise Greenspan, M.D. is a pediatric endocrinologist at Kaiser Permanente and a professor of pediatrics at UCSF. Her research has focused on the environmental determinants of puberty and childhood obesity and hypertension. She is the co-author of The New Puberty, and a mother of two based in SF.

GGMG: How did you become interested in research on food?

LG: Professionally, it was a subject I learned more about as I participated as an investigator in a longitudinal study on environmental determinants of puberty, and then subsequently when we were writing the book The New Puberty. My interest also came from my personal experiences as a pregnant woman and mother, having to make decisions on what to feed myself and my kids.

GGMG: Is organic food more nutritious or healthier, or is it just hype?

LG: There is not much data supporting that organic food is more nutritious, but it may well be healthier. There are likely residual pesticides left in the food that is non-organic, and this may have health effects. And organic food is certainly healthier for the farmers in the field as well as the environment. There is a lot of hype, but I think it's founded on common sense. I have a pet peeve about the current enthusiasm for organic processed foods—an organic cookie is still a cookie. Fruit is still a healthier snack than a cookie even if it's not organic! I laugh when I see organic mac and cheese—it would be better to buy the pasta and cheese separately, and it doesn't take much longer to make. If it has "organic" written on the box, it still involves eating the preservatives that are added to boxed foods. Fresh food and produce is better.

GGMG: Some people have argued that there are no clear-cut studies on the harm from pesticides or hormones in our food. How do you interpret the available research?

LG: I use the precautionary principle: "when the health of humans and the environment is at stake, it may not be necessary to wait for scientific certainty to take protective action." In other words, we shouldn't wait for hard data showing that these chemicals are bad for us. Right now, we have plenty of data showing they are

With Louise Greenspan, M.D.

bad for the people who are exposed at high concentrations. Studies done on farmworkers in Salinas, California are pretty convincing that high doses of pesticides are harmful. A long-term study enrolled pregnant women there, and then followed their children into their teen years and beyond. The amount of organophosphates (synthetic chemicals that act on neurotransmitters to poison insects and mammals) in each individual were measured in biological samples like blood. Developmental tests were also taken in their children. Those people exposed to higher levels of organophosphates had more neurocognitive issues—we're talking about behavioral issues and things like ADHD. This can all be attributed to exposure to chemicals! It's not fair to those families and kids. For me, that's enough information to try to buy organic as a consumer. It is more expensive, but if the consumer can afford it, why not spend the money? For people who have the means to make that choice, I actually cannot think of a better place for

GGMG: Are there real differences between "big box organic" and "small farm organic"?

money to go.

LG: There is an argument that having large companies get into the organic market is beneficial because it will make these products more affordable to everyone. That way more people can have access to organic food. The counter argument is that eating organic food from 2,000 miles away is worse for the environment

...an organic cookie is still a cookie. Fruit is still a healthier snack than a cookie even if it's not organic!

due to environmental transportation costs than eating food made locally. From a health perspective, I welcome all companies who are motivated to produce and sell organic food because that will shift the growers to making more farms organic-and that's a win-win for everyone.

GGMG: What should the average family with a limited income do about food?

LG: Buy as much fresh and frozen food—fruits and vegetables—as you can, rather than processed or fast food. It's still healthier to eat plant-based foods even if they are not organic. Frozen veggies can be bought cheaply in bulk, don't spoil as fast, and are perfectly healthy. And they are healthier than many other pre-prepared foods. 💠

GGMG: Helping Others, Treating Yourself

Community Support

Homeless Prenatal Program: Annual Holiday Fund Drive

GGMG's annual holiday fund drive for Homeless Prenatal Program (HPP) families is underway. Please join us in continuing this incredible tradition of moms helping moms and make a donation to HPP today.

HPP HAS THREE MAJOR GOALS:

- 1. Healthy babies: ensure that parents give birth to healthy babies and successfully bond with their infants.
- 2. Safe, nurturing families where children thrive: ensure that parents are knowledgeable, motivated, and empowered to support their children's success and healthy development.
- 3. Economically stable families: ensure that families have access to information and resources that move them towards permanent, stable housing and economic self-sufficiency.

Donate funds via www.homelessprenatal.org/donate. Please be sure to choose "GGMG Gives" in the gift designation scroll-down menu to help us track donations. Or you may purchase items off HPP's Amazon Wish List: http://a.co/i0qpsx2.

Any donation amount is greatly appreciated and will be put to good use supporting HPP families. Thank you so much for your support of this drive, which will run through the end of the year.

Win Free Botox!



77 PLASTIC SURGERY by Larry Fan. md

77 Plastic Surgery was founded by surgeon and artist Dr. Larry Fan, who has been named one of America's Top Plastic Surgeons. Dr. Fan is inspired by the beauty that surrounds and resides within all of us.

Our mission at 77 Plastic Surgery is to bring your beauty to life. We are committed to achieving the highest standards of excellence and the very best aesthetic results. We provide the most advanced techniques in plastic surgery while maintaining the highest standards of patient care and uncompromised professional ethics.

All GGMG entrants will be eligible to receive \$75 off of your first Botox treatment before March 31, 2018. Visit our site www.77plasticsurgery.com for more information.

FOR A CHANCE TO WIN THESE SERVICES, ENTER THE CONTEST BY LIKING THE FACEBOOK PAGE FOR 77 PLASTIC SURGERY OR SENDING AN EMAIL WITH THE SUBJECT LINE "BOTOX" TO CONTEST@GGMG.ORG BY JANUARY 31, 2018.



Contest

DADLANDS

Cooking Up Traditions

By Michael Laukert

would have not been remotely close in scripting my career path had I been 上 tasked with the assignment as a kid. But as the end of college neared, advice from my father resonated very loud and clear: "make sure the career you choose provides a happy life for you." Taking his words to heart, I decided to pursue my newfound passion for food, and with the help of my parents, I moved to upstate New York to attend The Culinary Institute of America.

My career, however, really began here in the Napa Valley in August 1991. The past 25+ years have allowed me to become a chef, editor, author, and specialty food consultant. During this time, I have been fortunate to work alongside a few of my culinary icons-Julia Child, Jacques Pepin, and Thomas Keller—and make amazing friends with a

similar drive and passion for food and wine. Cooking allows for a personal connection, giving part of yourself in each dish that you prepare.

I remember my early days as a young chef here. For many of us, our families were too far away, and schedules really didn't allow for thoughts of holiday travel. A handful of us from the kitchen

Cooking allows for a personal connection, giving part of yourself in each dish that you prepare.

would gather every weekend. We decided a theme was needed, a purpose that would provide meaning, and family was at the top of the list. Each of us contributed to the meal by making a special dish that we grew up with, representing our heritage. Today I still hold onto the wonderful memories of years past by bringing my version of those recipes created by dear friends and fellow chefs to my family's dinner table.



Thinking about this, I realize that my favorite time of year is upon us once again. Cool, crisp days showcase farmers markets full of rich, deeply colored produce. As a chef, my thought process shifts in cooking techniques. Time in the kitchen slows down to embrace braising and roasting, and the slow cooker finds a permanent space on the kitchen counter. In the fields, the electric, high intensity of the grape harvest wraps up; the vines are empty of their fruit clusters, leaves have fallen, and vines will soon be dormant. Gathering around the table, the flavors are robust, rich, and earthy, which together provide feelings of warmth, comfort, and satisfaction to the heart and soul.

My teenage son has decided it is not a bad thing to spend a little time with dad in the kitchen. We started his journey of

learning his way around the kitchen simply: mastering how to make a perfect fried egg. Some trial and error, certainly a few laughs, and a couple dozen eggs, give or take, and he is now well on his way. His enthusiasm to learn more about where his food comes from keeps evolving, and I get to share with him my knowledge of fruit, vegetables, proteins, how to choose them and why. We talk about what sounds good for our meal prior to making the trek to the local farmers market, butcher shop, and fish monger to shop for our ingredients. I am excited for and embrace the weekends, a time we share together planning menus, cooking, and bonding.

As time passes, I will share dishes from my family's heritage with my son, as my mother did with me. I know we too will develop our own list of favorites and begin creating our own family traditions. By teaching him to cook, I'm teaching him to connect. 💠

Michael is a celebrated chef who lives in the Napa Valley area, currently serving as the executive chef for One True Vine, a boutique winery. When he's not working, he's cooking or playing softball in weekend tournaments with his league team, Crush.

Courtney Graham Perhaps the best and most unexpected benefit of being a mom is the

camaraderie of other moms. Mom to mom, we get it in a way no one else can. Whether we are stay-at-home, work-outside-the-home, single, older, or however we choose to define ourselves, we are aligned by the daily joys and struggles we have in common. The Golden Gate Mothers Group is a 4,200-strong community of moms. We meet each other at events, on the forum, through volunteering, and now, through this magazine. In this issue, we launch our new Member Profile to highlight the insights and stories of GGMG members, one mom at a time.

Courtney Graham is the mother of a kindergartener. She's also a full-time learning support coordinator, working with parents and teachers to ensure learning and happiness for children in K through 4th grade. A San Francisco resident since 2006, Courtney lives on the Russian Hill/Nob Hill border. She spoke with Tara Hardesty.

