



APRIL/MAY 2025

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magazine

# Legacy







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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

# Hard to Say Goodbye

By Sonya Luecke-Abrams



Sonya is a mom to three teens and tweens living in Cole Valley. GGMG Magazine has been a part of her life for 13 years and she will miss it terribly.

To say GGMG has played a large role in my journey through motherhood is a gross understatement. In fact, almost every aspect of my experience as a parent has been guided and improved by this organization. GGMG has been the scaffolding that keeps me sane (usually). The early days of the newborn fog found me running to the GGMG forums at all hours, frantically asking for advice on everything from baby sleep noises to poop color

arranging photo shoots, designing spreads, and poring over copy again and again, all while juggling families and careers. I've learned so much from the mothers I've worked with here, and I've received so much love as well, whether in the months following my first husband's death when the whole team rallied to support me or in the more mundane moments of parental overwhelm we all experience. Having these remarkable women by my side has been an honor and a privilege of a lifetime.

In this issue, we hear from many current and former volunteers about what GGMG has meant to them. We also remind you all of the legacy of mothers everywhere, with H.B. Terrell's exploration of mothers who have shaped their eras, and of the power of our mothers to deeply shape our lives and psyche, as Vi Huynh-Dvorak writes about in a reflection on her heart-wrenching relationship with her mother. We are proud of what we've put together in this issue and all the

to milk production. When I finally managed to put on real pants and figure out how to leave the house, GGMG procured me a new social life. The mothers I met in my GGMG baby groups are still among my closest confidantes, sounding boards, and travel partners. Seasoned GGMG members and organization-sponsored events helped me land our first nanny and navigate the perplexingly stressful preschool and kindergarten application processes. And volunteering on the Magazine Committee for the past 12 years has, in addition to keeping my professional editing skills sharp, given me a deeper sense of fulfillment and belonging.

San Francisco's parenting landscape has changed drastically over the past decade. The city has witnessed a steadily declining birthrate, and many factors—from steep housing costs to COVID-induced claustrophobia—have contributed to an exodus of families from the city. Coupled with an explosion in online parenting group choices, these shifting demographics have made it increasingly challenging for GGMG to attract and retain the large number of volunteers necessary to sustain its many hardworking committees. Publishing a professional-quality publication bimonthly takes an enormous amount of (wo)manpower, and GGMG Magazine is no longer able to fill a volunteer roster large enough to manage this task. Our volunteers have put in many years at this publication—most of the magazine staff have been here more than seven years—and before this labor of love becomes more labor and less love, we are choosing to cease publication with this issue. It is not a decision we came to lightly. We love and are proud of our magazine.

An organization is only as strong as its members, and I've been privileged to volunteer with some of the strongest, smartest, most talented, and kindest mothers around. Magazine volunteers put in long hours crafting articles,

**“[B]efore this labor of love becomes more labor and less love, we are choosing to cease publication with this issue. It is not a decision we came to lightly. We love and are proud of our magazine.”**

magazine has achieved since its humble origins as a black-and-white newsletter nearly 30 years ago: the hundreds of articles, the beautiful artwork, and the resonance of our words. Mothers can and do change the world.

## 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.

**This issue made possible by:** My 11-year-old is enjoying middle school so far (yay!) but unexpectedly wants nothing to do with me (I thought I had until high school!!); Just attended my very first neurodivergence conference; Spring break “vacation,” getting excited for longer days and warmer weather; High school applications; A surprisingly pleasant family getaway with two teens; Immense gratitude for both the political and natural landscapes of Northern CA; 40th birthday weekend!

## LETTER FROM THE BOARD:

# Closing a Door

By Connie Lin



Connie and her husband Patrick live in San Francisco with their two kids, ages 8 and 11.

It's bittersweet to say goodbye to GGMG Magazine, my favorite publication to receive in the mail. I remember perusing many issues over the years for advice on raising my then toddlers, inspirational ideas of what to do around San Francisco, previews of developmental milestones, as well as supportive words of wisdom from other parents who have thrived through the childhood years. I will miss seeing the gorgeous cover

artwork showcasing cheerful and sometimes goofy images of mamas and kids each month.

Created shortly after GGMG was founded three decades ago, GGMG Magazine is one of the primary ways that our organization has communicated with you to share the latest and greatest on what's going on in the world of parenthood, a guidebook for how to parent, and a preview of upcoming GGMG events. When GGMG was started in 1996, a group of 12 San Francisco moms had a vision to enable first-time moms to get together and create a community of support for each other. As they tell it, San Francisco was a “city with no Internet, no smart phones, no kid drop-off, no organic formula, and no cute pregnancy clothes” to stave off the isolation of new motherhood. Without use of the Internet, GGMG grew by word of mouth alone. Moms met other moms on the playground—in most cases, the only place for new moms to find each other. Rosters were simply paper lists and meetings were at members' houses, often involving a bunch of toddlers

crawling around. By 2012, GGMG was the largest mothers' group in the U.S., with 6,000 members.

Nowadays, we've found that parents have increasingly moved online and to social media to connect with each other and seek out parenting resources, while print media has dropped in popularity. And recruiting and keeping GGMG volunteers has become especially difficult post-COVID.

Writing the Letter From the Board piece has given me a small glimpse into the thoughtful planning and collaboration involved in creating this publication. Putting together comprehensive, thoughtful, and well-written issues requires a tremendous amount of time and effort from our volunteer magazine team.

I am grateful to our amazing editorial team who have led the helm for countless years, to all the writers who have shared their voices and perspectives, and to the many many

**“It's bittersweet to say goodbye to GGMG Magazine, my favorite publication to receive in the mail.”**

others who have contributed to our magazine. While I'm sorry this will be the last edition, I hope that you might explore our online magazine archives, as much of the content is still relevant.

GGMG is approaching our 30th year, and we need you. Volunteering to lead or help at events, brainstorming event ideas, and encouraging moms to come to our events are just a few ways to help. Please email [recruiting@ggmg.org](mailto:recruiting@ggmg.org) to learn more.

Warm wishes and see you at our GGMG events!

## COVER OUTTAKES



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

Cover photo by Mini Anna Photography  
Cover models: Thomas (7), Henry (5), Emily (mom), Laura (grandma)





## Archiving Your Child's Artwork in Style

By Yuliya Patsay

Originally published in the December 2023/January 2024 Home issue.



**Artkive** offers a service where you can mail your child's artwork to them and they will professionally photograph and scan it. They will then create a hardcover book filled with the images. There is an option for them to mail back the original artwork and a USB drive containing the high-resolution images.

**Keepy** offers a similar service to Artkive, but in addition to creating books, they also offer a variety of other products, such as calendars, greeting cards, and home décor items, that can be customized with your child's artwork.

**Plum Print** sends you a prepaid box that you fill with your child's artwork. They will then professionally photograph, categorize, and create a custom coffee table book for you. They specialize in creating custom books of your child's artwork, family photos, and recipes. They offer a variety of book sizes and styles, and you can even customize the cover with your child's name.

*Yuliya is a Soviet-born, San Francisco-raised teller of stories. When she's not voice acting, writing her newsletter Buckle Up Bubelah, or driving carpool, she's on the prowl for a microphone and an audience to entertain.*



Nick Sherman, via Flickr

## Legacy Walks, 24th Street Corridor

By Sonya Luecke-Abrams

In a city that's constantly changing, San Francisco's Legacy Business Directory aims to preserve the character of the city's neighborhoods by incentivizing long-term businesses to maintain their physical features, traditions, and community ties. If it seems like the city skyline is growing at a dizzying pace, it can be grounding as well as fun to bring little ones on strolls through some of the most densely populated legacy business neighborhoods. The city's Legacy Business Program website has suggestions for nearly a dozen walks in the city, but here we will focus on one neighborhood, offering a sneak peek of some of 24th Street's legacy businesses.

Enjoy a vibrantly colored and culturally rich walk through this Mission District micro-hood. Stop in at **Precita Eyes Muralists**, which has been around since 1977 and offers art workshops for kids and adults, mural tours, and a selection of clothing, mugs, books, and art supplies. Introduce your little ones to the classic diner fare at **St. Francis Fountain**, which stakes its claim as the city's oldest diner, stretching back to 1918. Pop into **Adobe Books**, which is almost entirely volunteer-run and has fought off online competition and SF rental market woes throughout the decades to stand strong as a community gathering space. And since we all know there's always room for a second dessert, finish off your walk with a stop at **La Mejor Bakery** to experience the flavors and traditions of Mexico through sweets and baked goods.

