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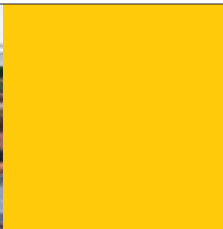
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magazine

Growth: Next Steps



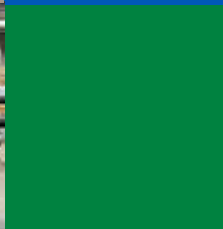
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New Arrivals

Letter from the Editor: Growth Mindset

By Sonya Abrams



Sonya is an editor, photographer, and mom to three children who are growing up way too fast, though during long airplane rides and 3 a.m. wakeups it can feel like not fast enough.

I’m a fraud. At least, that’s what I tell myself when people treat me like I’m an actual adult—a mature individual capable of discussing home repair, or taxes, or whatever else adults talk about with some measure of authority. I don’t feel grown-up. I feel more like Tom Hanks’ character in *Big*, a bumbling adolescent awkwardly attempting to pass for a 30-something. I

blame this insecurity partially on my terrible memory. For unknown reasons, I’m unable to recall many childhood events, thoughts, or behaviors. This robs me of the ability to perceive how I’ve grown and changed over the years, and has always proven a huge source of frustration.

So imagine my surprise this past summer when I was back east and my mother casually mentioned I might have fun going through the files she’d kept from my childhood. Files? Sure enough, the basement held sealed boxes of meticulously ordered documents from birth through college—everything from preschool artwork to abandoned tween-era autobiographies to printouts of late ‘90s chat-room conversations to old copies of *Sassy*. I spent night after night on the cold basement floor, poring over letters, drawings, essays, and diary entries, learning which passions had endured through the decades (my obsession with birthday cake apparently goes back at least 33 years), and

discovering which anxieties had shifted, been muted, or simply faded. Journal entries in which I shed tears over perceived social slights or spent nights consumed with fear over visiting new places or talking to strangers seemed so foreign to present-day me. As the documents piled up, the arc of my life began to take on a clearer shape and depth, and the salient ways in which I’d grown as a person over the years stood out in stark relief.

In this issue, our writers examine many different facets of growth. On page 16, former GGMG Board Member and Managing Editor Sallie Hess rolls up her sleeves and shares her decades-long journey from writer to horticulturalist to writer again. On page 22, Neha Mandal Masson takes a look at what holds women back in the workplace and offers tips on how to get on the path to career growth. Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss finds a place of zen on page 26 in an exploration of diverse family-friendly opportunities

I feel more like Tom Hanks’ character in Big, a bumbling adolescent awkwardly attempting to pass for a 30-something.

for spiritual growth. And Christine Chen has your family covered—literally—on page 20 with a handy guide to the world of kids’ clothing sizes.

My summer archeological expedition through the relics of my youth gave me a deep appreciation for and understanding of my personal growth. That being said, most of the time, I still can’t believe that the hospital ever thought I was grown-up enough to be allowed to walk out with an infant.

Sr An

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: Empathy for the people in Houston/Texas...with a side of Terrible Twos in full bloom, pining for AC, moving half a mile away—400 boxes—nothing broken, teething and tantrums, a month-long road trip, back-to-school freedom, 104 degrees in the Sunset, a trip

to the Hair Fairies, Scandinavian summer, unexpected preschool closure a week before school starts, three kids starting three schools in three cities, divorce.

COMING NEXT: December/January - Food

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

Letter from the Board: Seasons Change, and So Do We

By Cathy Tran

When I was a kid, summer was my favorite season. No school? Sign me up! Now that I’m a mom my feelings about summer run more along the lines of “what am I going to do with these kids for three months?!” Then comes the madness of back-to-school or back to a regular routine after a summer of deviating from the routine. So now that it’s fall, I want to congratulate each and every one of you. We did it, moms! We survived the summer and the madness of back-to-school! We survived multiple camp dropoffs, family getaways, transitioning to new schools or different classrooms, back-to-school shopping, packing lunches, and hearing “I’m bored” approximately one billion times. Please pat yourselves on the backs for a job well done!

We are more committed than ever to making GGMG diverse and inclusive of all moms.

This has been a big year for GGMG. We hit a few bumps in the road, including with our website, but now that we’ve launched it, I am so happy with the new ggmg.org and its myriad capabilities. Although we hired a firm to do all of the developing of the website, the project management of the site was completely volunteer-run, and we still have a group of dedicated volunteers who are working on fixing bugs and adding enhancements to make the site run smoothly for our members (read about them on page 34). We hope you love the site as much as we do, but if you ever have any issues, please email us at website@ggmg.org.

The Board, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and the Webteam Committee recently completed a diversity workshop, and we are more committed than ever to making GGMG diverse and inclusive of all moms. We will continue to attend workshops and educate ourselves in order to better serve moms in San Francisco. If you have any feedback or questions please email us at diversity@ggmg.org.

We hope you have taken advantage of your membership by attending some of our great events like the Preschool Preview Night or Fall Festival, and with the holiday season around the corner, our volunteers are planning an amazing slate of fun events to celebrate. Be sure to check our calendar often to see what’s coming!

Lastly, a big thank you to all of our volunteers! You have all worked so hard this past year and we greatly appreciate you. Volunteering for GGMG is a really wonderful experience and a unique opportunity to work in a completely female-run, nonprofit organization. If you are interested in volunteering, please email recruiting@ggmg.org.



Cathy is mom to two boys, Charlie and James, and wife to a supportive husband, Peter. She is the co-host of the parenting podcast *The MomVent*. In her spare time she enjoys dinners out with friends, nights in watching Bravo, and finding the best breakfast burrito in San Francisco.

Cathy

Cover Outtakes



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

Cover Photo by Anna Psalmond Photography
Cover model: Liam (3)

Playdate at the Pumpkin Patch

Make a day out of selecting the perfect pumpkin, with hayrides, bounce houses, face painting, petting zoos, and more.

By Stephanie AuWerter

CITY

Clancy’s Pumpkin Patch

Where: 1620 7th Ave.
When: October 1–31, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
What: No need to travel far for pumpkin fun. Gourds galore, hayrides, and Halloween decorations abound in this urban patch, ripe for family selfies.

www.clancystrees.com

EAST BAY

Speer Family Farms Pumpkin Patch

Where: 2153 Ferry Pt., Alameda
When: October 1–31, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
What: A four-story slide shaped like a sinking ship, zip line, bounce houses, petting zoo, and more.

www.speerfamilyfarms.com

SOUTH BAY

47th Annual Half Moon Bay Art & Pumpkin Festival

Where: Main St., Half Moon Bay
When: October 14–15, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
What: Celebrating “the almighty gourd,” enjoy pie-eating contests, live music, pumpkin carvings, a parade, and more.

www.pumpkinfest.miramarevents.com

Lemos Farm

Where: 12320 San Mateo Rd., Half Moon Bay
When: Sept.–Oct., all weekends and most weekdays (see website), 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
What: Littles will enjoy riding the “ghost train” and visiting the kid-friendly section of the Scare Zone. You’ll also find hayrides, a petting zoo, and more.

www.lemosfarm.com/seasonal/pumpkin-farm

Arata’s Pumpkin Farm

Where: 185 Verde Rd., Half Moon Bay
When: Through October 31, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. (8 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays)
What: A pumpkin-patch amusement park? This comes close: a two-acre “Minotaur’s Maze,” mini train ride, petting zoo, pony rides, hayrides, kids play area, and more.

www.aratapumpkinfarm.com

Farmer John’s Pumpkin Farm

Where: 850 North Cabrillo Hwy., Half Moon Bay
When: Through October 31, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 or 6 p.m.
What: An authentic working farm, good for those seeking a pumpkin patch without the major bells and whistles.

www.farmerjohnspumpkins.com

NORTH BAY

Nicasio Valley Farms Pumpkin Patch

Where: 5300 Nicasio Valley Rd., Nicasio
When: Weekends in October, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
What: Pony rides, face painting, rock wall, hayrides, giant slide, BBQ, and organic ice cream.

www.nicasiovalleyfarms.com

The Peter Pumpkin Patch

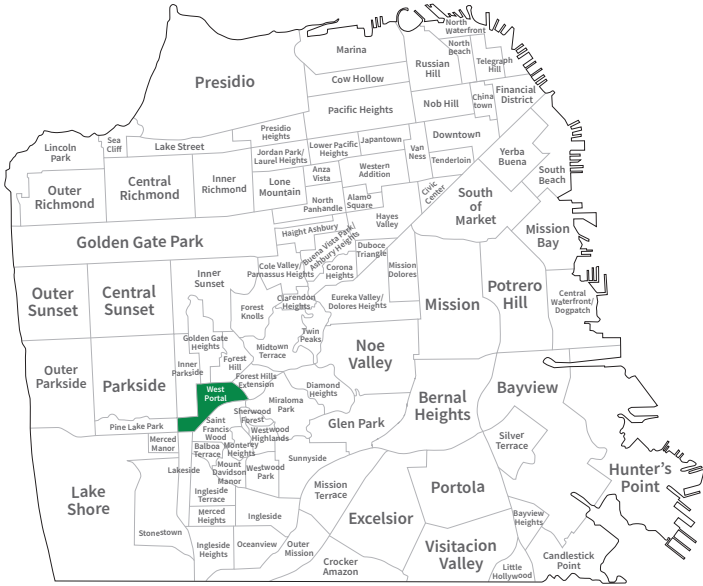
Where: 4235 Spring Hill Rd., Petaluma
When: Through October 31, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
What: A real working farm: milk a cow, dig for a potato, jump in a corn pit, and taste pumpkin ice cream.

www.springhillcheese.com/pumpkin-patch.php

Petaluma Pumpkin Patch

Where: 450 Stony Pt. Rd., Petaluma
When: Through October 31, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. or 10 p.m.
What: Corn field maze, 500-bale straw mountain, rubber duck races, corn kernel sandbox, and more.

www.petalumapumpkinpatch.com



Li’l Kid, Big City: West Portal

By Sonya Abrams

Uncrowded, unpretentious, and jam-packed with restaurants, shops, activity centers, and a movie theater along an easily walkable commercial district, West Portal just might be the most family-friendly neighborhood in town. Most parents know it as the home of **Peek-a-Boo Factory** (2 West Portal Ave.), whose slides and padded climbing structures are the perfect place to burn off energy on gloomy days. Peek-a-Boo also hosts date-night dropoffs, offering dinner and snacks for potty-trained children. After working up an appetite, head next door to fast-casual **Lemonade** (16 West Portal Ave.), which serves up dozens of salads, sandwiches, sides, and, yes, lemonade. Or, cross the street to **Squat & Gobble Café** instead (1 West Portal Ave.), where kids eat free on Tuesdays. **Noe Valley Bakery** recently opened an outpost at 28 West Portal Ave. to cover your dessert needs. We won’t judge if you decide to dig into a second brown butter salty sugar cookie. Or third. Reward your good eaters with a visit to one of the city’s last remaining toy stores, **Ambassador Toys** (186 West Portal Ave.), which has a fun black-lit space room in the back. Or wander down a bit further for stickers, plushies, and quirky, crafty gifts at **Growing Up Arts and Crafts** (248 West Portal Ave.) ❖

Sonya is a mom to three kids under 6 and sometimes wonders if she could hire the people who installed Peek-a-Boo’s padding to come do her house. It would significantly cut down on Band-Aid costs.