How do you juggle life's responsibilities as a single mom?

I don't know any different. I adopted my daughter when she was 5 months old. I think I make it work by planning and seeing something ahead of time, maybe plan a little farther

What's your biggest struggle as a mom?

What's been your best moment (so far) as a mom?

Right now, my daughter is in kindergarten, an little detail...It is a beautiful thing, and listening

How do you get through the day?

helps everything. I also involve her in important jobs around the house; it can turn our days around. She

Can you share a guilty pleasure?

My daughter has never been a great sleeper, and she is sleeping better and I binge-watch Netflix. Or going shopping for anything by myself, that is a guilty pleasure. 🔷





Books for Kids Winter and Holidays By Laure Latham

7 intertime is here, happiness and cheer. To enjoy the holiday season with carefully crafted words and a cup of hot chocolate, here are a selection of books that celebrate the best of the shorter months of the year. Whether in the city or in the great outdoors, these books will surely make storytime or quiet reading a most wonderful time for young ones.



The Itsy Bitsy Snowman

Written by Jeffrey Burton, illustrated by Sanja Rescek If an itsy bitsy spider can come down a water spout in rhyme, an itsy bitsy snowman can go sledding into town and have a ball in rhyme, too. Recreating

the famous lullaby, this winter version is short and sweet, perfect for little ones learning new words and little hands who want to grab everything. Sing it. Read it. And, maybe, find some snow to have your own itsy bitsy snowman adventure. Ages: 0 to 3 years



There Was a Cold Lady Who Swallowed Some Snow

Written by Lucille Colandro, illustrated by Jared Lee There was a cold lady who swallowed some snow. And some coal. And a hat. This winter spin-off on the traditional rhyming poem will have kids asking

for more as the old lady swallows incredible things. What will happen with all these items in the end? At home, kids can draw their own little cold ladies swallowing all things snow and winter. Ages: 2 to 5 years

Queen of the Hanukkah Dosas

Written by Pamela Ehrenberg, illustrated by Anjan Sarkar Dosas for Hanukkah may be unconventional, but in this blended family with an Indian mom and a Jewish dad, it's their tradition. Everything would be perfect if young Sadie could stop climbing on everything. She climbs on furniture at home, she climbs on structures at the Indian store, annoying her older brother to pieces. Though he tries his best to keep her still with a variation on the Dreidel song, Sadie doesn't listen. Could her skills save the day? This book includes recipes at the end that you will want to try. Ages: 3 to 6 years



cleeping

Shhh! Bears Sleeping

Written by David Martin, illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher This little board book teaches toddlers about

bears and hibernation in a fun and enjoyable way in relation to the seasons. A mama bear needs to sleep during the winter months with her two cubs, and they all wake up in the spring and make the best of the warm season. Along with other simple or more elaborate nature books, this book makes

for a perfect read before heading off to the Sierras or any bear territory. Ages: 2 to 5 years

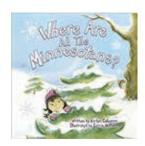


Little Red Ruthie: A Hanukkah Tale

Written by Gloria Koster, illustrated by Sue Eastland Little Red Ruthie is a loving granddaughter who crosses the woods in winter, with sour cream and applesauce in her basket, to cook latkes at her Bubbe Basha's house. An encounter with the wolf could turn tragic, if Little Red Ruthie didn't have all her wits about her. Inspired by the story of the Maccabees, the little girl manages to talk her way out of a thorny situation and tricks the wolf into leaving Bubbe Basha alone. Latkes, anyone? Ages: 3 to 6 years

Where Are All the **Minnesotans?**

Written by Karlyn Coleman, illustrated by Carrie Hartmann There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing, as this delightful book shows with watercolor illustrations. With long, frigid winters, the inhabitants of the



frozen Midwest could stay indoors by the fireplace, bake cookies, and dream of spring flowers, but no! Puffy jackets and snow boots need to come out. Minnesotans enjoy the outdoors even during the harsh winter season and kids play outside. Whether ice-fishing, ice-skating, or flying kites, these hardy young Minnesotans show that they are not afraid of the cold. *Ages: 3 to 7 years*



and Kalinka, a 15-year-old Jewish girl who

survived a mass Nazi shooting. Przewalski's

very ancient breed and Max is determined to

manages. When orders come from Berlin to

remove this biologically unfit species from

German Reich. Max and Kalinka find each

other united in a mission to save the last

two horses from being butchered for meat.

This is a great—if heavy—read for teens and

tweens who enjoy historical fiction with a

touch of magical realism.

Ages: 12 to 15 years

horses are some of the last on Earth of a

protect them on the nature reserve he

the animal population of the Greater

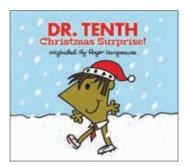
The Winter Horses

By Philip Kerr Winter 1941, Ukraine. Based on a true story, this book stars Max, a ranger for a Ukrainian nature reserve,

By Kate Milford

Dr. Tenth: **Christmas Surprise!** (Doctor Who/Roger Hargreaves)

By Roger Hargreaves Combining "Doctor Who" trademark storytelling with the Little Men illustrations and format, this is just the Christmas book for "Doctor Who" fans. Featuring angry snowmen, cold hot chocolate, and Santas, this new adventure of Dr. Tenth and Donna will make you want to discover the other 11 doctors—and cheer for Dr. Tenth, who stops at nothing for a Christmas surprise. Ages: 3 to 7 years



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

Befana: An Italian **Christmas Tale** Written and illustrated by

The Legend of Old

Tomie de Paola

This is a traditional Italian Christmas folktale about a mean and eccentric old woman who, one night, finds the three kings looking for Bethlehem. She then relentlessly searches for the



baby king. In some parts of Italy, people say that Old Befana goes every January on Epiphany Eve to children's homes to give them cookies and cakes while they are sleeping.

Ages: 4 to 8 years



The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street

By Karina Yan Glaser

A few days before Christmas, the Vanderbeeker family finds out they will have to leave their beloved brownstone in Harlem by the end of the month. Immediately, their five children-ages 4 to 12 years old-decide to involve the neighbors and use their creativity to convince the landlord that they should stay. Whether it's a science project, a violin recording, or a neighbor petition, the kids are ready to give it their all. Older kids will love this heartwarming tale of community, chaos, and love, with the feeling of a classic. Ages: 7 to 10 years

Greenglass House

It's wintertime at Greenglass House, the creaky smugglers' inn. During the winter holidays, young Milo expects to see very few customers because of terribly icy weather. Against the odds, five separate customers arrive who, one way or another, seem connected and yet won't disclose anything. When events take a mysterious turn, Milo and his friend Meddy decide to investigate. Young lovers of The Mysterious Benedict Society will fall under the charm of this atmospheric old inn where a raging snowstorm is the least of the dangers threatening our protagonists. Ages: 10 to 12 years



From W[®]mb to W[®]rld

Postpartum Care Around the World By Juli Fraga

T t's no secret that postpartum care in the United States is lacking. Compared to other developed countries, many U.S. Lemployers offer truncated and poorly compensated maternity leaves. The brevity of this bonding period illuminates the dearth of attention given to maternal self-care, especially after giving birth. These cultural dynamics, which sadly become norms, can contribute to the rise of "mommy guilt," fueling the false belief that parenting is a check-list of "to do's" that we must perform flawlessly.

But in other cultures, women transition into motherhood differently. Often, postpartum care focuses on a series of rituals, emphasizing maternal nurturing and well-being as an essential piece of the parenting process. Here are some examples, many of which involve the nourishment of body and soul during this transitional time.

China

In Chinese culture, the postpartum period is called *zuo yuezi*, meaning "sitting the month." During this period, mothers take sponge baths instead of showers, a practice that originated because the water available was too unsanitary given a woman's postpartum state. Activities such as reading and watching television are avoided because it's believed they can disrupt a woman's "chi," throwing her system off balance. During this period, a mother's sole job is to heal from childbirth and bond with her baby; family members care for mom and take care of all housework.

Cold beverages, even water, and raw fruits and vegetables are avoided during zuo yuezi. Instead, women eat and drink warm teas and special soups made of pig feet, fish, and peanuts. These soups help ward off a "chill" and promote the production of breast milk.

Latin America

In many Latin American cultures, the period after giving birth is referred to as *la cuarantena*, or quarantine. For the first 40 days after the baby's birth, women focus on taking care of the baby while family members cook, clean, and take care of household tasks. Purgantes (home remedies) are also prepared to help ward off mood concerns, like postpartum depression. New mothers are to avoid spicy foods and beans, instead eating caldo de pollo (chicken soup).

India

New mothers often reside with their parents for several months after giving birth. Several times a day, women are served warm milk mixed with ghee (clarified butter) and spices. It's believed this concoction helps restore a woman's strength. Boiled water

with fennel and fenugreek seeds are also given to promote milk production and ease physical postpartum pain. Ayurvedic medicine, an ancient healing modality in India, may also be used. To enhance milk production, restore energy, promote healthy sleep, and balance mood, mothers receive special tinctures formulated for their body types.