*As a 24-year resident of San Francisco, Sonya has witnessed an enormous amount of change and cherishes the longtime local businesses still standing in her little neighborhood of Cole Valley.*

## A Toast to Those Who Helped

By Yuliya Patsay

**I**t takes a village to raise a child and the surrounding state to raise a mother. So, let's toast to everyone who helped, for all that they have done.

**To** the labor and delivery nurse who actually read the birth plan and kept you from making a different choice than the one you had wanted.

**To** the labor and delivery nurse who read the birth plan, and then read the room, and kept you from suffering for a piece of paper.

**To** the barista at Starbucks who could see how overwhelmed you were with your newborn and let you hang out in the coffee shop until you got your bearings, not minding that you never actually ordered anything.

**To** the mom at the playground who spotted you an extra diaper when your little champ blew through not one, not two, but three extra diapers.

**To** your partner who got up in the middle of the night and changed the diaper so you could sleep.

**To** your sorority sister who organized the meal train.

**To** your actual sister who organized your baby shower.

**To** the moms on the online forums who answered your questions about pacifiers versus no pacifiers.

**To** your friends who you invite over even when your house is a mess instead of perfect.

**To** all the moms who supported your decision to not go back to work.

**To** all the moms who supported your decision to go back to the office and hire a great nanny.

**To** your mother-in-law, who never offered you any advice unless you asked for it.

**To** your grandmother, who held onto the baby clothes of your first cousins so that you could have hand-me-downs that were practical and meaningful.

**To** all of the baby books and baby blogs for the thousand ideas on how to do baby-led weaning, elimination communication, and gentle parenting.



**To** Mr. Rogers, the person who taught us how to be calm and grounded human beings.

**To** the elderly lady in the grocery store who witnessed the meltdown of all meltdowns, came over, and instead of saying something judgmental, looked you right in the eye and said, "You got this, lady!" while your toddler continued banging their fists against the ground.

**To** the cashier at Trader Joe's who always has stickers.

**To** the pediatrician who always has lollipops.

**To** the dentist who never has lollipops but who's got a treat treasure chest that you (and your kid) can pick from.

**To** the medical assistant who always has cool Band-Aids and can distract a 5 year old long enough to get the flu vaccine.

**To** the dads who helped you make a spreadsheet of pros and cons for all of the local preschools, with commute times calculated for each day of the week.

**To** the parent community of your new elementary school who volunteered to drive carpool when you were juggling a newborn and kindergartner and were too overwhelmed to drive.

**To** that one friend who attended a kid's birthday party and got you the name of the magician she knew your kid would love.

**To** all of your friends who reassure you on a daily basis through your group chats on WhatsApp that, yes, what you are going through IS normal.

**To** all of your friends who send ridiculous Instagram memes to cheer you up.

**To** all of the women who came before and normalized how boring motherhood can be.

**And to** your mom, who you call 17 times a day but totally doesn't mind.

See Yuliya's full bio on page 6.

# Caring for Aging Family Members

With Susan Yokoro, PT, MS, OCS

Originally published in the April/May 2023 Stand Up issue. This piece has been updated for accuracy.



Susan Yokoro has more than two decades of physical therapy (PT) experience working in outpatient and home health settings. She is an Orthopedic Clinical Specialist (OCS). She brings her life experiences as an Asian American mother to writing this article about caring for her aging parents and family members.

## What is the role of physical therapy with home safety and fall prevention?

A physical therapist's home safety evaluation can minimize the risk of falls with simple safety modifications. Implementing safety recommendations before they are necessary is really important. Ideally, we would like all recommendations to be implemented, but realistically, our family members may insist on keeping a fluffy rug in the bathroom even though an unsecure rug can be a fall hazard. We learn to compromise. By hearing and discussing safety at home, maybe at a future time, our family members will put away that favorite rug or install those ugly handrails in the bathroom and stairwell. The CDC's "[Check for Safety: A Home Fall Prevention Checklist for Older Adults](#)" is an excellent resource.

## How can I best advocate for an aging family member's health and safety?

Encouraging preventive care with regular yearly visits to a primary care provider (PCP) is critical to identify health issues before they become a problem. Since the onset of COVID, our PT clinic has seen an influx of aging patients with chronic degenerative musculoskeletal diseases presenting with pain and disability related to a decrease in physical activity. These health issues, such as knee and back pain, were previously maintained with exercise and didn't have a functional impact. A PCP can refer your family member to physical therapy to address the pain and dysfunction, which may contribute to falls.

If your family member is already receiving treatment for a condition, remember that medical appointments can be confusing and overwhelming, for both patients and their caregivers. When my siblings and I attended hospital care plan meetings for our father, we each remembered and interpreted the same conversation differently. We decided to start meeting before appointments to organize our thoughts and questions. By supporting each other, we were able to better understand and advocate for our father's needs.

## Aging family members may push back on a relative's recommendations or help. What are some strategies you've seen to foster cooperation and communication?

Although we may have the best intentions to help with our

aging family members, we should be mindful to interact in a respectful way. Having an objective person or professional, such as a physical therapist, social worker, or physician present the information can be more successful and decrease the stress between family members.

## How can I involve other family members to assist with caregiving?

Caregivers can easily overextend themselves, especially if we're juggling other responsibilities—raising children, maintaining a home, and growing a career. It's important to set personal limits. In my experience, family members really want to help, but don't know how. I suggest tapping into each family member's strengths. We all have different comfort levels when it comes to caregiving—some are comfortable assisting with toileting, bathing, or cutting finger nails, while others may prefer to pick up groceries. While my mother was in hospice care, my sister-in-law wrote a list of weekly tasks for us to sign up for, helping our family remain organized during a stressful time. When our family was caring for our elderly aunt, my siblings and cousins all helped with her care, taking turns visiting, purchasing food, running errands, and taking her to medical appointments. Because of my physical therapy background, I was the primary person coordinating her care during hospitalizations, home health episodes, and hospice, but I sent out emails to family members updating her status and had family meetings to make decisions regarding her care. I believe this constant connection between family members really provided a sense of assurance that my aunt was receiving the best care possible.

## What is the most important thing to remember when caring for an aging family member?

The opportunity to care for an aging family member is a privilege. We all want to age with dignity and respect, so as our family members age, we need to appreciate the situation from their perspective. It's hard to lose independence, feel reliant on others, and reach out for and accept assistance. When our family members ask for help, it is a humbling experience for both them and us. We need to respect the difficulties and recognize the courage required to acknowledge our own limits and seek assistance.

## In summary, what are your top recommendations to help aging family members (and those who love them) navigate the golden years?

Discuss home safety and fall prevention. Remain active. Lean on a supportive family and social network. Participate in regular preventive care medical visits with a PCP.

# Babel and the Legacy of Generational Trauma

by Vi Huynh-Dvorak

There's a storyline in the 2006 film *Babel* that I could not rewatch after first seeing the film. The plot in question follows Amelia Hernández, a nanny to an American family. The parents are on a trip in Morocco, and Amelia is staying with the couple's two children. Tragedy strikes the parents, and Amelia must extend her stay, forcing her to miss her son's wedding back in Tijuana. Determined, Amelia decides to take the children with her to the wedding and from there a series of unfortunate events unfold, eventually leaving Amelia and the kids stranded in the desert.

I forced myself to rewatch *Babel* in the name of research. Every time Amelia came onscreen, I got a knot in my throat, which I came to realize was from me holding my breath through pain. Amelia resembles my mom. Seeing her in distress put me in distress.

Recently, I started to understand and unravel this reaction. Amelia makes me feel sad and guilty, a byproduct of resentment. My resentment fuels my anger, and my anger forges the sharp words I throw at my mom. I've hated myself for this. I've tried to empathize with myself in an attempt to forgive myself, but I forgot a tenet I've embraced: forgiveness cannot be forced. All of this distills into a well of sorrow that I don't fully understand.