Día de los Muertos

By Catherine Symon

Born of traditional Mesoamerican graveside festivities, San Francisco’s annual Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) honors the circle of life with food, art, music, altars, and community gatherings. In addition to commemorating loved ones, Día de los Muertos helps the living process grief, normalize death, and celebrate life.

SOMArts, 934 Brannan St.

www.somarts.org/remembrance

October 6 through November 9
Gallery hours: Tuesday through Friday
noon to 7 p.m.; Saturday noon to 5 p.m.;
Sunday noon to 3 p.m.
Admission is free during gallery hours.



Close to 100 artists contribute to this annual exhibition featuring stylized altars and artistic interpretations of the issues facing the local community. This year’s theme is “Remembrance and Resistance.”

Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, 2868 Mission St.

www.missionculturalcenter.org/day-of-the-dead.html

October 10 through November 17
Gallery hours: Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
\$2 exhibit admission fee

The *En el Cielo Como en la Tierra* (In Heaven as on Earth) exhibition is a multisensory art experience with color, aroma, texture, and spectacular altars, including an elaborate Mexican monumental altar of the Huaquechula Puebla. Guided tours are available for school groups (\$40 for up to 25 attendees) to teach children about Día de los Muertos rituals and dispel myths associated with the celebration; download the tour reservation request form from the web page listed above.



Create your own altar

Children who aren’t ready for public Día de los Muertos celebrations can still get involved in honoring loved ones (including pets!) by creating and decorating an altar at home. Traditional *ofrendas* (offerings) include flowers, candles, fruit, photos, *papel picado* (decorative paper art), favorite foods or drinks of the deceased, sugar skulls, and *pan de muerto* (bread of the dead). Pick up supplies and speciality foods from locally owned stores like Casa Bonampak (1051 Valencia St.), La Reyna Bakery (3114 24th St.), and Mixcoatl Arts and Crafts (3201 24th St.). ❖

Catherine is a medical writer. She’s got a skull cookie cutter, food coloring, and big plans to make elaborate Día de los Muertos cookies. Hopefully.



Stephanie is a freelance writer who loves almost all things pumpkin (selecting, carving, pretending that a pumpkin-spice latte is a healthy treat). The exception: scraping a moldy, fruit-fly-filled pumpkin off the stoop once Halloween is over.

Ask the Expert

Personal Growth With Julie Santiago, Life Coach



GGMG: What are the most common transformations you see in your line of work?

JS: There are two types of transformations: inner and outer. Let's start with inner transformation. Most of us try to reverse engineer our lives, thinking, if I get to this point, get this job, make this much money, I'll be happy. We constantly chase happiness, falsely thinking

that when we get this thing we want, we'll get happiness or peace on the inside. However, lasting growth is about doing the inner work, which helps us be more confident, alive, present, connected to ourselves, and less overwhelmed by life. As women we are often depleted because we do so much for others, and then we want others to fill us up. It takes the pressure off our relationships when we fill our own cup. Outer transformations include things like improved relationships, career changes, leaving partners, finding love, moving cross country, starting a business. The outer transformation is a reflection of the inner.

Women evolved socially to be in a tribe...Now we feel like we have to go it all alone and be perfect, and it's killing us.

GGMG: How does a woman know she is ready or about to embark on a major transformation?

JS: Growth is a choice. We're constantly growing and changing, and we can choose whether or not to consciously interface with that change. The symptom of "it may be time to grow" is dissatisfaction. We all experience this to different degrees at different times. Life is always happening—having babies, kids starting school, job changes, aging parents, an unexpected loss—and we're being asked to grow and dance with it. Some phases pass, or we get comfortable with things not being great and we settle.

GGMG: What do women who experience the most dramatic growth have in common?

JS: The first thing that comes to mind is that they're done settling. They know they're here for more. They're committed to being the best versions of themselves. It's a real commitment.

GGMG: What do women who experience the least growth have in common?

JS: Fear. We all experience it. We're so afraid that growth means change. One of the reasons we stay in an average job or marriage

is that we're afraid the change would shake things up too much. So we justify our decisions by saying, "Well, I guess it's not that bad." We talk ourselves out of having our own standards. A lot of women I work with discount their own voice by saying things like, "Oh, first world problems." Many of us are privileged but it is our choice to do something with that privilege. There's a Maryanne Williamson quote: "It is not our darkness but our light that scares us." We are afraid to shine our light. Fear of failure and fear of success holds us back. So we settle and end up miserable.

GGMG: What are some important tools that woman can use to support their personal growth?

JS: The most important tool: self-care is first and foremost. If we're depleted, we're not helping anyone. Most women fill their teacup halfway and go around offering all their tea to everyone, and then they're exhausted. The real work is learning to fill our teacup so that it overflows. And keep the teacup for ourselves and give to others from the saucer. That may be different things for different women, but it's probably alone time like a massage, yoga class, a coffee shop. The second tool: what other people think of you is none of your business. Nobody cares as much as you think they do, so let go of everyone's opinion. It's a practice. The third tool is to be fierce about boundaries. Sometimes we have to say "no" to others in order to say "yes" to ourselves. If it doesn't light you up or fulfill you, say "no." The fourth tool would be to practice gratitude. Sometimes life sucks and it's hard, but there's still stuff to be grateful for. Learning to look for the good is key to moving forward when life is difficult. The last tool is to find a community of women to support you. Women evolved socially to be in a tribe; we weren't supposed to go it alone. We raised families with close relatives. Now we feel like we have to go it alone and be perfect, and it's killing us. Find a group of women you can be real with, celebrate with, and fall apart with. Our partners can't do all of this for us. Having a group of women to share life with will fulfill us in ways nothing else can.

GGMG: If you could give the women you work with a superpower, what would it be?

JS: I want them to trust themselves. I deeply believe every woman knows who she is and what she wants, but she's scared to admit it. The ability to trust the whispers in her heart, the intuitive pulls, that's learning how to trust herself. And then have the confidence and courage to act on what she hears and knows. ❖

Interested in reading more? Please find an extended version of this interview online at ggmg.org/blog/JulieSantiago

Julie is a former Wall Street trader turned transformational life coach & inspirational speaker. She helps women who are at a crossroads in their life to find more balance, more purpose, and more meaning. www.juliesantiago.com

GGMG: Helping Others, Treating Yourself

Community Support

Make a Difference in the Lives of Vulnerable Children and Their Families



We are all responsible for the well-being of children. Whether working directly with children, their families or caregivers, communities, or systems, the goal of **Safe and Sound*** is to create the greatest positive outcomes for children. No one can do this alone; preventing child abuse is a communal responsibility.

A monetary gift to Safe and Sound helps provide services to families like parenting classes, therapy, and case management. Your contributions will work to build comprehensive programming that strengthens families. When parents are knowledgeable about parenting, have someone to talk to when stressed (i.e., the TALK Line), and can provide basic needs for their family, they are empowered and resilient, which ultimately reduces the risk of and prevents child abuse.

Gifts can be made at www.give.everydayhero.com/us/ggmg. Thank you in advance for your generosity and helping GGMG contribute to this important cause.

**previously known as San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center*

Contest

Lemonshoots Maternity Photography Session



Being pregnant is such a blessing! Allowing your body to change, grow, and sustain a new being is one of the most selfless acts ever. Such a special moment deserves to be immortalized with a beautiful and artistic maternity photo session.

Let us document your road to motherhood while you enjoy dressing up in our maternity gown collection, looking gorgeous while having fun with your family, and celebrating your unborn baby. Once your little one arrives, you'll treasure images of your pregnancy and, with time, your grown-up child will be thankful too.

This is your moment. This is your story. Let us help you capture it! One lucky winner will receive a free maternity session with \$100 print credit (\$250 retail value). The prize includes:

- Phone consultation
- Maternity photo session with family members
- Use of maternity gowns and accessories provided by Lemonshoots
- One hour-long ordering appointment in which the client reviews and chooses images with the photographer
- \$100 to use towards prints and/or products

TO ENTER THE CONTEST, SEND AN EMAIL WITH THE SUBJECT LINE "LEMONSHOOTS" TO CONTEST@GGMG.ORG.

DADLANDS

Growth Rings

By Peter Willhoite

I asked a lot of friends and loved ones about parenthood as my wife and I prepared to bring a child into this world. People offered up all kinds of responses: It's exhausting. It's something new every day. It's really hard but really rewarding. Their tone was humorous, stern, and reflective by turns. Nearly everybody I spoke with, however, said something like this: "It's just..." a pause, a moment of pondering, "the best."

Sixteen months in, I agree wholeheartedly. It is the best. My daughter fills me with heart-expanding love every day. All the most wonderful moments of my life have been packed into the last year and a half. I've also experienced the worst moments of my life over that same time period. Parenthood is not only the best; it is also, quite literally, the worst.

For example, take last August, at a busy I-95 rest area near the Maine/New Hampshire border. Delphine, my daughter, was 14 weeks old. It was 9:30 p.m. on a sticky summer night. We were halfway through the drive from Boston to my childhood home in Maine. Our first cross-country flight from SFO had passed without incident (great success!), but now the wheels had completely fallen off.