Japan

Infant mortality rates are lowest in Japan, making it the safest country to have a baby. While U.S. physicians advise pregnant women to avoid raw fish and sushi, Japanese doctors believe eating raw fish is good for prenatal health. But spicy foods should be avoided, as it's believed ingesting them results in a "hot" tempered child.

Unlike women in the U.S., Japanese women remain in the hospital for five days after the baby's birth, longer if the infant was delivered via cesarean section. After returning home from the hospital, Japanese women receive an extended period of rest, residing with their parents for four to six weeks post-delivery. During this time, cold foods are avoided, and warm meals and tea are served. It's also tradition to celebrate the baby's birth by eating osekihan, a dish made from combining sticky rice and adzuki beans.

The Netherlands

In Holland, pregnant women are more likely to receive care from midwives than obstetricians. Many expectant mothers opt for home births, relying on their midwives for support and care. After giving birth, *kraamhulp*, also known as maternity home care, begins. For one week, a nurse provides home-based postpartum care. Along with tending to mom and baby's physical health, she completes domestic tasks like cooking and cleaning. While women in Holland don't avoid cold foods and beverages, the baby's birth is celebrated by eating a snack called beschuit met muisjes (biscuits and mice). The mice are actually licorice candy. A blue candy coating is used to celebrate a boy's birth while a pink coating signifies the arrival of a girl.

Across the globe, we honor mothers in various ways. Whether or not a period of rest ensues or special foods are prepared, the birth of a baby is a universal experience, primarily shaped by cultural traditions, setting the parenting journey in motion. Perhaps American mothers can benefit from the wisdom of mothers in China, Latin America, the Netherlands, Japan, and India who believe maternal self-care is a necessity, not a luxury.

Juli Fraga is a psychologist, freelance writer, and mom living in San Francisco. Read more of her writing at: www.drjulifraga.com.











Volunteer of the Month



New Arrivals



Vanessa B.	Baby Oliver Thomas
Jamaica M.	Baby Zora Eiko
Lindsey M.	Baby Layla Maclise
Jessica H.	Baby Sylvie Grace
Maria C.	Baby Camila Maria

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



To announce your new arrival in the magazine and for a chance to win a Babyganics gift set, fill out the form at www.ggmg.org/community.html.

babyganics

Congratulations to Heather Nichols Beck, our October volunteer of the month! Heather is a volunteer for the Membership Committee and has been working with GGMG since 2014. By day she works as a project manager at UCSF. She and husband Jeff Beck are parents to Clara (5).

HEATHER, WE WANT TO KNOW YOUR FAVORITE ... **Pastimes:** Attending 5-year-old birthday parties; Reading Material: Ramona Quimby series by Beverly Cleary; Film: Mr. Mom; Restaurant: Any restaurant that delivers; **Destination:** Indian Springs; **Parenting** Advice: Hide all permanent markers.

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



Expanding Fussy Palates

If you dread mealtimes, you're not alone. Here's the latest and best research on transforming your kid's attitudes about food, as well as your own.

By Catherine Symon

ave you ever dejectedly watched someone else's child feast happily on braised kale with a side of sprouted chickpea mousse while your son picks at yet another plate of buttered noodles? Have nightly discussions over how many more bites your daughter needs to eat before she can leave the dinner table turned her into a remarkably skilled negotiator? Do your children insist that they "hate" the food on their plates, even if you know for a fact that they've never tasted, seen, or even heard of it before? If you answered yes to any happily gobbles up everything offered to her will simply eat less often of these, you may be the parent of a picky eater.

Why do kids become picky eaters?

Picky eating-the perplexing and seemingly random rejection of certain foods-stems from a combination of physical, genetic, and environmental factors; the more factors that are relevant to your child, the pickier he or she will be. Here are a few reasons why most kids become picky eaters at one time or another:

Toddlers and children grow much slower than babies. Picky eating

Photographs by Sonya Abrams Photography

peaks between the ages of 2 and 6, a time when children aren't growing as fast as they did when they were babies. As family nutrition expert Maryann Jacobsen, MS, RD, notes in From Powerful to Picky: The Mindset, Strategies and Know-how You Need to Empower Your Picky Eater, "Birth weight triples in the first year of life but then doesn't quadruple until the second year. Children between age 2 and puberty gain an average of 4.5-6.5 pounds per year." A baby who when she becomes a toddler.

Children want independence. As they reach toddlerhood, children start to look for opportunities to make their own decisions and exert some control over their own lives. Saying "no" to everything is one example of how they try to establish a slice of independence. Deciding what to eat and what not to eat is another.

"Supertasters" find some flavors overwhelming. According to the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, about 25 percent of the population are "supertasters," people who

experience taste more intensely and consequently dislike certain foods because they have higher concentrations of taste buds on their tongues. People with this genetic sensitivity tend to avoid bitter foods, and therefore green leafy vegetables which, to them, taste unbearably bitter.

Children with cautious temperaments will be cautious about food. Those who are flexible and sociable tend to be more open minded about trying new foods than children who are cautious or slow to warm.

Negative eating experiences make children more guarded around some foods. Children who have choked, had reflux, or experienced allergic or food sensitivity reactions are more likely to reject the foods that either caused the experience or remind them of foods that caused the experience.

Nutrition-minded parents unwittingly encourage pickiness. It's true. Most of us are well-versed on nutrition, but not

knowledgeable about feeding (at least not past the infant stage). We goad, bargain, reason, berate, guilt, bribe, and plead at meal time to get a few more grams of protein or another serving of calcium down the hatch. Needless to say, children eat less if we try to get them to eat more (and vice versa).

Tips for handling picky eating

Picky eating is both normal and manageable. Here are some practical tips for making peace with the picky eater in your life.

Understand that competent eating is a learned skill. Eating seems intuitive—after all, newborns have built-in rooting reflexes that help them eat—so picky eating is mistakenly viewed as problem behavior. But rooting reflexes disappear by 6 months and a child needs time and practice to master the motor and executive skills required to become a competent eater. During this (lengthy) process, it is normal for the child to balk at foods that are challenging to her. As Maryann Jacobsen writes, changing your mindset from "picky eating is a problem" to "picky eating is just how kids eat" can help you be more patient and understanding when there's a picky eater in your family.

Follow the Division of Responsibility (DoR). If there is one thing you can do to diffuse tensions around meal times and help your child (eventually) eat a wider variety of foods, it is what dietitian, family therapist, and feeding expert Ellyn Satter, MS, RD, LCSW, BCD, calls the "Division of Responsibility": the adult decides what, where, and when the child eats, while the child decides how much or even if she will eat. You feed, they eat. Sticking to your responsibility means never coaxing, encouraging, and certainly not pressuring a child to eat anything. In her book Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense, Satter boils it down to this: "[T]he way to get a kid to eat is not to try."

Serve family-style meals whenever possible (the "what" of the DoR): Provide lots of options and let your child serve himself so he



PICKY EATING VS PROBLEM EATING

Picky eating can cause a lot of stress, but as long as the child is growing well, it is normal and can be managed with good feeding habits. Problem eating, on the other hand, negatively impacts growth and can be a symptom of an underlying issue. If you suspect your child is a problem eater, consult with a pediatrician or feeding expert. Here are a few potential signs of problem eating:

- Unable to take pureed food by 10 months
- Unable to take finger foods by 12 months
- Not drinking from a cup by 16 months
- Ongoing poor weight gain
- Eats fewer than 20 foods total
- Coughs, gags, or chokes during meals
- Ongoing problems with • vomiting
- Cries or has a tantrum in the presence of food
- Refuses all foods with a specific texture or entire food groups
- Almost always eats different food than the rest of the family
- Requires many more exposures to eat a new food than picky eaters
- Worries about being able to eat away from home

Sources: Kay Toomey, PhD (STAR Institute for Sensory Processing Disorder), Ellyn Satter, MS, RD, CICSW, BCD (Ellyn Satter Institute); Maryann Jacobsen, MS, RD (From *Picky to Powerful)*

gets to choose the foods he feels ready to eat. When you first start practicing DoR, be sure to serve at least one food that your child already likes to eat so he feels included in the meal. Yes, that may mean that he only eats rice or bread or mac 'n' cheese for the first few meals. That's OK. As he gains confidence and familiarity he will start to try other foods. Serve enough so that everyone at the table has the opportunity to eat until pleasantly full.

Set eating time zones that work for your family (the "when" of the DoR). Children typically need three meals plus one to three snacks. Eating time zones make meal time predictable, but also allow your child to get a little hungry between eating times so she is more likely to eat what is served. Children don't have to eat at exactly the same time every day (for example, if you set the breakfast zone for 7:30 to 9 a.m., the meal can happen any time in that window), so give yourself flexibility based on your child's natural hunger patterns and your family's schedule. But stick to the time zones; no grazing for food or drinks (other than water) between meal and snack times!

Insist on having everyone sit together for meals (the "where" of the DoR). Kids learn to become good companions at meals by sitting at the table, passing food to others, practicing good table manners, and engaging in conversation. If your child isn't ready to sit for an entire meal it's fine to let him take a break or finish early, just make sure all eating happens at the table.