I love my mom; however, I don't like her. She is in a constant state of regression, and I often feel like the parent. In my culture, children are raised so that they can care for you in your old age, and my parents have embraced this, though my mom would never admit it. There's a name for what they do: weaponized incompetence—someone knowingly or unknowingly demonstrates an inability to perform or master certain tasks, thereby leading others to take on more work. Weaponized incompetence can be a manipulation tactic. To be fair, I believe my parents are unaware that they are doing this.

With my mom, I listen to her voicemails, make all her appointments, drive her places, and assist her with anything that is outside her daily routine. When most people run out of sunscreen, they buy it. My mom takes a blurry picture of her empty bottle and sends it to me with a text: "Can you buy for me?" When my dad had a heart attack at 5 a.m. while on vacation, she called me and asked me what she should do.



I am responsible for the scaffolding that holds her up, and I hate her for it, and I hate myself even more for hating her. She triggers me just by her presence. There's nowhere for this to go because, though I am often aware, I will also at times suppress. But like pressure that builds up in tectonic fault lines, I sometimes unleash a massive quake. Many times, my children have been casualties of this.

But then there's her role as a

**"My early childhood was spent fleeing a war-torn country and time in a refugee camp before landing on U.S. soil. My mom's history is one of abuse, shame, duty, and pain. ...Before I can judge her, I have to reckon with my own parenting, colored by the generational trauma passed on to me."**

grandparent. I've seen a side to her that I never knew as a child. I've never gotten a kiss or a hug from my mom; she was a cold parent. But with my kids, she's affectionate, attentive, and she listens to their day with eagerness. When she is around, my kids swarm her and I don't exist. She's nurturing and patient—she's unrecognizable.

My early childhood was spent fleeing a war-torn country and time in a refugee camp before landing on U.S. soil. My mom's history is one of abuse, shame, duty, and pain. She nearly lost me to measles on a boat to the camp; she nearly lost my oldest brother to malaria a few years before that, and her second-born son was taken from her by my paternal grandmother. I have to wonder if she fought for him. I have to wonder if she found it a relief. A resourceful parent would have seen that my brother was autistic. My mom could not. Before I can judge her, I have to reckon with my own parenting, colored by the generational trauma passed on to me.

I am one part child—desperate for love, care, *belonging*. I am an adult who has saved herself after decades of seeking to be saved. I can't save my mom. My work is to metabolize the hate, guilt, resentment, and pain so that it doesn't metastasize in my children.

I just got a text notification. It's mom. My dad has run out of his medication. I need to get more.

*Vi shares her home with three kids, a spouse, two dogs, and 500 begonias.*



## Did I Turn Into My Mother?

By Christine Chen

I have turned into my mother in so many ways that it is scary, but also not like her in other ways. My perspective now, as a mother, is very different than when I was a rebellious teenager, when I SWORE I would NOT turn into my mother. Many of these characteristics are comical and stereotypical, which I always attributed to her Chinese background. But I now find myself doing the same things she did that annoyed me as a child, which I proudly have ingrained in my children.



I was a germaphobe before COVID, which I passed on to my kids; I chase after them with a jacket regardless of the weather (it is San Francisco after all); we have inside clothes and outside clothes because I'm a germaphobe; every meal must have a veggie or worst case, a fruit; and sunscreen is a must. (The latter I ignored as a teenager in SoCal, and much to my dismay as an adult, my skin shows it.) While my non-Chinese husband might laugh at these particular behaviors, now that I am a mother, they all make perfect sense to me.

I have my mother to thank for who I am today, and it is from her that I get my strength, resilience, and perseverance. My mother, who was pre-law in Taiwan before she immigrated to

**“Now that I am a mother, my appreciation and gratitude for my mom, her encouragement, and the wisdom she imparted makes me wonder how she raised me without completely losing her sanity.”**

the U.S., raised me to always speak up for myself and let my opinions be known. Her encouragement gave me the confidence to believe in myself, to never take no for an answer, and to never be intimidated or talked over in a room full of older men when I started my career on Wall Street after college.

For this reason, I have always encouraged my kids to stand up for themselves at the playground or school—from toddlerhood through elementary school. Of course, history repeats itself and similar to what my mom faced, this advice doesn't always serve me well at home. Both kids, now 9 and 11, have no qualms about voicing their opinions, demands, or “rights.” I keep telling myself, it will serve them well in life. “Payback,” is what my husband calls it.

I always thought I would be a “Tiger Mom,” but my husband

says I am more like a kitten. Unlike my mother, who rarely showed any emotion—even to this day—I am a total sap who cries during select “Bluey” episodes. She always told me I was too emotional, which did toughen me up, at least to the outside world, but on the inside I didn't change.

Expressing my feelings has resulted in a different relationship with my kids, who thankfully still want and like snuggles and kisses before bed, and who are never told they are being overly emotional. They are kids after

all, and I would rather know what is upsetting them than have it fester internally. They must not doubt that I love them unconditionally, regardless of how mad I might be. Unlike my mother, who never apologized (which is hard for me too), I am not afraid to admit to my kids on the RARE occasion that I am wrong and apologize. I hope this will smooth out the upcoming teenage years, which are around the corner for my son and slightly further away for my daughter, who despite being two years younger, has acted like a teenager since she was 3.

When I left for college, my relationship with my mother changed. I was overjoyed to be on my own and finally get to do things MY way. My mother, who I had never seen cry, was in tears the day my parents left my new dorm room. At that moment, it occurred to me that all those years of hearing my mother's encouragement had prepared me for any challenge the world had to offer. I have spent the rest of my life making it up to my mom for my teenage years.

Now that I am a mother, my appreciation and gratitude for my mom, her encouragement, and her wisdom makes me wonder how she raised me without completely losing her sanity. I also now understand why she would get so mad after her multiple requests were ignored or forgotten when she was the one keeping track of everything for me, my brother, and my dad, all while working full-time. If I even come close to having the positive impact on my kids that she had on me—without completely losing my mind—I will consider it a job well done.

*Christine loves being a mother and showing up for every event at her kids' schools, but is exhausted from scheduling and keeping track of everything. However, she realizes there are only so many more years left when the kids will want her around, so she sacrifices sleep to juggle work and volunteering at both their schools.*

## Preventing Injuries in Youth Athletes

By Nirav Pandya, MD and Brian Feeley, MD

An increasing number of children are engaging in sports in a distinctly different way than their parents. Rather than participate in school-based teams and recreational teams, or unstructured play with neighborhood kids, they are increasingly turning to privately-run club sports. We all recognize the powerful impact that sports have on the physical and mental well-being of kids. Yet, with this changing trend in participation, we are seeing a tremendous increase in severe injuries in younger and younger children. How can we keep our kids healthy and in the game? It might not be in the ways that you think!

For many of us growing up, sports participation was a way for us to socialize with our peers, fulfill our desire for competition, and represent our schools. The small percentage of athletes who were extremely talented were able to play at the next level. But now sports have become a means to an end. Teamwork and participation have been replaced by skill acquisition and individual development. It's no surprise that this trend has been accompanied by an increase in both overuse injuries and acute, traumatic injuries.

So why is there an increased injury risk in the way kids are playing sports currently? The problem is how they are playing. Rather than diversify their sports experience by playing multiple sports as long as possible, players are choosing to specialize in a single sport at the exclusion of other sports at younger and younger ages. This is directly linked to an increased injury risk.

Young, growing bodies need to diversify their sports experience so their bodies can be strengthened through activities which use their muscles and joints in different ways. Repetitive activity and training from playing a single sport places the bodies of young athletes at risk of injury. In fact, beyond reducing injury risk, playing multiple sports also improves athletic performance and skill. So, from the outset, have your kids participate in multiple sports for as long as possible to prevent injury (and improve performance).

Beyond participating in multiple sports, it is also important to control the amount of time kids are playing sports. Dr. Neeru Jayanthi, the director of Emory Sports Medicine Research and Education, performed a study looking at how much sports activity was too much. He found that children who played more hours per week of sports than their age (i.e. more than 10 hours for a 10 year old) were at a significantly increased risk of injury. So, beyond having your kids play multiple sports, make sure you are monitoring the amount of time they are playing.



Finally, it's important for young athletes not to push through pain and discomfort. Our bodies are designed to give us signals when we are acutely injured, overworked, or burnt out. Limping after practice, complaining of soreness, or not enjoying practice and games may be a sign of an injury (or an impending injury). It's not worth the risk of pushing through pain at a young age—kids are not professional athletes. It's okay to rest and spend time on more basic things such as flexibility, strength, and balance.