I paced a small wooded area between the lot filled with cars and idling 18-wheelers with Delphine strapped to my chest and wailing. She was overstimulated, epically exhausted, and unable to settle. We had already stopped three times (what should have taken 1 hour and 45 minutes would end up taking us 6). My wife was also sobbing. Three months in, the post-delivery endorphin highs had long since worn off, and the tricks that we used to get Delphine to sleep no longer worked. We were beaten down and

There were so many emotions layered in that moment that a younger version of myself would've been crushed by the burden.

fried. Worse yet, my wife was battling postpartum depression. My badass, always upbeat partner was in the backseat of the car, consumed by body-shaking sobs.

We were en route to Maine to visit my family. We knew it was too soon, and that this exact meltdown would happen. But we rushed the trip because 6 months prior, my healthy, strong mother, 63 years young and an energetic school principal, was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. My mother was given 12 months to live as my wife entered her third trimester. Our

daughter was a beautiful, perfect, and much-needed light in my mother's waning life. And we were going to give her that light, brutal cross-country trip be damned.

There was a specific moment at the rest stop when I stopped pacing. Delphine had yet to sleep (though she would soon, her body shutting down from unbearable exhaustion). My wife was still incapacitated by depression and exhaustion. My mother was still dying. On the line between the trees and the sprawling parking lot, with a soundtrack of highway thrum and bickering

families, I looked up at the dark sky and made a mental note: "Remember this, because this is the worst moment of your life."

And it was—until I held my mother's hand while she slipped away this past January, her body ravaged by cancer, full of pain. Misery is all relative, of course, and certainly there is much more suffering around the world every day. But that roadside moment was special and relevant not only as a high-water mark of supreme awfulness in my life. It mattered because of the sudden, explosive growth. For the first time, I

was capable of holding all these feelings in my heart at once: my love for my wailing daughter, my concern for my sobbing wife, and my fear about my sick mother's impending death. There were so many emotions layered in that moment that a younger version of myself would've been crushed by the burden.

How this growth happened remains a mystery to me. I did nothing in particular to prepare for the onslaught of that moment. It's the sort of growth born only out of necessity. It hurts like hell at first, but as things stretch and make room for sickness, for new life, for struggle and strife, it gets easier. I measure this growth in time, tears, and how much more space there is for love in all its varied forms to live in my heart than I ever thought possible.

I was exhausted, raw, and deeply sad, but not crushed. I paced on. Eventually, we would continue the drive north. I felt so many conflicting emotions and it was all OK. More than being the best, or the worst, parenthood is the growth to accommodate both states of being simultaneously. I can now hold all that disparate energy and emotion in my heart and mind, and not be rent apart by the great strength of those opposing forces. ❖

Peter strives most of all to be a great father, partner, son, and friend. He is also a writer who does marketing and branding work. He loves poetry, dogs, jagged coastlines, tall mountains, reggae music, and all sports and games.



GGMG: Reader Engagement, Volunteer Recognition

Reader Feedback

Hi,

I am really disturbed by the August/September cover of the GGMG magazine. I don't think this is the kind of "leaning in" we should be modeling for our daughters—nor our sons. It's way too reminiscent of all the other poses we see in heteronormative glamour magazines, where women look coyly off [to] the side while their male counterpart stands tall, looking straight into the camera. I'm sure you all didn't intend this kind of messaging, but in the context of conventional gendered media imagery, it doesn't seem well thought out and frankly, as a feminist and mother of a daughter, it's offensive to me and not what I paid my dues for.

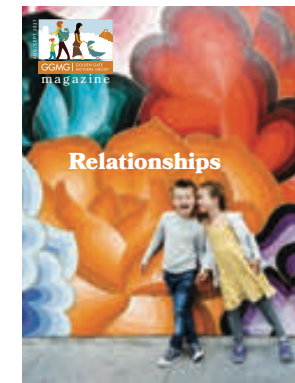
Sorry I can't be more positive. I know you all do a lot of great things, but it's the subliminal unintended stuff in society that is often the most harmful.

—Yuki

Editors' response:

Our editorial team saw the photo as capturing the moment after one friend leaned in to tell a joke to another, depicting an intimacy that we felt conveyed the idea of relationships. We interpreted the male's face as an expression of silliness and mirth, rather than a gaze. We sincerely hope our upcoming issues reflect the values you—and we staffers—hope to impart to your daughter.

At GGMG Magazine, we want to encourage dialogue and bring more perspectives to our publication. If you have any comments or concerns, we welcome your feedback (email editor@ggm.org).



Volunteers of the Month

Congratulations to **Megan Bushnell** and **Molly Agarwal**, our July and August volunteers of the month! **Megan** is managing editor of GGMG Magazine and director of Neighborhood Meetup Group 7. She and husband Chris are parents to Maslan (5) and Eleanor (2). **Molly** is the co-chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and works as a full-time minion of two small dictators. She and husband Vid Prabhakaran are parents to Jaidin (4.5) and Sonia (2).



MEGAN, WE WANT TO KNOW...Something about you that might surprise people if they knew it: I have attempted to catch a reef shark in a net outside his cave using SCUBA. I was unsuccessful; **What you miss most about your hometown:** My parents; **Place in the world you would most like to visit:** Great Barrier Reef; **Parenting Advice:** Don't be a helicopter.

MOLLY, WE WANT TO KNOW YOUR FAVORITE...Pastime: Plotting the overthrow of two small dictators; **Book:** *Catfish and Mandala*; **Film:** *The Way We Were*; **Restaurant:** Bursa; **Destination:** Mendocino; **Parenting advice:** Tune out the noise and do you.

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



Books for Kids

Autumn and Halloween

By Laure Latham

The colder season and shorter days present the perfect opportunity to bring to life a mysterious world of night creatures and adventurous heroes while celebrating changes in nature. Whether you love ghosts, pumpkins, or adventurous mice, these books feature all the necessary ingredients to look forward to the autumn season.



I Love You, Little Pumpkin!

Written and illustrated by Sandra Magsamen

This cute book with lift-the-flap pages makes for adorable parent-baby reading time about Halloween and love. Thanks to the book's interactive features and soft illustrations, babies will giggle and want to play with the pages. Watch for the surprise mirror at the end!

Ages: 0 to 2 years



B is for Boo: A Halloween Alphabet

Written and illustrated by Greg Paprocki

If B is for Boo!, D is for Dracula, and G is for Ghost, can you guess what the other letters are for? This Halloween alphabet primer is just what your little one needs to get introduced to Halloween in a non-scary way. The book's retro illustrations are as much fun as the choice of words, and each page is so full of wonderful details that you'll be able to turn this bedtime primer into a real storytime. *Ages: 2 to 5 years*



Autumn: A Pop-Up Book

Written and illustrated by David Carter

The third book in a series about seasons, *Autumn* offers perspective on the autumnal season in the Western states. As each page presents a new landscape, a central pop-up is surrounded by smaller scenes and short questions about nature. From the types of

clouds to the concept of a salmon run, *Autumn* helps kids understand what's unique about this beautiful season. *Ages: 3 to 5 years*

This Beautiful Day

Written by Richard Jackson, illustrated by Suzy Lee

There are two ways you can look at a rainy day—moaning or rejoicing. From dancing inside to skipping in puddles outside, three bored children show that a positive attitude can beat even the wettest weather. This celebration of rainy days will have young ones looking forward to overcast, gloomy skies and hoping to join in the fun depicted on the book's pages. *Ages: 3 to 6 years*



Peanut Butter & Aliens: A Zombie Culinary Tale

Written by Joe McGee, illustrated by Charles Santoso

In the city of Quirkville, zombies and living humans co-exist peacefully until aliens land on Earth and cover the city in cosmic grape jelly. What could they

possibly want? “Sploink” is all they can say. Once again, human Abigail Zink and zombie Reginald team up to come up with a solution to the aliens' request and save the world from the alien invasion. Even kids who are allergic to peanuts will fall in love with this story, since peanut allergies don't exist in outer space. Who knew? *Ages: 3 to 7 years*

Thanksgiving in the Woods

Written by Phyllis Alsduf, illustrated by Jenny Lovlie

Inspired by the true story of a family in upstate New York who has hosted an outdoor Thanksgiving feast on their farm in the woods for over twenty years, this book is a heartwarming tale of Thanksgiving and friendship in the great outdoors. If your family likes spending time outside with friends, this book could provide inspiration for a new autumn tradition.

Ages: 5 to 8 years



Heartwood Hotel: A True Home

Written by Kallie George, illustrated by Stephanie Graegin

In Fernwood Forest, not every tree is what it seems. When Mona, a mouse, is washed down a river by an autumn storm and loses her home, she stumbles upon a large tree. When she rubs her hand over a heart carved in the trunk, a hidden door opens onto

Heartwood Hotel, a refuge for lost woodland creatures. After meeting a variety of small animals and getting unjustly driven away, Mona discovers a plot that could threaten the new community she calls home. School-age kids will love this tale of the true meaning of home and will be inspired to look for small creatures (or adventurous mice) on their next day out in a forest. First in a series. *Ages: 6 to 10 years*

Harry Moon: Wand Paper Scissors

Written by Mark Andrew Poe, illustrated by Christina Weidman

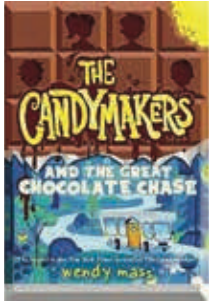
Harry Moon lives in the small town of Sleepy Hollow, Massachusetts, where every night is Halloween. When he learns that his arch-enemy, Titus, intends to win the yearly Scary Talent Show, Harry Moon needs to find a way to defeat the bully. Meanwhile, Sleepy Hollow's mayor is up to no good and it looks like Harry Moon may be the only one who can stop him. Will magic be enough? Tweens will cheer for this underdog hero who learns magic through a remarkable rabbit friend. *Ages: 8 to 12 years*



The Candymakers and The Great Chocolate Chase

Written by Wendy Mass

Mystery, adventure, and lots of candy! In this book, four children tell the story of a new candy contest that they won. Life would be wonderful except for one detail—the resulting perfect candy is about to hit candy stores and its taste has gone terribly wrong. A major ingredient is missing and no one can put their finger on it. Channeling their inner spies, the kids will need to use skills such as geocaching and problem-solving to avoid a major candy catastrophe. Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys lovers, this one's for you. *Ages: 8 to 12 years*



Thornhill

Written and illustrated by Pam Smy

In this memoir of an Inuit girl in Canada, two parallel storylines decades apart connect two different girls. A new girl in town, 12-year-old Ella is drawn via diary entries into the tragic life of Mary, an orphaned mute living at Thornhill Institute. When Ella glimpses a girl in the now-derelict Thornhill building, she decides to

figure out the story of Thornhill and the girl. Dark (really dark) and spooky, this graphic novel will appeal to a wide range of audiences, from reluctant tween readers to adults looking for a gothic tale.