Serve the foods you enjoy eating. In *It's Not* About the Broccoli: Three Habits to Teach Your Kids for a Lifetime of Healthy Eating, sociologist Dina Rose, PhD, encourages parents to focus on the long-term by thinking about what they are teaching their child to crave when they serve "kid-friendly" foods

let her be done. Pushing her to have "one more bite" or "at least" finish her vegetables overrides her natural feeling of satiety and is linked with obesity and being overweight.

Be patient, stay neutral, and trust your child will get there. A few weeks into practicing DoR you may feel deflated if your

Changing your mindset from "picky eating is a problem" to "picky eating is just how kids eat" can help you be more patient and understanding.

instead of real food. She writes: "[E]very chicken nugget makes roasted chicken a harder sell. That's because the salty, crunchy chicken nuggets not only train our children's taste buds to want more salty, crunchy chicken nuggets, but also make roasted chicken seem dull and strangely chewy in comparison." Also, don't assume that picky eaters only want bland, white food. Serve real, fresh food that you enjoy eating.

Serve the occasional treat. Avoiding treats or labeling them as "bad" only serves to make forbidden foods something to be sought after and consumed in mass quantities when mom isn't looking. Take the mystique out of these foods and show your child the right balance between healthful and treat foods by including them in the occasional meal at home.

Let your child determine when she is full. At some meals your child will take two bites and announce she is done with dinner. That's OK,

child still says "YUCK! I don't like that" about the delicious dish you served. Remember that unfamiliar foods are intimidating and even scary for some kids (researchers call it food neophobia) and when your child says, "I don't like that" what he probably means is, "I'm not ready to try it yet." In Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family, Ellyn Satter explains that children need 10 to 20 neutral exposures to a given food before they are ready to eat it: "Neutral exposure means it shows up on the table again and again, with no pushing or prodding, no persuading or cheerleading, no bribes or nutrition lessons, and no little lectures about starving children anywhere." A picky child may also need to smell, touch, squash, smear, stab, and lick the food multiple times before they are ready to actually consume it. Whether your child ends up needing 60 exposures to dig into a new dish or only six, trust them to accept foods at their own pace, just as they learn to walk, talk, and read when they are physically, emotionally, and mentally ready. ♦

Catherine is a medical writer and omnivore. She is the mother of a picky eater who is slo-o-owly and cautiously choosing to try new foods.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES: Fearless Feeding: How to Raise Healthy Eaters from High Chair to High School by Jill Castle and Maryann Jacobsen; SOSapproach-conferences.com (Toomey & Associates); EllynSatterInstitute.org; National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)



JOIN THE FUN AT THE JCCSF!

GGMG members receive three free passes to any JCCSF Kinder Fun Klub drop-in class (music, art, dance or gym) as well as 50% off the first two months of JCCSF Swim School lessons. Learn more at jccsf.org/ggmg.



GGMG members enjoy exclusive discounts at the JCCSF on programs and activities for families, including Kinder Fun Klub, swim lessons, Fitness Center Memberships and more. Learn more at jccsf.org/ggmg.



Come to Gymboree for fun & educational classes for children birth to 5 years old!

SPECIAL OFFER: GGMG members get one free month of play, music, art, or school skills classes!

For details visit ggmg-gymboree.com



TO REDEEM PASSES: Passes must be redeemed in person. Bring the cover of the current GGMG magazine or your GGMG membership card to the JCCSF Front Desk. Magazine must bear the name and address of the GGMG member.

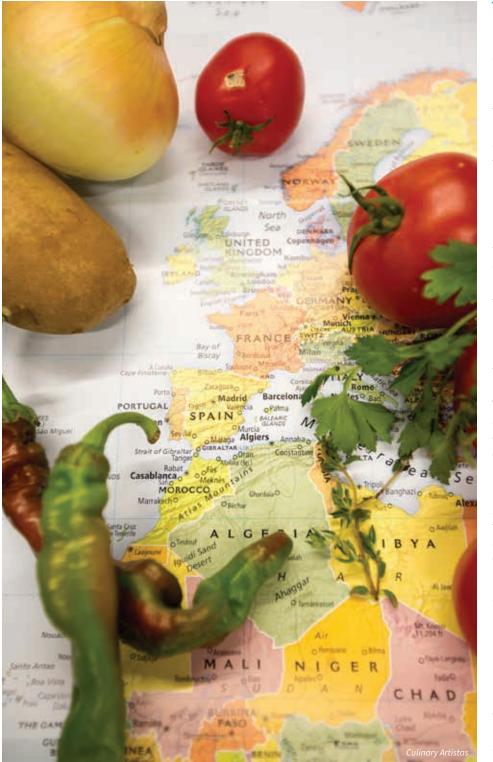
Jewish Community Center of San Francisco • 3200 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94118

The World on a Plate

As the world becomes smaller, being able to relate to people culturally different from ourselves is a critical skill to teach our kids

By Shaheen Bilgrami

Photographs by Petra Cross Photography



hen I moved to San Francisco from the UK, I was excited to meet people with interesting and different cultural and culinary backgrounds. New friends exposed me to new cuisines— South and Central American food, Burmese food, regional cuisines from the United States. Once I became a mom to a child extremely wary of new foods, I found myself trying to think of innovative ways to make her more interested in the bounty that surrounds us. I wanted to ensure she had a healthy appreciation of her Indian and French heritage, and I wanted to pass on my love of food itself. By connecting food with cultural education, my daughter became much more interested and engaged and willing to try, taste and experience new things.

I spoke to a number of fellow GGMG moms and food experts who agree that this immersive, multi-sensory experience appeals to the naturally curious mind of children. Stacie Dong, co-founder of the A Little Yumminess blog and cooking school, met her co-founder, Simran Singh, when their children were in the baby and toddler years. Coming from different cultural and culinary backgrounds, they bonded over a shared passion for food, leading them on many gastronomic adventures with their children throughout San Francisco. Their blog and cookery school came about because so many friends started asking them to recommend interesting food finds and fun foodie places to go with kids. Stacie says that the great thing about food as a medium to teach children about different cultures is that "it's hands on, accessible, and it's good for any age."

Vanessa Silver and Janine Gee, co-founder and program director of Culinary Artistas, also utilize the link between food and culture in their programs. In fact, Culinary Artistas recently hosted a series of summer cooking classes under the banner of Around the World Cooking. Read on for some tips, tricks, and activities for kids of all ages (and their moms).

Read all about it

Expose your children to books that include interesting foods and be inspired to buy and taste the foods mentioned after reading about them. The World Snacks board book series by Amy Wilson Sanger are particularly good for babies and toddlers. Topics are global, from Chaat and Sweets (Indian) to Let's Nosh (Jewish) to Yum Yum Dim Sum (Chinese).

For preschoolers, select picture books that feature a particular food, such as Dragons Love Tacos by Adam Rubin, Bee-Bim Bop! by Linda Sue Park, Cora Cooks Pancit by Dorina K. Lazo Gilmore, or Round Is a Tortilla and Noodle Magic by Roseanne Thong. After reading together, cook the featured food or sample it at a restaurant. Use the holidaysany holiday—to broaden your search for new and interesting foods you might not otherwise encounter, especially for holidays you don't typically celebrate.

Stacie also suggests that the simple act of looking at international cookbooks with kids can be a fun activity. Let them pick out what dishes look yummy and guess what they contain. Older kids can select recipes they like the look of and think about the ingredients required to make them. Is it possible to cook this at home? What ingredients do we need to buy?

To set yourself up for success, really think about what you want your kid to get out of the experience and consider different ways of achieving this.

I also discovered the fantastic series of picture books by Norah Dooley, which includes Everybody Cooks Rice, Everybody Bakes Bread, Everybody Serves Soup, and *Everybody Brings Noodles*. These stories function as the perfect starting point to investigate foods that are common to multiple cultures. For example, select breads from different countries and compare and contrast each kind as you think about the cultures that eat them. What dishes are they served with? How does the climate of the bread's origin affect its appearance or taste?

comfortable in the kitchen and/or have limited time, Janine recommends that you try to commit yourself to cooking one international meal per month. Get your children involved in choosing recipes and explore ingredients and learn a little about the country of origin. You can tailor the activity by complexity according to the time you have and your child's age and ability. Have realistic expectations out of the activity. Think in advance of your child's level of understanding and their staying power. Be realistic about their practical skills, and make



Cook up a storm

Invite your baby or toddler to investigate some of the ingredients you are using to cook an international dish. Set up sensory plates with ingredients to explore. Encourage them to use their senses to touch, look, smell, and if appropriate, taste what is presented to them. You can also do this while out and about, shopping for produce.

Cooking international foods with your kid has the potential to be a culturally rich educational activity. If you are not that

sure that they are able to do the jobs you designate to them. (If the idea of cooking sends a shiver up your spine, or if you just don't have time, there are a number of great cooking classes and camps available in our beloved city, such as Culinary Artistas and a Little Yumminess.)

Spice it up

Try spice painting with your littlest tots. Select a variety of vibrantly colored ground spices, place a small amount into individual wells of a plastic egg carton and add a few drops of water to make "spice paint." Let your toddler use this to paint fragrant pictures using a brush or his fingers. This activity definitely needs close supervision-avoid burning spices such as cayenne pepper and make sure you thoroughly wash everyone's hands afterwards.