**“Teamwork and participation have been replaced by skill acquisition and individual development. It's no surprise that this trend has been accompanied by an increase in both overuse injuries and acute, traumatic injuries.”**

If we look at sports as a lifelong endeavor, we can help young athletes avoid injury. Have them play multiple sports, monitor their workload, and don't have them push through pain and discomfort. This will keep them healthy and active throughout their life and foster a love of physical activity.

*Nirav Pandya, M.D., is the Chief of the Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery Service at UCSF and is a father to two children in Oakland. Brian Feeley, M.D., is the Chief of the Sports Medicine Service at UCSF. He has five children, four in San Francisco schools and one at UCLA. You can find them on Twitter or listen to their podcast, 6-8 Weeks: Perspectives on Sports Medicine.*



## Memories to Hold Onto

By Laure Latham

I started writing this column for Golden Gate Mothers Group in 2007, and it has given me much pleasure. With the discovery of new books and new authors, Books for Kids will always have a special place in my heart. With this issue, it's time to take a bow and sing, "Goodbye, farewell, Auf Wiedersehen, adieu." Leaving a legacy can mean happy things as well as sad things, and sometimes it's a little bit of both. Inspirational, these books tackle the feelings of belonging, grieving, or remembering in gentle ways that soften difficult moments or honor loved ones who disappear. Enjoy these books and keep reading!



### On the Night Before You Turn One

Written by Kristie Graves, illustrated by Gregorio de Lauretis

Every parent will relate with the bittersweet emotions before a child's first birthday, or the excitement for the milestones ahead. Told in gentle verse, this contemplative tale perfectly captures the special moments as our little one turns one. This would be a great baby shower gift too.

**Ages: 1 to 3 years**



### Home

Written by Matt de la Peña, and illustrated by Loren Long

What is home and how do you define it? Home can be a late-night, tired lullaby sung by a mother to her baby, silly little love notes packed in a lunch box, or a fancy high-rise with a pool. But, home changes. It can be lost, it can be found elsewhere. Most importantly, this lyrical take on home is a celebration of life and what we hold dear.

**Ages: 4 to 8 years**



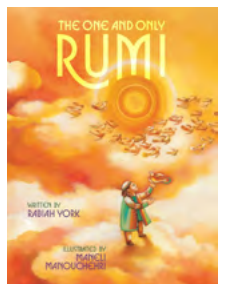
### Every Peach Is a Story

Written by David Mas Masumoto and Nikiko Masumoto, illustrated by Lauren Tamaki

Midori, a young Japanese American girl, walks into her family's orchard, followed by her jiichan (grandfather), to find ripe peaches. It's too early in the season and peaches are still crunchy, so Jiichan urges Midori to be patient: "You'll know it's

ready when it tastes like a story." In this book, the peaches and the farm tell the story of an emigrated Japanese family that creates roots in a new country. After Jiichan passes away, peaches also become a sweet memory for Midori.

**Ages: 4 to 7 years**



### The One and Only Rumi

Written by Rabiah York, illustrated by Maneli Manouchehri

How did Rumi become the beloved 13th century Persian poet whose words still resonate today? As a boy, Muhammad grew up listening to bird song and his father's flute, but as the armies of Genghis Khan threatened his hometown, his family fled. First, they flew to Baghdad, but even Baghdad was not safe from the wrath of Genghis Khan, so they went on to Mecca. This beautifully illustrated book tells a story of hope in times of profound turmoil—a message we all need to hear.

**Ages: 6 to 10 years**



### My Brother

Written by Laura Djupvik, illustrated by Øyvind Torseter and translated by Martin Aitken

Portraying the loss of a sibling and a son, this book starts in a dream, when a girl asks her father to sail out to the fjord. After setting their fishing lines, they catch an elongated boy who resembles the girl's recently deceased brother. They take him home and spend one last night with their son and brother, before

the boy returns to the sea the following day. Showing that life goes on after a loss, and that the living hold on to cherished memories as a reminder of the person they loved, this gentle book on grieving will open conversations about loss with older kids.

**Ages: 6 to 9 years**

Laure writes on marathon swimming, healthy living, and adventure travel at Frog Mom (frogmom.com), and is the author of Best Hikes with Kids: San Francisco Bay Area. She is the founder of a tech startup and lives with her teenage girls in London. She swam the English Channel in 2023. You can find her on social media @frogmomblog.

## The Mythology of Motherhood

By Gail Cornwall

In part thanks to this magazine, I've reviewed more than 100 books related to parenting. There is no question that the genre can create counterproductive pressure and perfectionism. So I understand why recent years have seen a trend emerge, epitomized by statements like, "Trust your instincts" and "There is no such thing as a bad parent." This is a necessary corrective and a good thing. But blanket reassurances make me uncomfortable, because some parenting practices *do* work better than others. How did we land here, having to choose between being micromanaged—feeling that we're failing if we don't implement all the best practices all the time—and being affirmed into rudderlessness?



### The Good Mother Myth: Unlearning Our Bad Ideas About How to Be a Good Mom

Nancy Reddy takes an innovative tack toward answering that question. *The Good Mother Myth* is one part memoir and one part history of science, with some critical theory thrown in alongside gossip about people's sex lives. It sounds like a mess, but it absolutely slays. Reddy's pacing, tone, organization,

degree of repetition—all of it works well to convey complicated ideas in an accessible, enjoyable read.

The book starts by describing, as Reddy puts it, "The myths I had absorbed from the mommy blogs and the parenting advice books I consumed alongside my prenatal vitamins and leafy greens ... that motherhood was an individual pursuit at which I could excel, in the same way that I had excelled in school." We're hit with others before procreating, she says, like the myth of "automatic, selfless love," including that you'd "love your kids so much that all your own desires would just fall away" and the idea that "motherhood, when done right, could be easy." Reddy's book chronicles how these myths were crystalized by a handful of, mostly male, scientists: Harry Harlow, John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth, Donald Winnicott, Benjamin Spock, and even Margaret Mead.

For example, "When he listed the evils that would contribute to a disastrous breakdown in the home, Bowlby placed 'war, famine, death of a parent, desertion, imprisonment' right alongside—truly, in the same bulleted list—"full-time employment of the mother." This assertion must be seen in its historical context: "[W]ith veterans returning home from war, [many] were worried about getting men back to work and women back home to care for children. Attachment theory gave them convenient cover to [say] sorry, ladies, science says you have to stay home." Reading Bowlby's conclusion "that a good mother would not only devote herself entirely to her child, but feel totally fulfilled by that work," left Reddy thinking he must have been unfamiliar with "the day-to-day care of a baby." So she dug into his personal life—and the others'. Reddy found not only seriously sketchy science, but a lot of women in the wings.

"The more I uncover about the ways that our ideals about motherhood came to be, the more I understand how inescapable these ideals have become," Reddy writes. For example, Dr. Spock positioning motherhood as "a quasi-professional endeavor" functioned to "lure" the increasingly educated women of the 20th century into pursuing it, she says. But by the '70s, he faced backlash. "It sometimes feels like every generation of mothers from Betty Friedan and Adrienne Rich on has been learning anew that the story we've been sold about the magical power of a mother's love is largely a way to draft us into an enormous amount of unpaid and undervalued labor," Reddy writes.

In reality, "anthropologists have ... found a wide range of parenting practices, but one of the most common themes is shared care," she shows, "in basically [no other culture] does the mother do the work alone." And yet, we're "stuck with an image of motherhood that's as resilient as it is unattainable: the good mother who cares for her child single-handedly." That left Reddy as a young mother "angry at needing help, and resentful of everyone who tried to help me," she writes: "I can see now that I'd learned the wrong lesson. My problem wasn't that I couldn't care for the baby all on my own. It's that I was trying to."

Reddy left me just one bone to pick. She joins that trend of prioritizing empathy above reality, writing, for example: "They don't need a good mother. They just need love." But anyone who has witnessed abusive or neglectful parenting knows that parents can love their children desperately, while failing, objectively and disastrously, to meet their needs. That's it.

Otherwise, I'm picking up, and recommending, everything that Reddy puts down: "The science beneath our ideals for mothers is just so bad. The studies are riddled with errors and bias, sloppy sampling and methodological shortcomings. And even knowing that, it's still so hard sometimes to set those bad ideas aside."