Ages: 10 to 14 years

Taproot

Written and illustrated by Keezy Young

Taproot is a graphic novel that tells the story of Blue and Hamal. Blue is a ghost and Hamal is his best friend. Hamal is human but he can see ghosts. The world starts disappearing for the ghosts and they are sent with the impossible task of restoring order to a forest where everything is dead. Tweens and teens will love this short LGBT romance where ghosts and the living live surrounded by plants and flowers.

Ages: 13+ years



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

From Womb to World

Bringing Home (Fur) Baby

By Stephanie AuWerter

My first baby arrived eight years ago, covered in fur. At the time, I was newly engaged, attempting to embrace the role of stepmom with the gusto of Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*, and hoping to get pregnant immediately.

Fantasy and reality collided. While I loved my fiancé’s sons fiercely, I struggled to figure out where I fit in with two boys who already had a loving mom and dad. And getting pregnant—or at least staying pregnant—became a challenge that took years to resolve.

So a large portion of my revved-up maternal drive went toward our new cat Seaweed and, three years later, our dog Chili Pepper. I dedicated myself to their care like any new mother. When Seaweed took her first steps on our banister, I stood nearby, my open arms waiting to catch her should she fall. (“She’s a cat!” my husband would yell from the kitchen, noting her capable balance.) I fastidiously brushed our cat’s teeth and our dog’s fur. And with brow furrowed, I would discuss “behavioral issues” over dinner with my husband, who would often beg to talk about something—please, anything—else.

Seaweed and Chili Pepper allowed me to parent them during those years when becoming an actual parent seemed hopeless. But now, after fertility treatments helped us conceive our beautiful daughter and time has enabled me to settle into step-motherhood (I might not be Julie Andrews, but my

relationship with my stepsons is loving, close, and deeply involved), our family is exactly as it should be.

For me, this means that Seaweed and Chili Pepper are no longer my children: they are beloved family pets. I’ve stopped brushing Seaweed’s teeth (she seems deeply relieved), but she still sleeps curled around my neck each night. Chili Pepper’s fur may occasionally be a little matted, but it’s nothing her groomer can’t handle, and she still gets her daily beach walks and tummy rubs.

Today, our pets are my 3-year-old’s constant companions—she showers them with treats, rolls with them on the floor, and creates games and forts for them that only a toddler could imagine. They look at her like she is a magical being. The rest of us get daily laughs and joy from them too: Seaweed squeezing her round body into an egg carton, or Chili Pepper zooming around the kitchen with an I-just-won-the-lottery level of joy when we return from a brief outing.

They may no longer be my kids, but I am forever grateful to Seaweed and Chili Pepper for helping us build the loving family we have today. The unconditional love has evolved, but still very much remains. ♦

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.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PET FOR YOUR FAMILY

Ready to add a pet to your family? Local experts offer this advice:

Know What You Want. Consider which traits, such as size, temperament, and energy level, will work for your family, says Jill Leiva, senior director at Copper’s Dream, an SF-based dog rescue organization. A young Labrador mix can be an ideal family pet, but if someone can’t give him daily exercise, it’s not going to work.

Understand the Costs. Pets aren’t cheap. There’s the cost of food, supplies, and vet bills, which can soar when your pet gets sick. Pet insurance covers some but not all costs, and the policies can be expensive.

If Possible: Adopt, Don’t Shop. *Petfinder.com* shows more than 2,500 dogs and cats available within 25 miles of SF. A reputable shelter will help you find a pet that’s ready for a home with kids, says Stephen Murphy, adoptions client care manager at the SFSPCA.

Consider an Adult. Puppies are cute, but they can be rude, jumpy, and mouthy, says Murphy. Then there is potty training, inappropriate chewing, and an endless need for attention—things you may already be dealing with raising kids. Do you really want to take on a puppy?

Get the Support You Need. Good pets don’t just happen. Affordable socialization and training classes are available, like New Cat 101 (free at SFSPCA).

Don’t Do it for the Kids. Pet ownership might offer lessons on empathy, responsibility, and patience. But if you are considering a pet for your kids despite your lack of enthusiasm, hold off. Chances are you’ll be scooping poop and asking yourself “why?” as you hold up what was once a shoe. The best way to teach your kids how to love a pet is to model truly loving the pet yourself.

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My Vegetable Love

One writer rekindles her passion for poetry through ripe metaphors about the frustrating process of growing vegetables in San Francisco

By Sallie Hess

Photographs by Aviva Roller Photography

In 2014, four years after leaving my work in viticulture to have children, I decided I would convert the landscaping around our house into edible plants. This project became so engrossing and fraught with metaphor that it ended up being a catalyst for much more. I was particularly interested in growing vegetables, a challenging endeavor in San Francisco’s unusual climate. Seed packets and gardening books tend to be geared toward climates with four seasons. Many vegetables need warmth and sunshine to develop fruit or flowers. It took a year of study and failure and constant seed-starting to get it down to a science. That is, I got it down to as much of a science as growing vegetables ever can be, wacky climate or no. Weather and disease are not predictable anywhere; much of applied plant science aims to redress whatever might go wrong when trying to grow overbred seed pods and roots.

There is only so much you can control, and vegetables are picky. The success of onion varieties, for example, relies upon latitude, which is the origin of the expression that so-and-so “really knows his onions.” Carrots will fork if the soil is too rich or if it is too hard; cauliflower can be “blind”; fennel will bolt and therefore fail to bulb if you touch its roots.

There are the veggies that have male and female flowers that need to cross-pollinate. And now the looming bee collapse! It’s mind-boggling, and a lot to keep straight.

These are the sorts of things on which I ruminated while snipping and tying up and pulling out yet another failure and thinking bloodthirsty thoughts about bugs and slugs and rats and larcenous neighbors.

Let there be scrivening

I started writing about it: the drought, the pests, the weather, the small victories that come with growing ordinary vegetables in a difficult climate.

This was big for me. I had written scientific papers and the odd article for *GGMG Magazine*, but stopped writing creatively about 15 years ago. I had been an aspiring poet back in the late 1990s, but at the ripe old age of 25 or so, I decided I wasn’t any good at it. So I stopped, with all of the hot-and-cold finality of a bad breakup.

But in the summer of 2015, I wrote a poem about trying to espalier a fig tree, and then one about growing artichokes, and then one about the ants who were farming aphids on them, and it kept going. I was off on a tear of writing as I had never experienced before. The spigot was on, and I could barely write fast enough.

I was indulging in a full-time hobby stuffed with oh-so-obvious metaphors and ironies. I had to cut away the dead bits of herbs to encourage new growth. I was using my scientific knowledge and wordsmith talents to explain to my son why haircuts do not hurt while at the same time soothing and pruning a kumquat tree that had been ruthlessly stripped of fruit by some neighbor while we were out of town.

Metaphors are actually quite difficult to get right, but they are everywhere, and not everyone can be Wallace Stevens. But if you are having an existential crisis, go read Steven’s “A Rabbit As King of the Ghosts.” It’s a real barn-burner; go feel the sunlight on your fur, girl.

The Awakening (minus the drowning-in-the-ocean part)

Gardening and writing about gardening also led me to realize that I didn’t really want to live in San Francisco anymore. Fine, fine, it’s great to be able to grow cabbage all year round, but how much cabbage can you eat?

I missed summer. I missed growing tomatoes and eggplant and okra. In one unusually warm summer, I got some real

...there are too many women in the world who don’t have enough poetry in their lives.

tomatoes, but the rats dug into them. The eggplant and okra were miserable and went nowhere. Meanwhile, the fog and its little friend powdery mildew were killing off every cucurbit and pea variety I tried.

Well-meaning people would remind me that September was just around the corner and wasn’t that nice, or hey remember there’s no snow in San Francisco, or I could always move out to the East Bay so I could get the summer I craved. No thank you. Moving out of the city wouldn’t solve anything. I used to work in Napa, where it gets to be 90-plus degrees during the day and 50 degrees at night. And by the way, September is nice everywhere.

Do you ever wonder why so many retired navy captains and ICU nurses obsess over dahlias or tomatoes? People with a lot to

think about need to do something with their hands that is positive and life-affirming and quiet. Gardening gave me the mental space to process giving up being a scientist to be a mom.

The poems started to be about exile and the plight of women. And still they kept coming.

By the time I left San Francisco for the east coast, a year later, I had about 80 pages of

poetry about vegetable growth and personal growth. That manuscript, *Dispatches from the Urban Farm*, got its title from an Instagram schtick I flogged as I posted pictures of my veggie failures and joked about my children being unruly livestock.

The writer becomes an NPR cliché, or, let there be sniveling

I had a complete manuscript and I didn’t know if it was any good. I didn’t even think of myself as a poet. I was a little embarrassed, frankly, that I had slipped into writing poetry again. It seemed too much like a KQED Perspectives biography: “Sallie Hess is a retired farmer and poet who lives in San Francisco.”

The prospect of answering questions at parties was terrifying. “You’re a writer? What do you write about? Are you published?” Ugh, the mortification! So, as it turned out, a big part of my growth as a writer was figuring out how to accept being a poet, and how to talk about it. Because as a mentor of mine recently asked, “Why does your work matter? Why should anyone care?” What questions! But they need answers.

Writing, especially the writing of personal essays and poetry, can be a pure act of narcissism. Why are people going to care about your opinion on something? Why does anyone want to know whether you found a particular cobweb interesting? I think, for what it’s worth, that you should write what you want to write about, follow where your subconscious is taking you, and then think about what it all means. Nothing is created in a vacuum.