Invite your older kids to look at spice blends and to explore the individual spices that have gone into them by touching, smelling, and tasting them. Encourage them to compare the difference in taste after grinding and/or roasting them. Once they become familiar with individual spices, you can see if they can identify the ingredients of ready-made spice blends. You can also explore the geographical and historical reasons for certain spices being used in certain cuisines.



Planting a garden of herbs that flavor your favorite ethnic foods is another wonderful activity for green-thumbed kids. Your kids can try growing herbs from seeds or start with small plants. Easy-to-tend herbs include chives, mint, parsley, basil, cilantro, thyme, and lemongrass. They can even plant a themed herb garden, such as a "pizza garden" in which they grow basil, parsley, and oregano.

Explore the amazing SF food world

Kids love to see how food is made. Stacie suggests tasting and discussing individual ethnic foods such as tofu, tortillas, tamales, and dumplings with your kids and asking them to guess how they might be made. Then see them made in person! The Hodo Soy Beanery in Oakland has a tofu factory tour. You can watch tortillas and tamales being made at La Palma Mexicatessen in the Mission. Several restaurants on Clement Street in Outer Richmond have dumpling makers at work near the front windows of the stores.

Explore your local ethnic neighborhoods to find what's offered. Local markets in Japantown, Richmond, the Mission, and beyond are a treasure trove for the curious foodie. Stacie gets her kids to each select a snack and/or an interesting fruit or vegetable to buy and try. She says "it's a great way to spark conversation and to be curious [with



your child]."

One way to tempt a picky eater is to select a food that your child likes and find international or different versions of it. For example, if your kid loves pancakes, maybe she'll be willing to try French crepes, Danish ebelskivers, Indian dosas, Japanese okonomiyaki, or Eastern European blinis, to name a few. Get older kids to think about ingredients used in different places and consider why these ingredients are used. Alternatively, select a favorite raw ingredient, such as an avocado, and explore the different cuisines in which it is eaten. Investigate this further with your child in an age-appropriate way. Are there any geographic links between the countries where it is eaten? Similar climates?

Many local churches host cultural food festivals. Vanessa says these offer a good opportunity to see food in context. Look out for events hosted by Middle Eastern, Greek Orthodox, and Armenian church communities in the city and beyond.

Ready, get set, eat!

To set yourself up for success, really think about what you want your kid to get out of the experience and consider different ways of achieving this. Give yourself extra time to

introduce the cultural elements into the activity. For example, if you're cooking international food, make sure you put aside time to talk and give your kid the time to ask questions, rather than try to talk to your kids at the same time as hurrying to get your meal made.

Do not expect your child to taste everything that is being prepared or being offered to them while out and about, but encourage him to keep an open mind and not to insult another person's food choice. The phrase used for this at A Little Yumminess is "Don't yuck my yum!" Culinary Artistas expect children who are enrolled in their classes to take part in the cooking activities, but they do not push children to taste the fruits of their labor unless they want to.

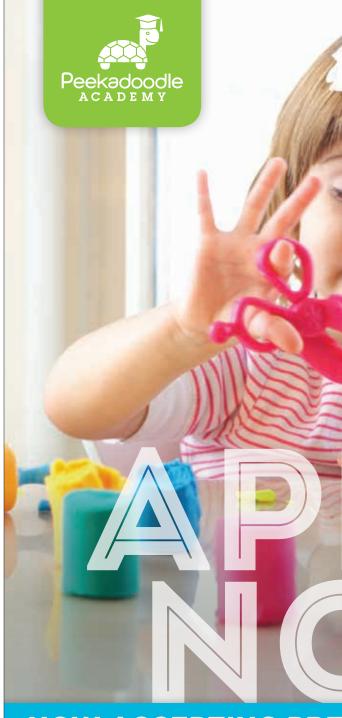
Food exploration is a natural and fun part of childhood. Harnessing this interest to give your child a taste of cultures beyond their own, through play, food preparation, and investigation, can be fulfilling, educational, and lots of fun for both parent and child. 💠

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

Culinary Artistas: www.culinaryartistas.com

A Little Yumminess: www.alittleyum.com

If you liked this piece, read about six San Francisco Fun Foodie Field Trips that you can take with your kid at www.ggmg.org/blog



NOW ACCEPTING PRESCHOOL APPLICATIONS!

APPLY ONLINE AT PEEKADOODLE.COM/GGMG-ACADEMY

DON'T FORGET ABOUT DATE NIGHT DROP-OFF!

Call For Info + To Sign Up! | 415.440.PEEK

Art + Music + Outdoor Play + Circle Time

Balanced Approach to Learning | Low Student : Teacher Ratios | Potty Training Not Required | Starting at 2.5 Yrs



Rethinking the School Lunch Experience

Lunch time at some San Francisco schools is in transition

By Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss Photography by Anna Psalmond Photography

t's grape day again," my colleague grumbles as we head to the middle school cafeteria where our lunch supervision shift is about to begin. I also dread this day. The next 45 minutes of my job as assistant principal will involve evading tiny green and purple edible dodgeballs that fly back and forth every time my back is turned.

Middle school embodies that precious and tumultuous age range where bananas result in fits of laughter and grapes rain down on all. Fruit rarely gets eaten, not because it isn't

desired, but because it has far more useful comedic purposes. Every day my colleagues and I prepare for battle, ready to face whatever food-related curveball is literally going to get thrown our way. Will smears of ketchup appear on strategic parts of the cafeteria mural, resembling a scene out of *The* Texas Chainsaw Massacre? Will a goldfish from the science lab appear in the salad dressing?

What is it about our cafeteria experience and school culture that inspires such creative rebellion from our kids? And what can we do

about it? Since my own children entered preschool and now the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), my eyes have opened to a wide range of creative and innovative approaches to the student food experience. We live in a major city after all, and we know good food. There is no reason for our children to endure the stale tater tots and soggy chicken nuggets of our youth. Examples of creative thinking to infuse more joy, mindfulness, choice, and community into snack and lunchtime exist all around the Bay Area.



School lunch, family style

For students at La Scuola International School, a K-8 Italian immersion school, lunchtime is an opportunity to come together as one big pasta-eating, meatballgobbling Italian family. The school has purposefully set up the student cafeteria experience to allow students to sit together in tables of five to six and share a communal serving of healthy, freshly cooked food, family style. You won't see any individual little paper trays, shrink-wrapped gray hamburgers, or syrupy pineapple cups. Instead, each table gets a bowl of healthy, often culturally inspired food with large serving spoons to encourage students to share, ask one another about their day, engage in polite requests to "pass the minestrone," and "Mangia! Mangia!" to their hearts' content.

"We cherish our culture around food," explains Amanda Mitchell, mom to Franchesca, age 3. "One day I picked my daughter up from school covered in orange soup. She came

running up to me, excitedly telling me, 'I ate zuppa di carote! I ate zuppa di carote!,' and it was amazing. She loved it."

Amanda went on to describe the great care the school takes to ensure students experience the connectedness of food from the garden to the table. The school itself boasts a thriving food garden and uses its fresh vegetables in daily meals. Students participate in harvesting the food and carrying it to the kitchen, sometimes even assisting with basic preparations. The students take great pride and even dare to get more adventurous with eating vegetables because they have ownership over the very origins of what's on their plates.

Forest snacking

Tinker Preschool, a "progressive early childhood community that emphasizes the importance of connecting with nature and engaging S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) education," offers students what they call a "forest immersion" experience. While some kids spend their days immersed in another

language, the students at Tinker have joined the Millennials and nature enthusiasts of the Bay Area to reap the spiritual benefits of "forest bathing," which simply means spending time in nature. This intentionally includes mealtime.

"We want kids to develop a strong sense of the world around us and to be comfortable in the great outdoors. We break down teaching so that it's back to the basics in a very techheavy world," explains Site Supervisor Rachel Chen. This philosophy extends even to small rituals like snack time. "The reason we have students eat outside in the forest each day is to help them learn to be flexible and enjoy those little moments," says Chen. "Not everything has to be so structured." She begins showing me adorable photos of kids eating on top of logs and rocks and under tree groves. The sun shines through tree branches on their little faces while they

munch on granola. This is in sharp contrast to crowded cafeteria lunch lines and long benches of folding tables. Outdoor distractions may offer another benefit: kids are too busy trying to balance on a log or follow a trail of ants to be tempted to throw a grape at classmates or teachers.

Gourmet goodness, to go

Several new companies have begun to sprout up around the Bay Area offering parents the ultimate package, quite accurately, in their pre-boxed lunch items. Families can order online in advance and have these fresh lunches delivered daily, right to children's schools.

Robert Tsai, father of two children and an active parent for Presidio Knolls School, a "progressive, Mandarin immersion preschool and elementary school," recalls the "terrible lunches" of burgers, fries, and long lines that characterized his own school cafeteria days. He explains the convenience and practicality of his own kids' lunch delivery experience. "We use a service called School Foodies. Parents can go online, order their selections,

and review it with their kids in advance. This gives kids some amount of choice. The lunches then come to the school each day pre-boxed and labeled with the child's name and classroom number."