Gail works as a mom and writer in San Francisco. Read about parenting and education from the perspective of a former teacher and lawyer at gailcornwall.com or by finding her on social media.





Source: Kheel Center, Cornell University Library

# Mothers' Might

Moms have a long legacy of changing the world for the better.

By H.B. Terrell

## Matrescence and sensibility

It's no secret: Parenthood changes people, and it changes the childbearing parent in unique ways, from literally rearranging physiology to make space for a growing fetus to the synaptic pruning that rewires the brain for a new kind of alertness and empathy.

The term matrescence was coined by medical anthropologist Dana Raphael in the 1970s to describe a set of discrete transitions related to motherhood as a rite of passage within a social group, including a shift in priorities and identity.

As researchers have continued to study this developmental phase, they have learned that the transformation comprises profound physical, emotional, and psychological transitions that can change how one sees their relationships with partners, family, friends,

and society—it is understood to be an identity crisis, in the sense of “crisis” as a crucial and decisive turning point in one’s self-concept and understanding of the world. Rather than being pathological, this identity crisis can fuel a metamorphosis that benefits the individual, their family, and the broader culture they inhabit.

Clinical Psychologist Aurélie Athan, Ph.D., describes matrescence as a seismic shift akin to the chaotic process of

adolescence. It also triggers a restructuring of how we think about ourselves in the larger world. “How do I feel about political systems and social justice? I might awaken to those things now, too. And even larger questions like spiritual and religious questions about the sort of origins of all things,” Athan says. “It’s a worldview change, at the end of the day.”

Throughout history, mothers have made major impacts on the cultures we inhabit—whether these actions were unrecorded or were volcanic acts that triggered a tsunami of change. There are countless examples of mothers who have changed the world while caring for their children.

Civil rights and children’s rights activist, mother, and lawyer Marian Wright Edelman famously declared, “It’s hard to be what you can’t see,” about children’s books that reflect the lived experience and history of all children. This concept holds for mothers as well.

Women are told time and again that the ability to work while raising children is a sign of gender equality. Many aspects of modern American life hamper this perceived equality: Paid family leave is not guaranteed, nor is affordable childcare or universal health care, and it is well-documented that women in heterosexual partnerships do the majority of caregiving while also holding full-time jobs outside the home. On the other hand—like much of the history of oppressed populations—examples of ways women throughout American history managed to care for families while also supporting them financially are often hidden.

Entwined systemic knots keeping many women from cultivating equality between work and motherhood are real. And yet, the relative invisibility of the mothers who nudged the boundaries of society’s prescribed role for women is one more obstacle to understanding what mothers are capable of when we examine our roles as caregivers and actors in the public sphere. There are many ways that moms can individually and collectively take on the mantle of care and leadership. We can learn from the examples of the women profiled below of just a few ways the might of our mothering might contribute to securing a better future for our children.



## The fearless orator

A free-born native of Baltimore, Maryland, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper joined the abolitionist movement in 1853, when the state passed a law preventing free Black people from returning to the state on the condition that they could be legally imprisoned as runaways and sold into slavery. Harper became a prolific writer for anti-slavery newspapers and is known as the mother of African American journalism. Widowed, she supported her daughter by delivering abolitionist and feminist speeches across the U.S. and Canada, including a seminal speech on the intersection of racism and sexism at the National Woman’s Rights Convention in New York.

“We Are All Bound Up Together” urged white suffragists to include African American women in their cause, emphasizing the double burden of racism and sexism faced by Black women. “You white women speak here of rights,” Harper began. “I speak of wrongs,” she declared, prefiguring the searing oratory of Malcolm X. She exhorted her listeners to work toward “one great privileged nation,” which would become “so color-blind, as to know no man by the color of his skin or the curl of his hair,” verbiage that would be echoed by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Harper’s voice was ahead of her time in many ways. We can raise our voices, individually and collectively, to speak against the wrongs we observe in the world.

## The ingenious entrepreneur

Madam C.J. Walker was the first self-made female millionaire in the United States. Of her inspiration to begin her business in 1904, Walker explained, “As I bent over the washboard and looked at my arms buried in soapsuds, I said to myself: ‘What are you going to do when you grow old and your back gets stiff? Who is going to take care of your little girl?’” Walker’s daughter, A’Lelia, worked alongside her mother as they developed a business model adopted by numerous companies that followed: Licensed sales agents sold products using the “Walker System,” earning hefty commissions on personal care products specifically designed for Black women. Walker became a philanthropist and activist—she was motivated to earn her first million, “not [because] she wanted the money for herself, but for the good she could do with it.” She famously hosted parties that functioned as safe spaces for LGBTQ+ artists of the Harlem Renaissance.

Music icon, business mogul, and mother of two, Rihanna’s ventures in beauty and fashion have made her a billionaire. In a *Harper’s Bazaar* article by Lynette Nylander, Rihanna says of her sons, “Every decision I make revolves around them, but everything that I do that I love robs me from them,” perfectly encapsulating the contemporary mom’s push-pull of fulfillment via life in the home and life in the world.



MADAM WALKER FAMILY ARCHIVES/A'LELIA BUNDLES



This could almost be a definition of matrescence, the way we show up in the world and in our relationships and our family units. As moms, we can examine both how we make our money and how we spend it, considering the good we do and the good our money does in the world.

### The unswerving artist

Kara Walker, whose exhibition, *Fortuna and the Immortality Garden (Machine)*, is at SFMOMA through spring 2026, explores race, gender, sexuality, violence, and identity in her art. Walker has said of her art, “I wanted to make work where the viewer wouldn’t walk away; he would either giggle nervously, get pulled into history, into fiction, into something totally demeaning and possibly very beautiful.”

Walker has been a mother since the early days of her career. She incorporated her daughter’s voice into her 2005 video piece, *8 Possible Beginnings or: The Creation of African-America*. Walker’s daughter, Octavia Bürgel—now a photographer and writer—describes her experience as the daughter of an artist: “My mother is a mother. And an artist. And the two never felt like they were incompatible.”

Walker’s work has been the source of controversy. Employees of Newark Public Library questioned the appropriateness of her piece, *The moral arc of history ideally bends towards justice but just as soon as not curves back around toward barbarism, sadism, and unrestrained chaos*, for the reading room where it was hung—particularly in its depiction of sexual violence.

Walker has acknowledged how the overwhelming number of images—an “assault of stuff”—elicits anxiety and intensity and leaves it there without resolution for the viewer.

Many of us are in this state today, overwhelmed with the onslaught of actions that dismantle social safety nets and democratic norms. One way of combating this feeling is through creative expression. Where a social media diatribe or a political



speech may not get through to some, a work of art has a way of settling into one’s consciousness, of taking up liminal space in the brain, which allows us to absorb its meaning, burrowing truth into our hearts over the long haul. Art is not a luxury in times like these. It is a necessity.

### The agent of change

In 1963, Johnnie Tillmon founded Aid to Needy Children (ANC). Later that decade, ANC became one of more than 500 local welfare rights groups who joined to form the National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO). Tillmon was its chairperson.

Tillmon aligned the NWRO with the feminist movement, writing “Welfare Is a Woman’s Issue,” published in *Ms.* magazine. “I’m a black woman. I’m a poor woman. I’m a fat woman. I’m a middle-aged woman. And I’m on welfare,” Tillmon wrote. “In this country, if you’re any one of those things, you count less as a human being. If you’re all those things, you don’t count at all.”

The radical idea of welfare rights organizers was that poor women were the most equipped, by experience, to know how welfare should be reformed and

whether they should seek employment outside of the home; poor mothers should be provided the means to raise their children, regardless of whether they worked or were looking for work. At the same time, professors at Columbia University’s School of Social Work publicly advocated for replacement of public assistance programs with a guaranteed annual income for all.

Though the NWRO disbanded in 1975, the work Tillmon and her cohort did has finally come into its own over the past decade. Y Combinator began testing universal basic income (UBI) in Oakland in 2016. Stanford’s Basic Income Lab was founded in 2017 to study the politics, philosophy, economics, and implementation of UBI. Stockton launched a UBI pilot in 2019. And 2020 presidential candidate Andrew Yang ran on a platform that included a UBI proposal.