I found inspiration from the novelist, Lee Smith, and the poet, Louise Glück. Smith's first two novels came from her childhood. She says she ran out of things to write about, so she got a job at a newspaper in Alabama. There, she says, she got enough material for the rest of her writing life. She wrote whenever she got the chance—even at her kids' soccer practice. Glück similarly believes that you should live your life and see what comes from it. In her twenties, she took two years off to write and didn't accomplish anything, so she figured she was not a poet after all. She took a job teaching and "the minute [she] had obligations in the world," started writing again. A few years later, she wrote *The Wild Iris*, which won the Pulitzer Prize.

It sounds like such a Gertrude-Stein-style cliché but it is true: you don't have anything to write about if you don't have anything to write about. What I was writing about, in retrospect, was so obviously an existential crisis (again). Who was this person who used to be a scientist and now entreated small tyrants to eat more broccoli, and who would also cry over broccoli in the garden not heading up?

Ars poetica and raison d'être

Does this read like a prose poem, then, full of off-kilter metaphors and yearning? Maybe it's a beat poem sort of thing, with lots of slang and winking?

How am I going to write my ending here? Write us out of this, lady. Well, my answer is that I am a poet, not a novelist, and my ending doesn't have to tie up neatly. It just needs to raise questions, raise feelings, and make you want to read more poetry.

Maybe this is the answer to the question of what I write about: I write about the paradoxes of having children, the certainty and simultaneous surprise of death, and the satisfaction of creating beautiful cauliflowers. I write about things that make the world move forward by inches, household by household. I write about the questions implicit to womanhood, the tyranny of tiny things you can't control, both children and insects, and our place in the world as women and mothers, and why we matter.

And this is why my work matters: there are too many women in the world who don't have enough poetry in their lives. So many of us give up our beloved work to raise our beloved children, and in the process lose a sense of self and purpose. Your purpose cannot just be to infuse other people's lives with purpose.

Thinking about that particularly circular question too much will drive you crazy. Or, it may drive you into the lowest-paying job there is: poet.

Poetry isn't a career that will pay the bills. Many journals don't pay anything for poems; some pay in the ballpark of forty bucks, which will get you exactly two organic grass-fed steaks. At a writers' conference I attended recently, my workshop leader suggested we meet during one of the agent panels. "They don't care about us," she joked, "because 15 percent of nothing is nothing."

But does that matter? Forty bucks is more than I've ever made as a stay-at-home mom, and there is a lot less volunteering in the poetry racket. This is where I've planted my little flag of meaning and permanence. Bring on the slings and arrows of not-the-green-cup. This, a retreat on Calliope's mount of epic poetry, is the hill I'm going to die on. ❖

Sallie is a retired farmer and poet who lives in McLean, Virginia. She is the former managing editor of GGMG Magazine and a former board member. She is going to be very disappointed if you don't look up cucurbit in the dictionary or get the references in the titles and subtitles of this article, and she thinks you should read more poetry.

READ THESE

(Just Do It)

Impossible Bottle by Claudia Emerson
Posthumously published, about dying of cancer, she won the Pulitzer for her previous book *Late Wife*, and she was so awesome.

Radial Symmetry by Katherine Larson
A scientist who writes about nature and beauty with deep knowledge but no irony or sappiness.

Bird Book by Sidney Wade
Light language and heavy knowledge of birds unsurpassed in a poet and she's just goodness personified.

Olives by A.E. Stallings
A MacArthur Fellow because she is a badass scholar of Classical texts AND she is also a gifted poet AND she's funny!

The Wild Iris by Louise Glück
It will break your heart in a good way with its spare beauty.

Headwaters by Ellen Bryant Voigt
Her poetry has a breathless sternness like a dynamized Minerva.

Ariel by Sylvia Plath
Because her work is important and good and she wrote it under very challenging circumstances to say the least.

And go back and read the following dead male white poets: Seamus Heaney, Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, W.H. Auden, W.B. Yeats, William Carlos Williams, Stanley Kunitz, and Dylan Thomas. You may think you know them but good poetry will mean something different to you at different times.

Go on, now. Get a little poetry in your life.



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*Not valid on kids, or bronze tickets

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Size Does Matter

Getting your child’s clothing sizes right can be a daunting task; when in doubt, size up and shop smarter

By Christine Chen

Consider myself a savvy shopaholic, but navigating children’s brands can be frustrating and time consuming without knowing how clothes will fit on various body types. As the last of my friends to have kids, I received a ridiculous amount of hand-me-downs, many with tags still attached. I now own enough inventory to open a store. Neither my almost 4-year-old son nor my 21-month-old daughter are able to wear the clothes quickly enough before they are given to the next generation. Thus, I benefit from knowing how various brands fit before I make additional purchases.

Generally, I advise buying up a size or two, since children (especially babies) grow like weeds and many brands shrink an entire size post-dryer. Air drying kids’ clothes would be ideal, but it’s impractical (though I confess I forego the dryer for Ralph Lauren). A more accurate guideline for sizing is height or length rather than age or weight, which can be found in some brands’ size charts online and on most tags. For tips specific to items and brands, consider the following guide when shopping for your kids.

Bodysuits/Pajamas

Had I organized my collection of bodysuits and footy pajamas by size, some would never have been worn at all. I suggest sorting by body length regardless of size or width as length from neck to diaper bottom (allow extra room for the bulk) is most important. You will naturally transition to two-piece pajamas once walking begins and diaper-changing becomes more of a contact sport as footy PJs can be slippery, even with grippy bottoms, and that diaper change takes way too long with a one-piece end point.



Old Navy Halloween 2-piece PJs



babyGap mitten feety PJs



Old Navy Halloween mitten feety PJs

Pants/Shorts

When shopping for bottoms, elastic waists, partial elastic waists, or adjustable waists (with buttons inside) are critical. For babies, waist size is most important for pants to fit over the diaper, and non-elastic waists often make this impossible. Once your little one begins walking, shorter pants work better since cuffs don’t necessarily stay rolled, and no one wants to see their toddler face-flop. Besides, flood pants show off incredibly cute socks! Elastic waists without buttons or zippers are critical for potty-training preschoolers to be able to pull their pants up and down themselves. Tea Collection’s* French Terry pants offer a fashionable alternative to sweats or fleece pants. Old Navy’s pull-on denim offers great fit and quality for the price. Leggings are versatile and easy at any age, wearable before and after their printed sizes. Check out the leggings at babyGap, which are worth the extra cost for the quality, stretch, and lack of baggy knees.



Tea Collection moto pants



Old Navy pull-on denim



babyGap bow back leggings

T-shirts/Polos/Sweaters

Sizing is often inconsistent in this category. On opposite ends of the pricing spectrum, Old Navy and Ralph Lauren tops both tend to run small and narrow and shrink a size post-dryer. Gymboree and Janie & Jack tend to run large and wide and will become the printed size post-dryer. Tea Collection, babyGap, and Peek** are mostly true to size with minimal shrinkage.



babyGap sweater



Tea Collection pink animal sweater



Tea Collection long sleeve tee



Peek Emma top



Peek Eva dress



Tea Collection green floral kimono dress



Old Navy plaid dress

Dresses

Dresses for babies and toddlers are easier to buy since they tend not to be form fitting. Buying based on length rather than size ensures a better fit. Once they become too short, most dresses can transform into a top paired with leggings (most Peek and Tea Collection dresses seamlessly change from dress to top). For fitted dresses, sizing across brands seems to correlate with sizing for tops.

***Enter code GOLDENGATEMOTHERS to receive 20% off your order on TeaCollection.com. Offer valid Oct. 1-15, 2017. Excludes Patagonia, Livie & Luca, Saltwater, and Everyday Play Sets.**

****15% off full-priced items at the 2156 Chestnut St. store with proof of GGMG membership. Offer valid Oct. 7-22, 2017.**

Christine has analyzed and advised consumer companies for a career, regularly conducting “market research” at the mall or online, which has only made her shopping addiction worse. One of her son’s first words was “Polo.”

BRAND	TOPS	BOTTOMS
babyGap	True to size, minimal shrinkage	Runs big, wide, & long, minimal shrinkage
Old Navy	Runs small and lean, shrinks a size	True to size, runs lean, minimal shrinkage
Peek	True to size, minimal shrinkage	True to size, minimal shrinkage
Polo Ralph Lauren	Runs small but long & lean, shrinks a size	Runs big, wide, & long, minimal shrinkage
Tea Collection	True to size, minimal shrinkage	True to size, minimal shrinkage
Carter's	Runs small, shrinks a size	Runs small, shrinks a size
Gymboree	Runs large & wide, shrinks to printed size	True to size, runs long & lean, minimal shrinkage
Janie & Jack	Runs large but lean, minimal shrinkage	True to size, runs long & lean, minimal shrinkage
H&M	True to size, minimal shrinkage	True to size, minimal shrinkage
Mini Boden	True to size, minimal shrinkage	True to size, minimal shrinkage



Career Day

Self-confidence, planning, and being willing to tell your story are essential to growing your career. Just don't forget that for parents, it's all a balancing act.

By Neha Mandal Masson Photography by Petra Cross Photography

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to take on a bigger job at a large company in the tech space. It was a chance to step into a big leadership position with more responsibilities and professional growth. Everything sounded perfect...so why did I feel such mixed emotions when deciding whether or not to take the job? My first instinct was to ask myself: am I ready for a larger leadership role? What if I fail? Am I qualified enough or have I oversold myself? Then came the mom guilt. Would my toddler be OK if I wasn't around as much? How will we make it work with two parents in very demanding jobs?