The school is in the midst of some construction and expansion, so there is no cafeteria or kitchen yet at Presidio Knolls, which makes the partnership with School Foodies especially convenient. However, there is one other surprising perk of students eating lunch in their classrooms with either home-packed lunches or School Foodies deliveries: access to classroom sinks means students are encouraged, and even excited, to brush their teeth immediately after eating each day. "It kind of just happened," says Robert. "A few students started bringing their toothbrushes to school, and then the school director asked us parents, 'Would you like us to encourage your kids to brush after

> lunch?,' and we said 'Sure!'" In what Robert explains appears to be some healthy peer pressure, Presidio Knolls is using the lunchtime

There is no reason for our children to endure the stale tater tots and soggy chicken nuggets of our youth.

> experience to ensure healthy teeth and gums as well.

> Dahlia Topkis, founder of Little Radish, another food delivery service that prepares fresh, healthy boxed lunches daily for kids, says the inspiration for her lunch delivery service came when her own daughter was in school. The director informed parents the school would start partnering with a food vending company and wanted parent input in choosing the new vendor. "Everything appeared greasy," recalls Topkis. "There was no color, no fresh fruits or veggies," she says.

> That's how Little Radish was born. Topkis' own creations feature small, bite-sized nibbles perfect for little fingers to pick up, dip, and pop inside tiny mouths. One of the primary goals of Little Radish is to incorporate as much plant-based food as possible, often displaying creative ways to ensure kids get more than enough. The adorable packaging shows toddler delectables such as baked falafel and hummus, black bean brownies, and something playfully named "unicorn pasta," which features spiral noodles in different shades of pastels. Topkis went on

to emphasize the urgency behind her own business. "This is when we calibrate their palates, so we need to let them know that healthy foods are delicious." Little Radish now partners with six schools across the city, spreading healthy, plant-based unicorn cheer to those fortunate enough to partner with it.

Reimagined space, time, and lunch lines

Perhaps the biggest lunchtime transformation currently underway is in our own public school system, SFUSD. In 2013, SFUSD partnered with the design-thinking pioneers at IDEO, a global design company, to help the city grapple with some of its most complicated issues surrounding daily mealtime and nutrition for over 55,000 students.

The website dedicated to SFUSD's future dining experience, *www.sfusdfuturedining.org*, explains the partnership's purpose of "creating a vision for a student-centered, financially-stable system that engages kids in eating good food." It boasts of the collaboration and involvement of over 1,300 students, parents, nutrition staff, principals, teachers, administrators, and community partners in the design process. Photo after photo shows the transformation of the first round of pilot schools, including James Lick Middle School, Willie Brown Middle School, Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School, Everett Middle School, Phillip and Sala Burton Academic High School, George Washington High School, and Thurgood Marshall Academic High School. Before-andafter pictures show the institution-like, traditional school cafeterias transformed with restaurant-style seating including bistro tables and booths, comfortable couches, and outlets to plug in laptops. Simple, food-related, colorful paintings and words decorate the walls. The emphasis is on community, engagement, choice, making healthy food compelling, and the simple enjoyment of eating with friends.

Moving beyond furniture and aesthetics are other concepts in the works, such as online pre-ordering using iPads, mobile carts, healthy vending machines, and "grab and go" bagged lunches. There is even a proposal on the table for a community kitchen, where older students interested in the food industry can get involved and complete a food-related high school internship to begin making a real contribution to feeding thousands of their peers while learning valuable career and life skills. All of this is underway, with the process rolling out over multiple years. The next round of pilot schools is yet to be revealed, but the seeds of change have been planted. For at least seven SFUSD schools, lunchtime has become more of a joyful experience for

students and staff to come together, break bread, and connect with one another.

Dining disco fever

Unfortunately, the middle school where I work hasn't yet undergone the cafeteria redesign process, and there's no guarantee we will be next in line. The grapes, ketchup, and balsamic-bathed goldfish live on. Until the day comes for our own extreme makeover, however, our small but mighty administrative team has started embracing our own out-of-the-box solutions to make lunchtime a more pleasant, joyful experience: we added music and dancing.

Every lunch hour, amplified popular tunes, oldies, and even a few country westerns blast from a hired deejay's speakers. After gobbling down their lunches, the students often crowd around him, calling out their requests and yanking one another onto the blacktop to Cha-Cha Slide. The other day I saw a small sign in the staff lounge inviting teachers to put in their own requests as well, to entice the teachers onto the dance floor, too. Who knows? Maybe we'll bring back moves like the Mashed Potato or the Tootsie Roll, just to complete the all-around food-related theme...or will that inspire tomato throwing instead? �

Special thanks to Mission YMCA for accommodating our photo shoot.

Jennifer is an assistant principal at Presidio Middle School. When she's not dodging grapes in the cafeteria, you can find her packing adorable bento box lunches for her daughter Lilly, 5, and son James Duke, 2.



26 | GGMG MAGAZINE | DEC 2017/JAN 2018

GGMG Membership perk from **vi urban**sitter UrbanSitter Perks Are Here, Claim Yours!



To redeem, visit: www.urbansitter.com/promo/ggmg

"Subject to UrbanSitter, Inc.'s Terms of Service. New customers receive 35% off UrbanSitter membership fees and \$50 credit to be used toward babysitter payments. Returning customers receive 35% off UrbanSitter fees (not valid for babysitter payments). Recipient must become a registered user of UrbanSitter with valid credit card on file to redeem offer. Restrictions include sitter availability and service to requested location (not all areas served). For GGMG Members only - Please note that your name and email will be shared with GGMG to confirm eligibility. UrbanSitter reserves the right to modify these terms. Valid through June 30, 2018.

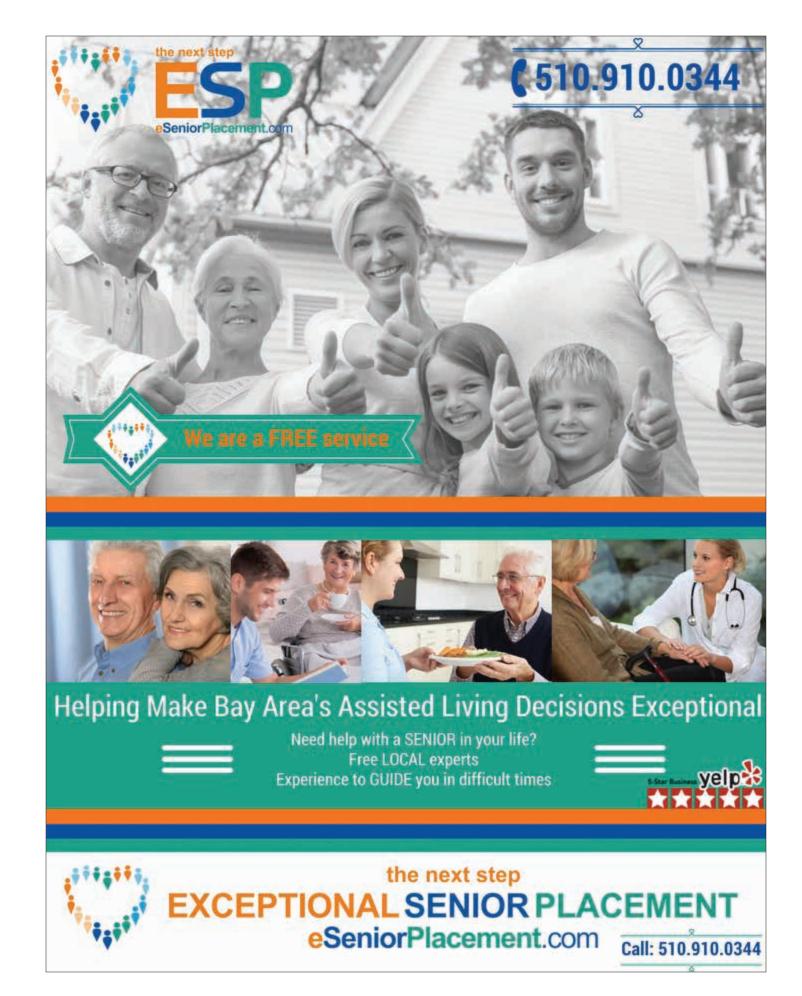
Hire your next sitter or nanny with UrbanSitter!



AND



EXCLUSIVELY FOR GGMG MEMBERS!





DISCOVER WHAT MAKES THE SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOLHOUSE SPECIAL

San Francisco Schoolhouse is an independent K-8 school located in the Richmond District. Our intentionally small size, experienced and passionate teachers, experiential curriculum, and active parent participation provide a unique opportunity for families seeking a community-minded progressive education that challenges and supports their children.

Now enrolling K-7th grade for 2018-19

To join us for a morning tour or evening open house, sign up on our website.