The lesson in Tillmon’s legacy is that the actions we take now may seem to fail in our own time, but we never know how far into the future the tendrils of our actions will reach.

### The political leader

Senator Tammy Duckworth’s career in politics began to take root during her recovery from the loss of both legs at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, after her helicopter was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade during her tour of duty in 2004. Lieutenant Colonel Duckworth leveraged her knowledge and experience to become



the director of the Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs before representing her district in the U.S. House of Representatives (2013 to 2017) and then her state in the U.S. Senate (2017 to present). She is the first U.S. senator to give birth while in office; she is the author of the “Right to IVF Act,” to increase access to and lower costs of assisted reproductive technology (ART); and she introduced Senate Resolution 463, permitting senators to bring children under one year old on the Senate floor to breastfeed, which was approved by unanimous consent.

Duckworth is skilled at securing influential cosponsors on committee bills and has focused her efforts specifically on foreign policy, gun control, climate crisis, health policy, and immigration. As a veteran, a parent, and a person living with a disability, Duckworth’s perspective is a product of her experience. Her work has yielded substantial benefits for families through government policy.

Duckworth entered the political realm by steps, first as an advocate for fellow veterans, then at the state level before she began her career in Congress. She is driven by compassion for individuals and families who are the least protected by social safety nets in this country. This is a position many moms can identify with, and it is a path we can emulate in service to our country—by doing what we can, wherever we find ourselves. We may eventually find ourselves in the halls of power leveraging our insights as parents to support our fellow citizens and would-be citizens to make our country truly great.

### The dedicated caregiver

In *The Three Mothers: How the Mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and James Baldwin Shaped a Nation*, author, sociologist, and mom, Anna Malaika Tubbs examines the contributions of these women to their famous sons’ accomplishments. We see many congruences in the lives of Alberta King, Louise Little, and Berdis Baldwin with their sons’ work.

In King’s biography, he wrote that his mother raised him and his siblings with a sense of self-respect, conveying that the segregation defining their movements in the world was “a social condition, not the natural order. She made it clear that she



opposed this system and that I must never allow it to make me feel inferior.”

Multilingual scholar Louise Little was a Black independence activist, moving to Montreal from Grenada on her own at the age of 17. After her marriage, she became the secretary and branch reporter of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). In his autobiography, Malcolm X recounts white supremacists shattering the windows of their home, targeting the Little family because they were unapologetic proponents of revolution in the blossoming Black communities of the Midwest.

Tubbs says, “Everyone who knows Berdis Baldwin’s writing says it has helped them think differently about their world and move through their despair and darkness.” James Baldwin’s work reflects the love and forgiveness that is his mother’s legacy. The oft-quoted, “Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within,” has more to say. Baldwin continues, “I use the word ‘Love’ here not merely in the personal sense but as a state of being or a state of grace—not in the infantile American sense of being made happy but in the tough and universal sense of quest and daring and growth.”

Mothers do not have to be perfect to be good parents. Tubbs says, “One lesson that helps me through the exhausting moments is remembering that all these mothers willingly showed their vulnerability.

...Instead of plastering a smile on her face all the time, sending a false message of I can withstand anything, each mother had conversations around her own feelings. This brought a complexity to their relationships.”

Vulnerability isn’t always acknowledged in motherhood, but sharing our vulnerabilities with our kids can help them cultivate a deeper understanding of the human condition. Caregiving is work, even if it is not (yet) paid work. It’s worth remembering that whether our children change their small sphere of influence or the whole world, what we do now to support them in cultivating kindness and agency is their whole world.

### The battle of the here and now

In her *Harper’s Bazaar* interview, Rihanna says, “My legacy is what I do with my time at this moment.”

May our collective legacy as mothers and caregivers be awareness and action. We can look for role models in one another, acting on behalf not only of our own children, but all the children who will eventually replace us. We can face this moment in history with courage and commitment to what is right, making big and small differences in one another’s lives.

*H.B. is ready to roar.*

“Throughout history, mothers have made major impacts on the cultures we inhabit—whether these actions were unrecorded or were volcanic acts that triggered a tsunami of change.”



# Looking Back: A Senior Editor's Journey

## How *GGMG Magazine* lifted me up when I was down and launched me into a new life and career.

By Jessica Perry

**I**t was the summer of 2019, and my light at the end of the tunnel had finally arrived: My oldest daughter was about to start kindergarten. I had stepped away from my professional life in publishing years before, after maternity leave, and had been a stay-at-home mom ever since. My brain power, previously dedicated to intellectual and professional pursuits, had been reallocated to potty-training and filling the other roles that full-time moms assume—counselor, referee, cruise director, maid, house manager, chef, and many more.

That previous year, outside of child-rearing, my time had been wholly dedicated to applying to and finding a spot for my older daughter in kindergarten. We navigated the harrowing SFUSD public school application process, applied to three private schools, and finally landed her at our beloved neighborhood parochial school, Saint Thomas (now defunct). It had always been my intention to get back to work once she was settled, but I knew I needed to dip my toes in before diving head first into the deep end. Volunteering seemed like a manageable way to build up my skills again.

A good friend of mine noticed that a copy editor position had opened up with *GGMG Magazine* and encouraged me to apply. After so many years away from work, I was very nervous. I interviewed with the senior editor (Jenny Shaw) and editor-in-chief (Sonya Abrams) and was delighted to be invited to join the staff as a copy editor.

The first magazine meeting I attended was in Sonya's dining room. When I walked into her house, I immediately felt embraced by the staff. Many of the members had been working with each other for more than five years and were integral parts of each other's lives. The meeting was professionally run. Themes were debated and everyone (not just the writers) was encouraged to pitch ideas. The entire staff—who were all mothers—debated ideas together until we had enough to pull together an issue. I was blown away by what a tight-knit mom community had formed in the magazine staff. Business was handled. Wine was poured. Lives were discussed. Relevant issues to the San Francisco experience were addressed. Advice was lent. Friendships were built.

It felt good to be using my brain again for something that would

benefit moms in my community. The magazine was produced six times a year and when I started editing, there were four other copy editors on-staff. Copy editors divided up the articles, and then the managing editor and senior editor took a final pass on everything after the articles had already been seen by two pairs of eyes. Every article was reviewed three times during the copy stage and three times again once it was in design. In my “previous life” as a copywriter and editor in higher education publishing, I had never had the benefit of more than two copy editors looking at one piece. The rigorous review process was a gift to everyone on the staff. The issues we produced were

were still pitched and gave us focus during an uncertain period.

Looking back now, I see that the issues we produced during that time were all inspired by human experiences that grounded us when it felt like the world was spinning out of control. Issues on love and connection, change, collected wisdom, endurance, and back to basics were all ideas that helped us navigate our new reality. We wrote about and shared our experiences of being at home with our kids during that supremely weird and isolating time. During COVID, my living room had become my whole universe, but the magazine meetings gave me a window into life outside my pod.

**“Before I started on the magazine, I was struggling to find my identity outside of motherhood. The magazine created a unique mom tribe where we could marry our motherhood skills with our professional experience and produce something tangible.”**

something we all felt very proud of. With every issue, I learned something new from one of the features or smaller articles and knew that moms in the Bay Area were benefiting from it, too.

After four months as copy editor, I attended a magazine planning meeting and sat next to Sonya, whose husband had unexpectedly passed away less than a week before. She told me that she needed to keep busy. The magazine staff was more than just colleagues. They were also her friends, working together to lift her up after loss. More than once, we all struggled with a significant life event and were met with open arms by the other staff members, who covered our responsibilities so we had a chance to heal.

This same unwavering support couldn't have been more evident than when San Francisco went into lockdown for the pandemic three months later. During a time when people rarely left home or saw other people in person, the Zoom staff meetings were a beacon of normalcy and commiseration—they still ran like clockwork every month. I looked forward to getting “dressed up” for our meetings (which were an excuse to wear pajamas only from the waist-down, not head to toe). Issue ideas

Towards the middle of the pandemic, I took over the position of senior editor. In this role, I managed and hired other copy editors and worked more closely with the co-managing editors, editor-in-chief, and art director. I can honestly say that working with these women has been one of the highlights of my editing career. All of them are innately talented, responsible, and empathetic.