In the end, I decided to say yes. At first I was hesitant, self-doubt coursing through my veins, hoping my new employers wouldn't realize I wasn't as special as they thought. Slowly, with the help of friends, family, introspection, and time, I was able to say yes emphatically and confidently; I knew I was qualified and had skills that were desperately needed. Great! That was step one. That didn't make the reality of the situation go away. Would I come home from a long business trip and find my son subsisting on donuts and pizza? Who would make sure his 18-month checkup happened? Did anyone do a grocery run for

school snack week? Would people judge if I took conference calls during school drop-offs? The truth is that in many households, these responsibilities often fall on moms, so we tend to tie all of that beautiful chaos to our decision making in a way that fathers may not. Whether it's a question of taking on that difficult project, asking for a promotion, or starting a company, career-growth opportunities come with costs of which mothers often feel the pain more acutely than others. Additionally, there tends to be a struggle with the internal challenges of being a woman in the workplace. Women more often

than men tend to question their abilities and second-guess their qualifications, which further confounds the path to career growth. Regina L.*, a software engineer and mom of a 1- and 4-year-old, shares that she has passed up great career opportunities because of this self-doubt. "I didn't apply for a huge role on my team last year because I feared failing in a new, more technical role," she shared. "I have the skills, the expertise, and I know I'm more qualified than the guy who got the job. But when push came to shove, I feared being measured against others and failing if I did get the job." The obvious question is: why? Why are women, particularly working mothers who are qualified, educated, and experienced, so often plagued with these issues in professional life? Is the deck stacked against us, or do we need to change our own thinking? Perhaps it's a bit of both.

Changing the story
Iris Charabi-Berggren is a certified career and life coach in San Francisco, and mom to 15-year-old twins. She has worked with hundreds of men and women seeking professional growth, across demographics and career stages. "I definitely see that women are more prone than men to allowing self-doubt and the worries of family life to affect career decisions," she says. However, she goes on, "I want to emphasize I also see this with men, and much of it relates to cultural norms, not just gender roles." During coaching sessions, she often asks clients to evaluate their professional competencies on a scale of 1-10. "In these evaluations, women will usually give themselves high evaluations, nines and even tens. If I ask them to write out a list of accomplishments, they can fill pages and pages with impressive feats," she explains. "They seem to know their true added value in their professions. But there is a disconnect between their true self-evaluations and the verbal story they construct to tell others." When women explain in words what they do and how good they are at their jobs, the story often changes, she says, with a lot of hedging and apologizing for not being technical enough, smart enough, or needing more skills than they have. She particularly sees this

disconnect with women in high-stakes leadership positions. "I call this synthetic storytelling," says Charabi-Berggren. "For some reason, women (and some men as well) tend to shy away from painting themselves as highly competent, successful individuals. The thing is, we have the ultimate power to craft our stories, so we might as well be accurate, authentic, and unapologetic. But often, that isn't happening and that directly impacts chances at career growth." A lot of this self-doubt may be cultural, she points out. In American culture, women have traditionally been nurturers, with high emotional quotients and an expectation of being agreeable, likeable, and altruistic. "It all goes back to your history," Charabi-Berggren says. "Who were your role models? What behaviors were reinforced positively? What did your culture expect of you?" When it comes to the question of why women like Regina don't raise their hands for bigger jobs, much of it relates to taking risks. "Women tend to be much more cautious and calculated risk-takers," Charabi-Berggren estimates, "which serves us in many instances—for example, women tend to be better at saving and investing, according to research." Charabi-Berggren also notes that

Women more often than men tend to question their abilities and second-guess their qualifications, which further confounds the path to career growth.

women starting their own businesses tend to demonstrate significant risk taking, motivated by the rewards of a flexible work environment. "But perhaps [calculated risk taking] doesn't serve us in high-performing professional cultures like Silicon Valley or Wall Street," she says. When people start families or take on other big responsibilities such as buying a home, their risk tolerance tends to decrease, simply because there is so much more to lose if they fail. You can imagine the effect of having children to care for on that risk tolerance.



Playing the game
There is no doubt that it's challenging being a woman in almost any professional environment. Many men and even other women may look at us and assume we aren't as "valuable" in our jobs, perhaps because of gender stereotypes or our traditional responsibilities inside of the home. If you want proof of that mentality, then consider the persistent wage gap across industries in the U.S. This narrative itself can impact self-confidence and feelings of self-worth in the workplace, and ultimately potential for career growth. Additionally, work environments have traditionally been set up and run by men, therefore the rules have also been set by them in most cases, with traditionally "male" traits garnering praise and rewards. Being emotional or comprising is often seen as a weakness. Confidence can be prized over competence. In the journey of career growth, much of it comes down to game play. Even if confidence doesn't exude from your pores, at high leadership levels, there's an expectation of being assertive and confident. "For women," Charabi-Berggren says, "I often work on being authentic yet assertive to a degree where they're confident in a way that disarms people. It's a beautiful fine line, confident yet warm, so that people can hear you regardless



of gender.” The truth is that confidence can be perceived differently when women project it versus men.

Clarity of thought, controlling body language and speech, and putting people at ease all play a part in projecting confidence. These things are learned, but we don’t explicitly teach it. “There’s this fascinating science experiment conducted by Dr. Lillanne Mujica-Parodi at Stony Brook University in New York State,” Charabi-Berggren shares. “She took one group of people to the gym and then collected their sweat samples afterwards. A separate group of people was taken skydiving, and sweat samples were also collected afterwards. Another group smelled both sets of samples without knowing the difference. With the gym group, nothing happened; their brains stayed normal. But sweat from the skydiving group lit up every part of the brain associated with fear.”

This is to say that, whatever you bring to a room, your fears, apprehensions, enthusiasms—everything is communicated to the people around you. Small gestures such as going into a meeting early can make a huge difference. Studies show that even a simple introductory handshake can increase the degree to which people want you to succeed. Now that’s playing the game and setting yourself up to succeed.

Having it all

Once we start advancing in our careers and taking on those bigger jobs, there’s the question of making it work. Many people, and women in particular, struggle with jobs that threaten work-life balance. This applies to women without children as well, who tend to look for that balance to set themselves up to have families in the future.

“The way I suggest thinking about it, is in increments of time,” Charabi-Berggren shares. “If you’re committing to a demanding job, ask yourself how long you want to commit to that. It might mean no vacations, or giving just 30 percent of your time to yourself and 70 percent to your job. Then decide how long you’re willing to say yes to that.” She emphasizes that deciding to say yes for a specific period of time is very important. The realities and compromises may feel very doable if it’s a six-month period, versus three years. Set expectations that will allow you to honor yourself, your health, the needs of family, and other commitments.

“I read *Lean In*,” says Priya R*, a marketing professional and mother of a 5-year-old. “It seems very convenient and easy to criticize women for not raising their

hands at work when you’ve got infinite resources to take care of everything else the rest of us struggle to balance.” The truth is everyone, but particularly parents, has to look at the context of their lives when making career decisions. Everyone needs to ask themselves, “how much do I want to push here in the context of my entire life?”

“What happens is that people look at their careers as an independent item in their lives, but it’s not. This is what’s missing in the *Lean In* stuff,” Charabi-Berggren says.

That brings us to the other piece of the puzzle, which is figuring out who will support you and your family when you do decide to amp things up at work, and get them on board. Within a family, taking on a consuming job will have implications on spouses or

partners, kids, family members, friends, and even hobbies. That’s okay; the fact that we lead full lives that mix passion, nurturing, ambition, is simply real. This means asking partners or parents to play larger or new roles to make time to unlock your potential for career growth, or relying on paid help to fill in any gaps. “Understand the circle of impact and set up a structure that makes it work so that you can truly focus on your professional commitments,” Charabi-Berggren advises.

She also shares that highly successful people look for support in the workplace as well, by putting in place powerful mentors that keep them focused and inspired. “You need an unbiased, objective person or people who can provide feedback and be a sounding board,” she says. For example, career coaches, mentors, or anyone outside of your organization, where you are their agenda without any complexity or politics. Keep in mind the importance of including male mentors as well, since men understand the behaviors and driving forces that inform

male-dominated cultures, which means they have valuable insights and perspectives. “And invest in your networks!” Charabi-Berggren emphasizes.

“Women particularly don’t invest in building and maintaining their networks enough; they have to foster connections to stay visible.” Despite being natural relationship builders, there’s a need for women to feel more at ease tapping into and taking advantage of networks when seeking career growth or building their own professional brands.

When I think of my toddler son, I think of who I want him to see looking back at him. I hope he sees a woman who pursued growth in all aspects of life, and someone who played the game without losing any of the traits he loves about her. ❖

*Last names withheld by request.

Neha is a mother to a 2-year-old and a vice president of marketing at a large technology company. Her superpower is multitasking like a boss.

Thursday 9/7			
GMT-07			
4pm	4:30p – 5:30p Performance review		4:30p - pick up kids
5pm	5:30p – 6:30p Happy Hour		5p - cook dinner
6pm			5:30p – 6:30p help kids with homework

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Growing Spiritually in the Bay Area

Exploring the meaning of life and other existential questions with an array of spiritual opportunities in our own backyard

By Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss

The other day during bath time, my 5-year-old daughter surprised me with, “Mommy, how did the earth become alive?” After a day of fighting traffic to and from work, tending to two dropoffs and pickups, and now deep in the evening dinner-bath-teeth-brushing-pajama shuffle, I wasn’t equipped to answer this question. I muttered something incoherent about God while my husband interjected with a story about two rocks crashing into one another. Needless to say, it was not our most meaningful parenting moment. This experience left me realizing that not only am I incredibly delayed in getting my child baptized, but I also need to start thinking about our family’s spiritual growth.

If you have young children, you may or may not have contemplated how you’re going to answer questions about our existence on this planet, where we came from, where we go when we die, what our purpose is, and why bad things happen to good people. Perhaps, like me, you’re looking to learn a few answers yourself before you attempt to guide those little humans toward a greater spiritual understanding. Maybe you want to push beyond the boundaries of your own spiritual upbringing, or you simply want to take some time to connect as a family and experience something deeper. Fortunately, opportunities abound in the Bay Area to connect, explore, and grow in the spiritual realm.



Florian Brody

Green Gulch Farm Zen Center

www.sfzc.org/green-gulch

1601 Shoreline Hwy, Muir Beach
415.383.3134

This lovely little outdoor retreat area is also known as the Green Dragon Temple (Soryu-ji). Established in 1962, it is a Buddhist practice center in the Japanese Soto Zen tradition. On the first Sunday of the month, the center opens its doors for a family-friendly practice from 9:45 to 11:45 a.m. with a short talk at the beginning geared toward children. Little ones then leave to participate in their own program such as seasonal farm projects, mindfulness, yoga, contemplative handwork, and ritual. Participating families are invited to stay for tea, juice, muffins, and the farmers market. There is a suggested donation of \$20 per family.