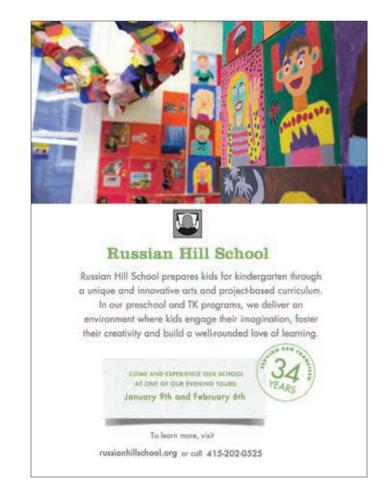
www.sfschoolhouse.org • admission@sfschoolhouse.org 301 14th Avenue San Francisco, CA 94118 • 415-221-3435





Physical therapy for the pelvic floor and more

Elizabeth Miracle MSPT, WCS 🔶 Annemarie Everett Lepe, PT, DPT MiraclePT.com NOE VALLEY, SAN FRANCISCO 415.401.8083





For what everyone's talking about...



Life begins at home.

With over 30 years of combined experience, the Costa Group is a top-producing Real Estate team ranked in the top 1% of San Francisco area Realtors.

From Noe Valley, to Mill Valley to Napa Valley, experience our extraordinary service, involvement and concern for you & your lifestyle.

Your Home Awaits.



Franck Costa & Sara Werner Costa 415.730.2604 info@thecostagroup.com | TheCostaGroup.com BRE#01853603 | BRE#01772972

San Francisco | Marin | Wine Country







MARIN MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Children start out delightfully curious and thoughtful about their world. We keep them that way. **Get to know us.**

A toddler through 9th grade AMI accredited community.

marinmontessori.org

5200 Paradise Drive Corte Madera CA 94925 415 924 5388 Ext. 104

Concerned about your child's speech and language development?



The Hearing and Speech Center of Northern California can assist children in reaching their communication potential.

 Interdisciplinary services and Kids Academy Preschool on site Parent observation windows promote collaboration in therapy
English and Cantonese speaking therapists



EARING AND SPEECH CENTER a non-profit clinic, school & community

1234 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94115 415.921.7658 | www.hearingspeech.org



parenting is

find the **community** you crave & the **information** you need.



new parent groups

free newborn memberships

co-working space WITH childcare

pilates & yoga for mamas

sensory friendly playtimes baby sign language, CPR & more!

visit: recess-sf.com/ggmg

GGMG events

JUST FOR MOMS

Holiday Fitness Challenge Kick-off with a FREE Gixo Workout

Gixo is kicking off a GGMG Holiday Fitness Challenge with a FREE in-person, 25-minute circuit training class hosted by The Vault SF. The Gixo app helps busy parents get affordable, trainer-led fitness classes wherever you are, through your smart phone.

DATE:	Thursday, December 7
TIME:	1 to 2 p.m.
PLACE:	The Vault SF, 415 Jackson St.
COST:	FREE

REGISTRATION: www.gixo.com/ggmg/

Mindfulness Meditation for Moms

We moms spend a lot of our time and energy caring for others but often neglect to make time for ourselves. Here's a chance to find some peace and calm in your day. Join us for a guided meditation with the founder of Pacific Pause, followed by complimentary kombucha

ind dicinal		
DATE:	Tuesday, January 9	

- TIME: Noon to 1 p.m.
- PLACE: 564 Market St., 3rd Floor, Suite 301

COST: \$5 **REGISTRATION:** www.tinyurl.com/y8r5yjzp

COMMUNITY **SUPPORT**

Movie Night at HPP

Please join Homeless Prenatal Program families for a fun movie night with popcorn and pizza. This is a great opportunity to get to know some of the families we support during our HPP drives. PJs encouraged!

DATE:	Wednesday, January 24
TIME:	5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
	2500 18th St

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org/calendar/

ATE:	Wednesday, January 2
ME:	5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

COST: FREE

event/246502/2018/01/24



CAREERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Work-Life Balance Webinar

As a mom, you're probably juggling a lot: the kids, the job, the homefront. Sometimes it can feel overwhelming. You'd like to find more balance, but you're not sure how or when you'd find the time. GGMG is thrilled to be hosting a free webinar-that you can attend in your pajamas, from home-about finding balance. Together we'll look at balance and how it means much more than juggling endless tasks. You'll walk away with easy, go-to strategies for re-centering and aligning your to-do list so that there's more room for things that light you up, more space to honor the precious moments with your family, and more joy in your days. The event is hosted by three life coaches—Julie Houghton, Liz Applegate, and Paula Jenkins—all moms who understand what it feels like to have a big heart, a desire for more connection, and the overwhelm that comes with today's world. We hope you will join us!

DATE:	Friday, December 8
TIME:	12 p.m.
PLACE:	Online or call-in
COST:	FREE

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org/calendar/event/231949/2017/12/08

KIDS ACTIVITIES

Asian Art Museum Stroller Tours

The Asian Art Museum now offers Stroller Tours, docent-led tours for parents and caregivers with babies ages 0 to 2 years old. Tours take place before the museum opens to the public, and crying babies are always welcome! Enter code "GGMG" for a 20 percent discount!

DATE:	Friday, December 1
TIME:	9:30 to 10:30 a.m.
PLACE:	200 Larkin St.
COST:	\$25

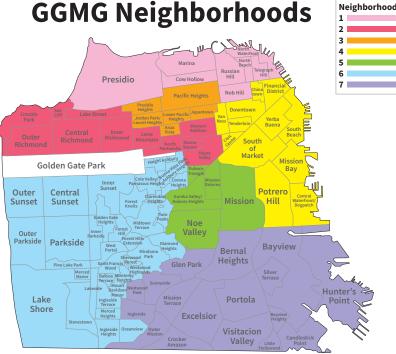
REGISTRATION: www.asianart.ora/events/ search?series_types=stroller+tours

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

It's been a big year for Neighborhood Meetups, with a reorganization of our neighborhoods and the new GGMG website. We have hosted hundre of events over the year: play dates, wine nights, and special events. In th fall season, we had Halloween events, Friendsgiving, and we look forwa to celebrating the December and New Year holidays. Read on for neighborhood events happening near you.

- Neighborhood 1 is planning a multilingual board book cinema with Christmas stories on December 5. Location TBD.
- Neighborhood 3 will have a holiday play date at the Presidio Heights Playground (3437 Clay St.) on December 13 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and a Holiday Wine Night at the Commissary in the Presidio on December 5 from 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Marina, Cow Hollow, Fisherman's Wharf, Presidio, Russian Hill, Nob Hill, North Beach, and surrounding neighborhoods.	Cathedral Hill, Filli Heights, Pacific Heig
	Presidio Heigh neigi
Neighborhood 2	
Neighborhood 2	Neigh
ichmond, Alamo Square, Hayes Valley, NOPA, Western Addition, and surrounding neighborhoods.	Chinatown, Dogpato District, Downtown, Potrero Hill, SO surroundin
GGMG Neigh	borhood
GGMG Neigh	borhood



:	•	Neighborhood 4 will host a New Year's event on January 7 at the Beacon.
eds he ard	Neighborhood 6 will host a family holiday party on a weekend in December (location TBD) with musical entertainment, a craft, and snacks. Director Dru Garza will host the annual moms-only party at her house, featuring a white elephant exchange, on a Thursday in	
h		December from 7 to 10 p.m.
.11	•	Neighborhood 7 will have an ornament decorating party and a Yoga and Wine Holiday Party in the Excelsior.

Neighborhood events are organized and hosted by GGMG moms who want to meet other moms and help us all connect; we believe this peer-to-peer connection is the essence of GGMG.

hborhood 3

Imore, Japantown, Laurel ghts, Lower Pacific Heights hts, and surrounding hborhoods.

hborhood 4

ch, Embarcadero/Financial , Civic Center, Mission Bay, MA, South Beach, and ng neighborhoods.

Neighborhood 5

Duboce Triangle, Noe, Castro, Mission, and surrounding neighborhoods.

Neighborhood 6

Balboa Terrace, Forest Hill, Golden Gate Heights, Laguna Honda, Lakeshore, Inner/ Upper/Lower Sunset, St. Francis Wood, Miraloma Park, Parkside, West Portal, Clarendon Heights, Cole Valley, Lower & Upper Haight, Midtown Terrace, Panhandle, Twin Peaks, and surrounding neighborhoods.

Neighborhood 7

Bernal Heights, Glen Park, Excelsior, Outer Mission, Mission Terrace, Ingleside, Sunnyside, Westwood, Visitacion Valley, Bayview, Portola, Crocker-Amazon, and surrounding neighborhoods.

If you would like to be a part of our incredible committee, if you've ever wished there were more events in your neighborhood, or if you'd like to make new friends, please contact yanina.markova@ gmail.com. Get up-to-date information on events by joining a neighborhood group (you don't need to live in a neighborhood to join), checking the GGMG website calendar, or emailing Yanina.

Committee Spotlight: Operations

Who are your current volunteers?

Preeya Dabir, Dawn Gordon, Connie Lin, and Andrea Semancik

What types of activities or projects do you undertake?

We plan and execute the monthly GGMG all volunteer meetings, as well as two annual volunteer appreciation events. The committee also coordinates the Volunteer of the Month award and UrbanSitter raffle prize awarded at each volunteer meeting. Our committee works hard to make sure the volunteer meetings are run smoothly, with plenty of delicious food and wine!