Meeting on Zoom on the first Monday of every month became such a mainstay in our lives that we continued on remotely for another four years, long after the pandemic was behind us. A few of us had moved north to Marin, and many other volunteers found that juggling the mounting demands of the magazine was becoming untenable.

By the time I reached my fifth year in the magazine, we were down to one copy editor, one designer, one photographer, and a few writers. The magazine became even more of a labor of love when we had to operate with such a bare-bones crew. The managing editors and I wrote many of the pieces and also took on the brunt of the actual editing and copy editing rather than doing project management only. We pulled articles from the archives to fill in where we were lacking.

Despite the extra responsibility, I held on to my job at *GGMG Magazine* because it gave me a sense of purpose, and I felt a deep bond with the staff. The magazine and its mission to connect moms was something I believed in. Before I started on the magazine, I was struggling to find my identity outside of motherhood. The magazine created a unique mom tribe where we could marry our motherhood skills with our professional experience and produce something tangible.

Once my family was settled in Marin, I decided it was finally time to start freelancing. After many years of hard work building my portfolio through my pieces with *GGMG Magazine*, I landed contract positions with PBS KIDS and with a marketing company that worked with Google. Freelancing became hard to juggle on top of my magazine duties, so it was with a heavy heart that I gave my notice to Sonya and the other managing editors. We had all entered new life phases. Our kids were approaching the tween and teen years and many of us were reprioritizing how our time outside of our families was spent. After I left, another editor stepped down, and the magazine could no longer be sustained.

With more than a decade of mothering behind me now, I recognize that two of the most impactful personal and professional events that happened to me in recent years were thanks to *GGMG* and its extraordinary members. Long before I started volunteering for the magazine, the baby group where I made most of my closest mom friends started from a post on the *GGMG* community website. Those moms and I leaned on each other when we had newborns, and we still cherish each other just as much now raising tweens as we did back then. I wouldn't have made it through the pandemic without the support of my phenomenal colleagues and friends at *GGMG Magazine*. They lifted me up when I had been down and launched me into a new life and career.

*Jessica is a writer, editor, and mom living in Marin County. She will be forever grateful to GGMG for introducing her to an incredible group of friends and colleagues. She would not be where she is today without GGMG.*





# Behind the Pages: Some of the Women Who Brought GGMG Magazine to Life

**GGMG Magazine** has shaped the lives of mothers,  
both personally and professionally.

**G**olden Gate Mothers Group is approaching its 30th year of supporting, nurturing, and connecting mothers in the Bay Area. The organization's growth would not be possible without *GGMG Magazine*, a once 16-page black-and-white newsletter turned 40-page colored, glossy magazine of today. Learn more about some of the women who worked behind the pages to bring the magazine to life.



## Anna Munandar

**Current photographer, GGMG Magazine (since 2016)**

GGMG has been a cherished part of my life since I moved to the Bay Area in 2015. When I arrived with my 8-month-old son, I didn't know anyone and was building a family photography business while struggling with postpartum depression and a difficult marriage that soon ended. Volunteering with *GGMG Magazine* became a lifeline, connecting me with an incredible community of moms who offered the support and friendship I needed.

For the past nine years, I've had the honor of being *GGMG Magazine's* lead photographer, capturing families for covers and feature articles. I also gifted newborn portraits to new mom members—because, let's be honest, those first few weeks are a blur, and someone needs to document the tiny toes and sleepless nights! Unlike my commissioned family sessions, which focus on keepsake portraits, *GGMG Magazine* assignments were all about storytelling. Collaborating with writers and editors to bring these stories to life visually was incredibly rewarding. Seeing my work in print and knowing it resonated with fellow moms meant so much to me.

While I'm heartbroken to see this amazing group end, I will always treasure the friendships and memories it gave me.



## Sandy Woo

**Current co-managing editor, GGMG Magazine (since 2021)  
Former copy editor, GGMG Magazine (since 2016)**

I initially signed up as a GGMG member to find a nanny after an unexpected early delivery. The magazine was a pretty, shiny thing that arrived almost monthly (!) that I rarely read (hanging head in shame) though I kept them all. My day job as a genetic counselor rarely afforded me the opportunity to “play with words” (which I love), so after some years of motherhood, I volunteered to copy edit for the magazine. I had to take a test to edit the craziest piece of writing, but I passed, apparently. Reading the magazine in earnest and working with all the dedicated moms blew me away. Such creativity, talent, insight, humor, and support!

Well, I didn't think I'd stay for essentially a Ph.D in the magazine. When the pandemic bled into endless days of virtual schooling and my son's severe OCD diagnosis upended our lives, I attempted to roll off. Instead, I accepted a managing editor role with Colleen Morgan, co-editor extraordinaire. It was one of the best decisions made amidst chaos, guilt, and a strong belief in something really good. I am grateful to have stuck it out for this long and am honored to have many pretty, shiny things to show for this incredible time.



## Lani Schreiberstein

**Current art director, GGMG Magazine (since 2016)**

My first experience volunteering with GGMG was on the social events committee, planning large-scale events. It was a ton of work and left me feeling wrung out, but I loved volunteering. Another volunteer who wrote for the magazine suggested that I join because it was a great group of women to work with, and there were monthly meetings with free pizza. That was not a tough sell for me, and I soon joined the magazine team as a graphic designer. Once the art director JoJo Rhee Chevalier stepped down, I was a shoo-in for the position and became the new art director. This meant I took charge of the magazine design team, which was made up of four designers and four photographers. I also took on the daunting task of redesigning the magazine. Publishing a magazine six times a year took a lot of work (it used to be 11 issues a year), but it was worth it!

My favorite aspects of working on the magazine were the collaboration and the people. It was meaningful to see several of the magazine's themes inspired by my ideas. I was also inspired by all the super-moms I had the opportunity to work with over the years. I took pride in each and every issue, thanks to the team I was so fortunate to collaborate with.



Photo by Lisa Leach Photography







## Jessica Franklin

Current designer, *GGMG Magazine* (since 2015)

When my twins were born, I joined a group for parents of multiples—having infant twins is a very specific challenge. But when my kids got past the toddler stage, I started wondering if I might get more out of a bigger group. I found GGMG—which was definitely big! My kids were too old to join newborn groups, but I was still hoping to find community. So I did the same thing I've done many times when looking for connections—I volunteered! I do some design and layout in my professional life, so I thought I might be able to help on the magazine. After a test of layout design knowledge, I joined the staff as a designer—and I'm still here, a decade later. Just as I had hoped—in addition to sharpening my design skills—I made some great friends, and really felt like a part of a community. I always appreciated how everyone was invited to participate on all levels of the magazine: I pitched issue themes and article ideas; I put pictures of my own kids and the places we've been in more than one Out and About piece; I even wrote an article or two. Over the years I've seen staff meetings go from 20+ people at a restaurant to 6 or 8 people on Zoom, so I understand why we're closing the proverbial doors. But I will miss the community, and will always be proud of the years of beautiful magazine issues that I helped to create.



## Tara Robinson

Former writer and editor-in-chief, *GGMG Magazine*

I landed in San Francisco with a 3-month-old, leaving behind my job and friends back in Los Angeles. I interviewed for the then “newsletter” team to meet other moms and be creative together. Years later, I took over the role of editor-in-chief, volunteering on the magazine for seven years total.

Working on the magazine was one of the most transformative volunteer efforts I've ever been a part of. I remember 15 people sitting around the table at the old Pauline's Pizza pitching ideas for a full-color, 40-page magazine and all that it entailed—managing advertising, being recruited by major news outlets to re-run our articles. There were a lot of late nights, so much emailing and organizing and reviewing the proofs before going to print. This was a labor of love and a powerful connecting experience where a bunch of parents got together to create something we were proud of. We got to showcase our kids on the cover and share stories to thousands of people in the Bay Area. Thanks for the ride.



## Sherri Howe

Former advertising manager, *GGMG Magazine*

I had so much fun working as the advertising manager for *GGMG Magazine*. When my son was born, I didn't have many friends with kids. Joining the magazine was a great way to give back to my newfound (and life-saving) mom community and make new friends at the same time. Some of those moms are still close friends over a decade later. I was thrilled that they had a position available that didn't require any creative talents, as I'm more of a spreadsheet kind of gal. Every month we would take over a private room in Pauline's Pizza, connect, commiserate, and think about ways the magazine could support other moms. It was a little oasis. We all got a couple hours of time for ourselves that one night of the month. And the pizza was pretty dang delicious too. My job was helping relevant businesses reach this amazing audience. I will never forget the hemorrhoid cream ad. It was a reminder that while motherhood isn't always pretty, it's always pretty amazing.