Allen Kennedy

Spirit Rock Meditation Center

www.spiritrock.org

5000 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Woodacre
415.488.0164

The website boasts that Spirit Rock Meditation Center is “a refuge from everyday life where it’s truly possible to quiet the mind, soften the heart and see life in a new way.” Nestled in just over 400 acres of woodlands in West Marin County, the center offers programming on Dharma, mindfulness, and meditation. Join a Family Day on Sunday, October 15, from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Community Meditation Center. The morning starts with a program that weaves the theme of the day into songs, skits, and family activities. During the second half of the day, youth ages 4 to 14 will attend age-appropriate groups with Spirit Rock leaders to participate in play, art, song, and mindfulness activities. Parents will have an opportunity to meditate, hear a talk related to parenting as practice, and connect with one another through group discussions. Participants are asked to contribute on a sliding scale of \$65 to \$200, and bring lunch and something to share for a community potluck. Scholarships and volunteer opportunities are available, and no one is turned away due to a lack of funds.



Alain McLaughlin

GLIDE Memorial Church

www.glide.org

330 Ellis St.

415.674.6000

You may remember GLIDE as the church that Will Smith’s character, Chris Gardner, attends during his bleakest times living on the streets of San Francisco in *The Pursuit of Happyness*. GLIDE prides itself on being a “radically inclusive, just, and loving community mobilized to alleviate suffering and break the cycles of poverty and marginalization.” Celebrations take place every Sunday at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. The sanctuary fills up quickly, so guests are encouraged to arrive early to ensure seating. Aside from the weekly Sunday services and gospel choir, this special community offers an incredible amount of children’s programming and events throughout the year.



Jewish Community Center of San Francisco

www.jccsf.org

3200 California St.

415.292.1200

The Jewish Community Center of San Francisco is the oldest Jewish center on the West Coast, providing educational, social, cultural, and fitness programs to the community since 1877. All families are invited to attend Jewish education classes and holiday celebrations, and interact with the changing decorations and artwork displays. Family-friendly gatherings include special Second Friday Shabbat celebrations in the atrium. Enjoy musical guests, food, and Shabbat blessings starting at 3:30 p.m.



Jill Baker Photography

First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco

www.uusf.org

1187 Franklin St.

415.776.4580

The stated mission of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco is “to be a sanctuary for individual religious growth and learning, to celebrate life and worship in diverse fellowship, to bear witness to suffering and joy, and to work for peace and justice in our world.” Open to any and all religions and beliefs, the Unitarian Universalist church is ideal for the curious and the open minded. Sunday services begin with adults and children for a Message of All Ages at 11 a.m. Children’s programming then occurs from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Every fourth Sunday, the church hosts special art workshops for children; the art room opens as early as 10 a.m. ♦

Jennifer is the mother of two very inquisitive children. On Sunday mornings you can find her hugging a mug of coffee and praying the kids don’t wake up...just yet.

*If you have young children,
you may or may not have contemplated
how you’re going to answer questions about
our existence on this planet.*



Jill Baker Photography



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NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS: NEIGHBORHOOD 6

Neighborhood 6 has a very active group made up of moms and kids of all ages coming from Balboa Terrace, Forest Hill, Golden Gate Heights, Laguna Honda, Lakeshore, Inner/Outer Sunset, St. Francis Wood, Miraloma Park, Parkside, West Portal, Clarendon Terrace, Cole Valley, Lower and Upper Haight, Midtown Terrace, the Panhandle, and Twin Peaks.

Dru Garza is the neighborhood director and hosts our quarterly family playdates at the beautiful San Francisco Botanical Garden. Keep an eye out for the next one, which will be later this year. Lupe Amador and Semmantha Chie are our two newest volunteers who have recently taken on our Moms-Only Wine Night, which falls on the fourth Tuesday of the month. They have hosted events at several neighborhood hot spots, from a Giants margarita-themed night to tiki cocktails and

comedy. Kate Bartenwerfer continues to host our book club every six weeks, which is open to anyone who has read the book or just wants a night out with some fun ladies. We’re always looking for incredible mamas to join our team...let us know if you’re interested!

We definitely love to keep busy in our neighborhood. If you live in the area (or even if you don’t), we look forward to seeing you soon!

To join your Neighborhood Group, log into *ggmg.org*, select “My Dashboard,” then scroll down the left side menu to “Find and Join Groups.” Please select as many groups as you desire. You may also email us at *playgroups@ggmg.org* and ask to be added to a specific group.



KIDS ACTIVITIES

GGMG Exclusive: Helen Diller Family Preschool Tour at the JCC

Spend an hour with the Education Director at Helen Diller Family Preschool discussing logistics, teachers, and the education program followed by a tour of the school.

DATE: Tuesday, October 17
TIME: 9 to 10:30 a.m.
PLACE: 3200 California St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Call Stacey Mangold at (415) 276-1538 to schedule a tour

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Infant and Child CPR Class

GGMG is pleased to offer a discounted infant and child CPR class for our members (\$45 per person) on Wednesday, October 18. This class will provide CPR basics, the latest in CPR techniques, and instruction in how to prevent choking. Experts recommend reviewing this information every two years. Family members and caregivers welcome.

Please RSVP carefully as there are no refunds. If you are unable to attend the event, someone may attend in your place, or you can ask GGMG Community Support to be rescheduled for a future date.

DATE: Wednesday, October 18
TIME: 6 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: Sports Basement, 610 Old Mason St.
COST: \$45

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org/calendar/event/229716/2017/10/18

JUST FOR MOMS

Mommy Makeover Party

Do you have a holiday party coming up and don’t know what to wear? Do you have a date night with your partner on the calendar and don’t feel sexy in anything you have? Or are you just sick of throwing on the same old clothes and want something fun and fresh to wear?

Indulge yourself and join us for bubbly drinks, nutritious treats, and lots of fun. Phyllis Timoll of Well Woman will be there with her top tips on self-care for moms. As a partner in pioneering these in-store private parties, GGMG guests (you!) will receive extra deep discounts. This is a private party with no walk-ins allowed, so be sure to RSVP before it fills up!

DATE: Thursday, November 9
TIME: 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
PLACE: Ambiance, 1858 Union Street
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org

PARENT EDUCATION

Get Ready for Private Preschool Applications

Betsy Little and Paula Molligan of Little and Molligan will provide an overview and advice on navigating the private preschool application process. Little and Molligan offers a professional service to parents in the school placement process in San Francisco and Marin. Bring your questions!

DATE: Thursday, October 5
TIME: 7 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: St. Mary’s Cathedral, 1111 Gough St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org/calendar/event/231944/2017/10/05

Preparing Your Private Kindergarten Application

Betsy Little and Paula Molligan of Little and Molligan will provide an overview and advice on navigating the private kindergarten application and admission process. Little and Molligan offers a professional service to parents in the school placement process in San Francisco and Marin. Bring your questions!

DATE: Wednesday, October 11
TIME: 7 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: St. Mary’s Cathedral, 1111 Gough St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org/calendar/event/231945/2017/10/11

Real Estate and Schools in San Francisco and the Peninsula

Join us for a discussion about the best schools, communities, and the cost of housing on the Peninsula and in San Francisco. Hosted by realtors Paul Huber of Coldwell Banker and Heidi Maierhofer of Keller Williams, and Julie Shumate, mortgage banker with Stearns Lending.

These three parents and real estate professionals will share knowledge about choosing schools, housing price trends, and how buying real estate ties into the school process. Both moms and dads are encouraged to attend!

DATE: Thursday, October 12
TIME: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
PLACE: Coldwell Banker, 2355 Market St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: email.shumate:julie@gmail.com

Private Middle Schools—What to Look for and Where to Start

Quality and availability of schools is a major concern for parents in the San Francisco Bay Area. Join Betsy Little and Paula Molligan of Little and Molligan for a discussion on the private middle school search and application process. They cover topics such as school options, determining fit, discussing a timeline, evaluating a school, what private schools look for, and do’s/don’ts of the private school admissions process.

DATE: Thursday, October 12
TIME: 7 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: Community Room, 200 Brannan St.
COST: Free, must RSVP to reserve your spot

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org/calendar/event/231755/2017/10/12

Real Estate and Schools in Marin County and San Francisco

Join us for a discussion about the best schools, communities, and the housing prices in Marin County and San Francisco. Hosted by realtors Emily Beaven of Compass and Liz McCarthy of Paragon Real Estate Group, and mortgage banker Julie Shumate of Stearns Lending.

These three moms and real estate professionals will share knowledge about choosing schools, housing price trends, and how buying real estate ties into the school process. Both moms and dads are encouraged to attend!

DATE: Thursday, October 19
TIME: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
PLACE: Compass Real Estate, 891 Beach St.
COST: Free, must register to reserve a spot

REGISTRATION: www.ggmgsfmarin1017.eventbrite.com

PPS-SF—Countdown to Kindergarten

Come to this informative workshop to gain an understanding of your public school options and navigating the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) enrollment process for Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and Kindergarten. You will learn more about the SFUSD student assignment system, discover options and strategies for the enrollment process, and find out key dates and other important enrollment information.

DATE: Thursday, October 26
TIME: 6:30 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: St. Mary’s Cathedral, 1111 Gough St.
COST: Free, must register to reserve a spot

REGISTRATION: <http://bit.ly/ppssf-kinder-1026>

CAREERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

A Morning with Moms in Tech

Join us for a panel discussion with tech industry leaders from companies including Google, Slack, Lyft, and Twilio. Learn how these moms have built successful careers in the tech industry while balancing family, personal lives, and everything in between. Coffee and light breakfast bites will be served.

DATE: Friday, October 13
TIME: 9 a.m.
PLACE: 375 Beale St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.ggmg.org/calendar/event/230869/2017/10/13

Work-Life Balance Webinar

As a mom, you juggle a lot. The kids, the job, the homefront, and sometimes it can feel overwhelming. You’d like to find more balance, but you’re not sure how or when you’ll find the time. GGMG is thrilled to be hosting a free webinar that you can attend in your pajamas, from home. Together we’ll examine balance and how it means so much more than simply juggling endless tasks. You’ll walk away with easy, go-to practices for re-centering and re-aligning your to-do list so that there’s more room for those things that light you up, more space to honor the precious moments with your family, and more joy in your days. This 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 who recognize the sense of being overwhelmed in today’s world.