For our recent volunteer appreciation event at Le Colonial (held November 1), our committee secured a dozen raffle prizes and great items for the goody bags. We know how hard all of our mom volunteers work, so it was wonderful to celebrate them with a fun night out.

Why do you do what you do?

Being a part of the Ops Committee allows us to support the volunteers, who in turn support the organization. We are a very "behind the scenes" committee, but we wouldn't have it any other way!

A Chain Reaction of Good

Between fires, hurricanes, and political divisions, it's easy to feel down about the world these days. The Dalai Lama wrote in *The Art of Happiness* that the best antidote to unhappiness is helping someone else. In that spirit, one of my children's PJ Library books describes how one good action can start a chain reaction of other people doing good. If someone does a nice deed, the recipient will be happy and do a sweet favor for someone else, and so forth. To counter the negativity around us, Member Support challenges you, our GGMG family, to start a chain reaction of good deeds. Whether we each help a family who lost their home in a fire, point a lost tourist in the right direction, or cheer up a fellow mom with dinner, imagine what could happen if we all did one helpful thing for someone else once per week? Let's start with a mom in our community. Make someone's day. Spread the good!



Describe the personality of your committee.

Our committee is a really fun, food-loving group. We have clear opinions about what we want to offer our volunteers for a fun night out, and we are not afraid to do things a little differently.

How do you know when you are making a difference?

When we see all of our awesome volunteers at each monthly volunteer meeting. We hope that each meeting serves as a "GGMG night out" where we get a little work done, share what we are all doing within our groups, and have fun together. For a lot of our volunteers, this may be the only adult interaction they have all day, so we hope to provide a little respite out of their busy day!

What's next for the Ops team?

We look forward to seeing all of our volunteers at our monthly volunteer meetings. They generally take place the first Monday of each month at the JCC, starting at 7 p.m. If we can help any volunteer do her role better or become more involved, we welcome her to contact us. We love GGMG and enjoy giving back!

Diversity and Inclusion: Our Year in Review

Happy first birthday to the D&I Team! It has been a challenging year of formation and development. We are extremely proud of our initial accomplishments and excited for all that is still to come. In our first year, we:

- launched our first book reading and signing event with author Innosanto Nagara, a local father, known for *A Is for Activist*
- participated in community events in Japantown and SoMa to make GGMG more visible and available in new locations
- cooked and served dinner to families at the Safe & Sound Family Support Center (formerly San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center)
- organized and participated in professional diversity training with the GGMG board and Webteam Committee
- created a mission statement

In 2018, we will build on our newly developed partnerships with the Contemporary Jewish Museum and the SF Children's Council. Save the date for Part 2 of "How To Talk To Kids About Race" on Monday, March 19 (6:30 to 8:30 p.m). We'd love to see you at our events, and we always need motivated volunteers to join our team. Reach us anytime at *diversity@ggmg.org.*

Social Events

It was wonderful to see so many members and their families enjoy a gorgeous day of fun-filled activities at this year's Fall Festival on October 1. The day would not have been possible without the help of all the GGMG volunteers and the Social Events Committee who worked tirelessly to pull off such a great event! We would especially like to thank all of the sponsors who generously contributed to our event.



GGMG Operations

The Operations Committee was excited to host our annual volunteer appreciation event on November 1 at Le Colonial in Nob Hill. It was an intimate evening, with raffle prizes, goody bags, and a few speeches from board members. We'd like to congratulate Lani Schreibstein for winning volunteer of the year! Lani participates in three different committees: Community Outreach, Magazine, and Website. She stepped in to help when no one else volunteered and took ownership over those roles. We'd also like to congratulate the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for winning committee of the year! This newly formed committee has really taken off over the past 12 months, and we are looking forward to more exciting and thoughtprovoking events in the future.

Lastly, we'd like to thank all of our sponsors who so graciously donated items for our goody bags and raffle prizes, especially GGMG moms Sherri Howe, Dru Garza, and Bella Shen Garnett, as well as the following organizations:

In Harmony Music DayOne Baby STEMful Carmel Blue It's Yoga Kids Mudpie SF Tots My Gym Prep Cuts

Culinary Artistas Sephora Minted SF Music Together Amour Vert Ambiance SF Urban Putt Recess Blue Apron ThirdLove Bay Club Camp Galileo Pacific Catch

Boon + Gable Tutu School Smuin Ballet One Less Thing Cupcake Cove

Music for Aardvarks Nicole Miller Design West Agile LabsScarlett Education Children's Creativity Museum The Rabbit Hole Theater Company Blue Bear School of Music Deeksha Prakash Photography **Balanced Life Concierge** SF Children's Art Center







for more information visit www.sfnightdoulas.com





www.MotherNaturesCleaning.com



Bay Area Discovery Museum December Events and Activities





I'll Have a Bowl of Normal, Please By Neha Masson

ike many children of immigrants, I grew up caught between two worlds. Here I was, a red-blooded American girl, with a funny name and an even worse at-home haircut. I was born to two young parents who left their country in the 1970s in search of better opportunities. My parents' struggle to assimilate to a new culture that was so diametrically opposite of what they knew is clear to me now. But at the time, I didn't understand what they were going through and often felt frustrated or embarrassed by their insistence that we grow up both Indian and American.

By the time I turned 7, the most contentious topic was food. My mother is an amazing cook and these days I beg her to make daal, biryani, chicken curry—all the Indian dishes I've come to cherish. But as a child, these same foods caused me anger and embarrassment.

"Why are we eating weird food instead of meatloaf like my friend Crystal gets?" I'd ask my parents. My mom would make a face. "We don't eat things like that, I don't even know what it is. It sounds unhealthy!" My dad would chime in to remind us how hard they worked to put this meal on the table, and that was the end of the discussion. It's true, he

was the sole breadwinner, and after paying the mortgage and sending money to help relatives, they often had under \$40 left for food and discretionary spending. At 7, I had little sympathy.

I could see the disappointment in my parents' eyes, witnessing the outright rejection of their culture by their own daughter

The next day at school, some kid would inevitably brag that he got a McDonald's happy meal for dinner. What did I do this weekend, they'd ask? Most often, the truth would be that we spent time with other Indian families eating traditional food or watching Hindi movies on VHS. My answer to them, however, was a fantastical tale of having gorged myself on mac and cheese after a day at a water park. That usually elicited the approving nods I was looking for.

The worst was when my mother packed leftovers for lunch. Usually, I made sure we had peanut butter and jelly in the house so that I could proudly wield my sugar-laden meal at the cool kids' table or trade for someone's Lunchables, which my parents refused to buy. "Why do you want mechanically separated ham and processed cheese when you could be eating something homemade?" Dad insisted. But the little plastic tray of neatly stacked crackers and machine-pressed cheese in colorful packaging fascinated me and represented my freedom to choose what I ate. My heart sank on the days I'd open up the My Little Pony lunchbox I'd begged for for Christmas (which my parents reluctantly agreed to celebrate) to find cauliflower curry wrapped in a roti. I'd quickly shut my lunchbox only to hear someone say "Ew what was that? It smells!" I'd bring home the uneaten lunch, furious at my mother. Was she trying to get me ostracized? I could see the disappointment in my parents' eyes, witnessing the outright rejection of their culture by their own daughter. The same snide comments intolerant strangers would make to my parents often came out of my mouth. The constant battles over appearing and acting "American" made me, at times, a stranger with whom they couldn't identify.

Eventually, my parents acquiesced. They felt they were doing a splendid job of assimilating: wearing the right clothes, learning how to talk football with co-workers. Didn't they have the right to eat what they liked in their own home? But to appease her kids, my mom learned how to make things like Thanksgiving dinner and our favorite, spaghetti. We delighted in the heaps of noodles, jarred sauce, and melty cheddar cheese. I never even realized that cheddar cheese doesn't belong in spaghetti, but to this day,

that's my favorite way to eat it.

I continued to struggle with the desire to fit in versus embrace my dual cultural identity. At some point, things began to evolve. I found friends in college who had grown up similarly, and celebrating Diwali or dancing to Bollywood music went from being

weird to cool and interesting. Somewhere along the way, my parents also transformed—from immigrants clinging to the familiar, to well-adjusted American citizens with diverse friends and a healthy cultural balance. I now realize the immense effort it took for my mom to run a household, raise two kids, navigate a new country, and still toil over home-cooked meals daily. My husband and I together struggle to accomplish half of what she did alone.

Since I've become a parent of a child who is even more removed from his ancestral culture, I feel the same desire to keep him connected to our roots in little ways. I want to remind him that he's special and comes from a storied family with deep roots that span generations, continents, and cultures. And when I put a bowl of homemade chana masala in front of him, it warms my heart to see a smile. \Rightarrow

Neha is a mother to a 2-year-old and enjoys attempting to cook like her mother.



Golden Gate Mothers Group P.O. Box 475866 San Francisco, CA 94147 Are you a San Francisco mom? Want to receive this magazine? Join GGMG today at *www.ggmg.org.*

Presorted First Class Mail US Postage PAID Oakland, CA Permit #2319

statement of purpose:

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