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

Committee Spotlight: GGMG Website Transition Team

The GGMG community recently saw the debut of its long-awaited new website. Growing pains early on were addressed by dedicated GGMG volunteers working alongside website developers, and the site now boasts improved speed, better functionality, new features such as Most Popular Topics Today/This Month/Ever, discussion tools, and some old favorite functions (posts get bumped up with each new comment, lightning bolt signifies hot topics). The website transition has been managed by just a handful of volunteers, all working overtime to improve your online GGMG experience.

What's your favorite feature of the new website?

Addie Bjornsen: It's OURS. We're no longer restricted by the limitations a platform like BigTent presented us with, so we can really tailor the website to meet our community's needs. It is much easier for us to continually improve upon and add new features as we see fit. I also love the fact that we have incorporated EventBrite for events and RSVPs.

Lani Schreiberstein: The back button works! I also like being able to reply to a reply in the discussions.

What are some cool new features that most people might not be aware of?

Lani: You have a mobile membership card to show to vendors. Click on the person icon at the top right and select Membership Card.

Sarah Soto: Use an asterisk when you want to search for patterns. For example, searching for “kid*” returns discussions that have either kid, kids, or kidding, and *ing* returns things that have “ing” anywhere in the word, like kissing or lovingly. You can also use a pipe when you want

to search for multiple words, for example: mother* helper | nanny.

Any unexpected challenges?

Cathy Tran: The transition was totally volunteer-run, so we were not able to run QA (quality assurance) for the site the way a company normally would, which led to a lot of issues we didn't anticipate. It's hard to find 4,000 people willing to volunteer to QA something!

Addie: The initial migration. I've always been a very active poster, so as a user, it was frustrating for me too. We were excited to bring our members a fresh, new look and a new website, so when we ran into the initial migration issues, it was extremely frustrating and disheartening.

How many hours have you worked on the transition?

Cathy: Probably 40 hours the week after the transition. I almost missed my son's preschool graduation answering emails and on calls with website developers. For the last three years, I have had a 1-2 hour weekly call with our developers.

Sarah: I probably volunteered close to 20 hours a week during initial migrations. Definitely not sustainable with a full-time job and kids.

What has improved since the initial migration?

Cathy: The site is working so much faster now, the notification systems are fixed, and the search is awesome!

Lani: You can now have your GGMG Mail messages forwarded to your personal email by adjusting the setting at the top of your notification preferences page. Just remember you have to reply to the messages through GGMG mail.

Careers and Entrepreneurs

We are pleased to present three exciting upcoming events. See page 33 for RSVP details.

A Morning with Moms in Tech will feature some of the city's best and brightest moms working in the tech business. Set for October 13 at Twilio, from 9 to 10 a.m., join us for great conversation, coffee, and light bites. Limited to 30 members.

December is a time to reflect on the months past and the year to come. Join our committee member Marija Djordjevic for a special meditation session and attend our Work-Life Balance Webinar on December 8 at noon to help you start the new year with intention.

Feel like you have a closet full of clothes with nothing to wear? Get inspired with the Capsule Wardrobe event! Check ggmg.org for future details on this event happening early in 2018.



Member Support

Nine years ago GGMG was the only large mothers' group in the city. Since then, many other groups have started on different platforms, but GGMG Member Support makes our community much stronger than its 4300+ individuals. With our new website slowing member interaction, we are appealing to YOU, our members, to help spread the word about the services that Community Support provides.

GGMG Member Support offers membership scholarships, meals, babysitting, resource lists, and support groups. You can read more about our work at www.ggmg.org/about-us/community-support.

Please email us at member.support@ggmg.org if you need a hand. But more than that, keep your eyes peeled for members who are

having a rough time and would welcome some help but don't feel comfortable asking for it. Maybe one mom's children are giving her a tough run, keeping her up at night, or having troubles at school. Maybe a fellow member is battling health issues or going through a divorce, or you see an unhealthy relationship needing support. Maybe she lost her job, or her partner did, or they are facing eviction or a rent increase beyond their means. This is not an exhaustive list, but just a few ideas of when to turn to us, for yourself or a fellow member.

Remember what Mr. Rogers said: “In times of difficulties, look for the helpers.” We are that helper. You are that helper. GGMG is your village.

Are You Maximizing Your GGMG Membership?

Whether you are a new member or a longtime veteran, the Membership Committee wants to thank you for your loyalty to GGMG. Remember to take advantage of ALL your membership benefits!

For the amazing list of partner perks offered by Gymboree, JCCSF, Peekadoodle, Recess, and UrbanSitter, visit www.ggmg.org/partnerships.html. Additionally, download the entire list of local business discounts on ggmg.org.

Use GGMG to meet other moms and families face-to-face and turn online connections into real-life friendships. Seven Neighborhood Meetup subgroups hold events regularly all over the city; join your nearest neighborhood subgroup on ggmg.org to receive more information about what's going on near you!

Our rockstar community and member support groups facilitate donation drives and support members in need. Know another mom, even yourself, who could use a little help? Reach out to member.support@ggmg.org—that's what they are here for!

Thank you for being part of THE BEST mom community in the city. Interested in being involved on the Membership Committee? There are benefits and perks to volunteering. We have volunteer positions open, come join us! Questions? Email membership@ggmg.org.





The GGMG Blog is Here!

- GGMG is excited to announce the launch of our new blog.
- Read about topics relevant to motherhood, parenting, and city life with kids
 - Enter contests and snag valuable discounts on services and products for your life
 - Share resources with other parents
 - Continue discussions from *GGMG Magazine*

Visit ggmg.org/blog and become part of the conversation.

New Arrivals



- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Meera Jegathesan | Baby Aran Jega |
| Andrea S. | Baby Kieran Crosby |
| Yi L. | Baby Kai Liu |
| Leah P. | Baby Serafina Chen |
| Leah and Jacqui K. | Baby Swift McKinnon |
| Stephanie J. | Baby Robert Kai |
| Sarah D. | Baby Sumner James |
| Amy Poynter | Baby Emmett Zayne |
| Mareen W. | Baby Norah Sophie |
| Jaclyn Karnowski | Baby Leo Miguel |
| Nicole L. | Baby Charlotte Adeline |
| Molly Tang | Baby Elise Alexandra |
| Amy Bacharach | Baby Sebastian Raymond |
| Rachel W. | Baby Sophie Valerielynn |



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

To announce your new arrival in the magazine and for a chance to win a Babyganics gift set, fill out the form at tinyurl.com/ggmgnewarrival



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I ♥ Mom

Seeing Ourselves in Our Children

By Tara Hardesty

Months before my first son's birth, I was struck with an overwhelming sense of his personality. Accompanying the nausea and exhaustion was the distinct feeling of being occupied; this tiny force of nature growing inside of me was already asserting himself. Having never been pregnant, I was surprised. While the other aspects of growing a human were expected, I wasn't prepared for this overwhelming awareness of who he was. I wrote everything down, to remember in detail, and to compare perception with reality after his arrival.

My son arrived 10 days late. We tried everything to get labor moving naturally, but with no progress, we went ahead with an induction. I was convinced that he was stubborn, like his mom and dad. As it turns out, my sweet son was not staying put due to stubbornness: he was stuck. After 36 hours of labor, we were ushered into an emergency c-section. My obstetrician's first words after delivering him were, "It's a toddler!" Weighing in at 10 pounds, 14 ounces and 22 inches long, Luke arrived into the world the physical equivalent of an emphatic exclamation point.

Born with a scowl on his face, Luke had eyebrows knitted together in what would appear to be consternation at his new circumstances. His stern expression didn't disappear in the weeks after birth; it was his Resting Baby Face for what would be the better part of 6 months. When people cooed over him, he

that, so the men will bond with the baby." I thought this was an interesting statement—though scientific studies on this have produced mixed results, the premise certainly makes sense to me. In my son's case, it certainly seems to be true. It's hard to tell that the portrait of my husband from the early '70s isn't my son.

But the nurture part is what interests me the most. Genetics have handed down the foundation to my children, but what will

happen next? I am the youngest of five children, and we could not be more different from each other, both genetically and in personality. I am a tall, pale person, the kind of pale with a bluish tint. Yet two of my sisters have olive skin and are six inches shorter than me. We all have outgoing personalities, but we present them in very different ways. One is stoic and reserved, the other is a hugger out of the gate and will make you feel like family in minutes. It has always been a

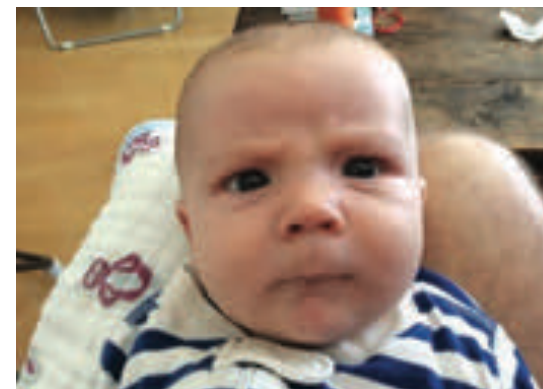
head scratcher that two parents created five people who look and act so differently.

My husband and I are each loud and assertive in our own ways. We both struggle a little with anxiety, which my husband displays by always moving and hustling about while I nurture a severe case of overthinking. As we watch our sons grow, I wonder if via day-to-day contact with their sponge-like brains they will pick up our anxiety-fueled tendencies.

It amazes me to observe personality traits of both his parents as I watch my eldest son grow. Some, like the scowl, were visible from the beginning, while others emerge over time, like the sparkle in his eye and his ability to laugh at his own jokes. That's me. And the uncanny skill he has with tools and building. We could track that one through both of our families of builders. He wields a shovel and digs like a 60-year-old farmer, which would make my grandfather proud. Each day, we learn something new about him. While the framework seems very familiar, the little character he is becoming is completely original.

I recently revisited what I wrote during my pregnancy. My son proved to have the larger-than-life personality I predicted, the kind that is noticed when entering a room, as a force of nature from the very beginning. ♦

Tara is a mom of two boys, a marketing professional who specializes in commercial real estate ventures, and a freelance writer. She blogs at TheDailyWrites.com about the things she is passionate about: the hairy underbelly of life, motherhood, and entrepreneurship.





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