## Kristen Tate

Former managing editor, *GGMG Magazine*

My *GGMG Magazine* friends were part of the village that got me through a tough divorce and then cheered me on as I started up a brand-new career. We have all of this rich history and shared context. I find it so much easier to be deeply honest with friends who know me in this way—that long history together is one of the advantages of aging!

Working on the magazine played a very direct role in my career path. I did some of my first professional editing training via professional development funds from *GGMG Magazine*, and my magazine experience and contacts helped me get a publishing internship and some initial freelance projects. Volunteering with the magazine showed me that I loved editing and working with people to shape their words—and that I was good at it. I also loved the way we worked—we had so much autonomy in terms of what we featured and when we did our work. That experience led naturally to me choosing to freelance rather than pursue an in-house job. Now, 10 years later, I've made for myself a job that I absolutely love, and I still have the freedom to build a schedule that fits around family needs and take time off to tour colleges or just spend a random weekday at SFMOMA with one of my kids.





## Jen Gette

Former writer, *GGMG Magazine*

I joined GGMG because I didn't know very many women in San Francisco with babies. I met [former *GGMG Magazine* Editor-in-Chief and current Books for Kids Author] Laure Latham at a coffee shop downtown and she decided to take a chance on me as a writer even though I hadn't written anything formally since college. I'm forever grateful: It was so inspiring watching talented women around me blossom and regain confidence in their various roles on the magazine staff.

This led to fun meetings at each other's homes, late-night editing sessions, and the expansion of the black-and-white newsletter to a full-color magazine. It provided a connection to over a dozen other moms with similar creative passions outside of motherhood and our day-to-day routines and resulted in an incredible platform that connected thousands of new moms in San Francisco. This was long before any of the productivity tools available today. We worked via email (Hotmail!), text message, and in-person meetings mostly. We were a diverse group and we all supported each other. We had ambitious goals and we worked together to figure it out.

## Catherine Symon

Former writer, *GGMG Magazine*

I was a GGMG member from my daughter's infancy through her early elementary years and a writer for *GGMG Magazine* for much of that time. As a member, I was so grateful for the magazine's timely and digestible content. (What new parent has the time or brain space to plow through the latest tome on sleep or picky eating? I definitely did not.) The main articles were relevant to what was happening in my life and Out & About became my go-to reference guide for events and places to explore in my adopted hometown.

Once I joined the magazine team, I was energized to work alongside women who managed to deliver a full-fledged print publication on schedule no matter what was going on in everyone's (insanely) busy lives. I had the freedom to explore topics that fascinated me and write about the pelvic floor, the relationship between movement and brain development, menopause, how the sense of humor develops, miscarriage, and more. Hooray for the pizza and wine that kept us going at meetings. Most of all, I felt welcomed, productive and supported. Thank you to staff—past and present—for making this magazine happen!

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# Meet the Locals



## VOLUNTEER WITH GGMG!

GGMG is a volunteer organization for moms, run by moms, and we are always looking for members who would like to help, whether it's for a specific event or on an ongoing basis.



Reach out to us at [recruiting@gmg.org](mailto:recruiting@gmg.org) to let us know your areas of interest, and we will help find the role that works best for you.



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## Do you know?

**SCHOOLS** - There are 15 school districts in Marin County.

**LOTTERY** - One Marin school district enrolls via a lottery system.

**FOG** - Where the temperature and fog line change in Marin?

**COMMUTE** - Traffic patterns and commuting options to SF.

**OFF MARKET** - Our team has access to exclusive pocket inventory.

## Food allergy treatment with a 97% success rate\*

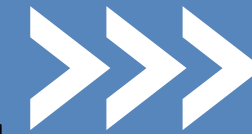


\*97% of patients under 4 years achieved desensitization to their allergen(s).  
 Source: Internal data, 2024



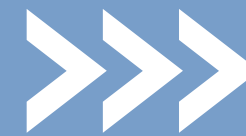
### Party Animals

We want to be in the mix, so we can walk to shops, restaurants & bars. Easy public transit. Must have parking, but we can deal with shared laundry and a 4th floor walk-up.



### Baby Time

Oh snap! No more 4th floor walk-up with loud crowds outside all the time. We loved our starter condo, but now we crave in-unit laundry, a third bedroom, second bathroom, and two-car parking. It's definitely time to nest.



### Life Happens

Wouldn't it be great if our son could get himself to school and back on public transit? With both of us working from home now, we're going to need 4 bedrooms. Oh, and a yard for that dog my family has \*finally\* agreed to let me get.

## Seasoned by real life and ready to help you navigate the real estate market, whatever life throws at you.

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### School Age

Our kid's school is across town. We better move closer so we don't have a long commute for 12 years. We should probably get some outdoor space or at least be near parks & playgrounds.





NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS

**Monthly Queer Family Hike**

Join queer families for a walk/hike, which includes casually mingling/chatting, discussions on agreed-upon topics, and just sharing unique experiences and issues we have encountered as queer families. All queer families are welcome!

- Date:** First Saturday or Sunday of each month
- Time:** Typically 10 a.m. to noon
- Place:** TBD
- Cost:** Free for members
- Contact:** Email Dy Nguyen for details (*dy.nguyen@gmail.com*).

**Marina Coffee + Stroller Walk**

Calling all Marina (and surrounding neighborhoods) mamas & babies! Would you like to meet neighborhood moms, grab a coffee, and enjoy a stroller walk together? We're organizing this stroller walk for you! We meet at Philz Coffee Truck before heading out for a walk and some fresh air. Drop by and say hello.

- Date:** Every week on Wednesdays
- Time:** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Place:** Philz Coffee Truck, 500 Marina Blvd.
- Cost:** Free for members
- Contact:** Please text or email Carly at 650.722.1124 or *Carly.n.hoffman@gmail.com* to RSVP or with any questions.

**Sunset Coffee + Stroller Walk**

Calling all Sunset (and surrounding neighborhoods) mamas & babies! Would you like to meet neighborhood moms, grab a coffee, and enjoy a stroller walk together? We're organizing this stroller walk for you! We meet at Andytown (on Taraval) before heading out for a walk and some fresh air. Drop by and say hello.

- Date:** Every other week on Thursdays
- Time:** 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Place:** Andytown Coffee Roasters, 3629 Taraval St.
- Cost:** Free for members
- Contact:** Please email Raman Chima at *rkular11@gmail.com* to RSVP or with questions.

**Monthly Moms Happy Hour**

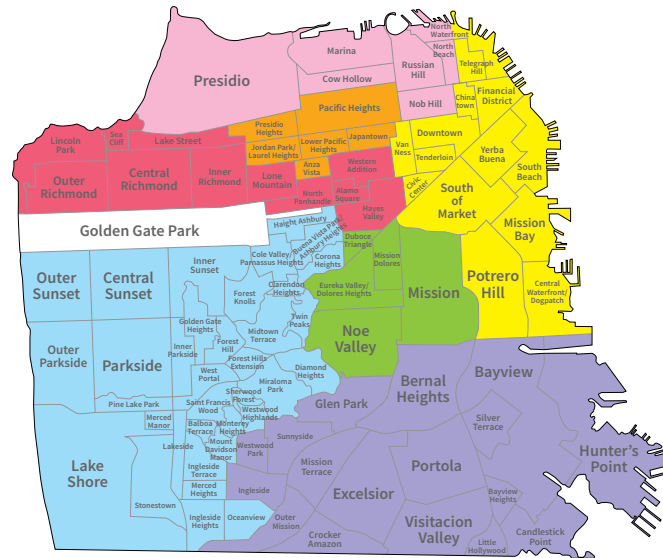
Join us for drinks and appetizers at a local restaurant to meet and connect with other moms in San Francisco. We will visit a different venue in a different SF neighborhood each month. Details for each month's venue will be posted through our website.

- Date:** The third Wednesday of every month
- Time:** 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- Place:** TBD
- Cost:** Free for members
- Contact:** Please text or email Jessie at *Leejessiesf@gmail.com* or 415.518.6402 for details.

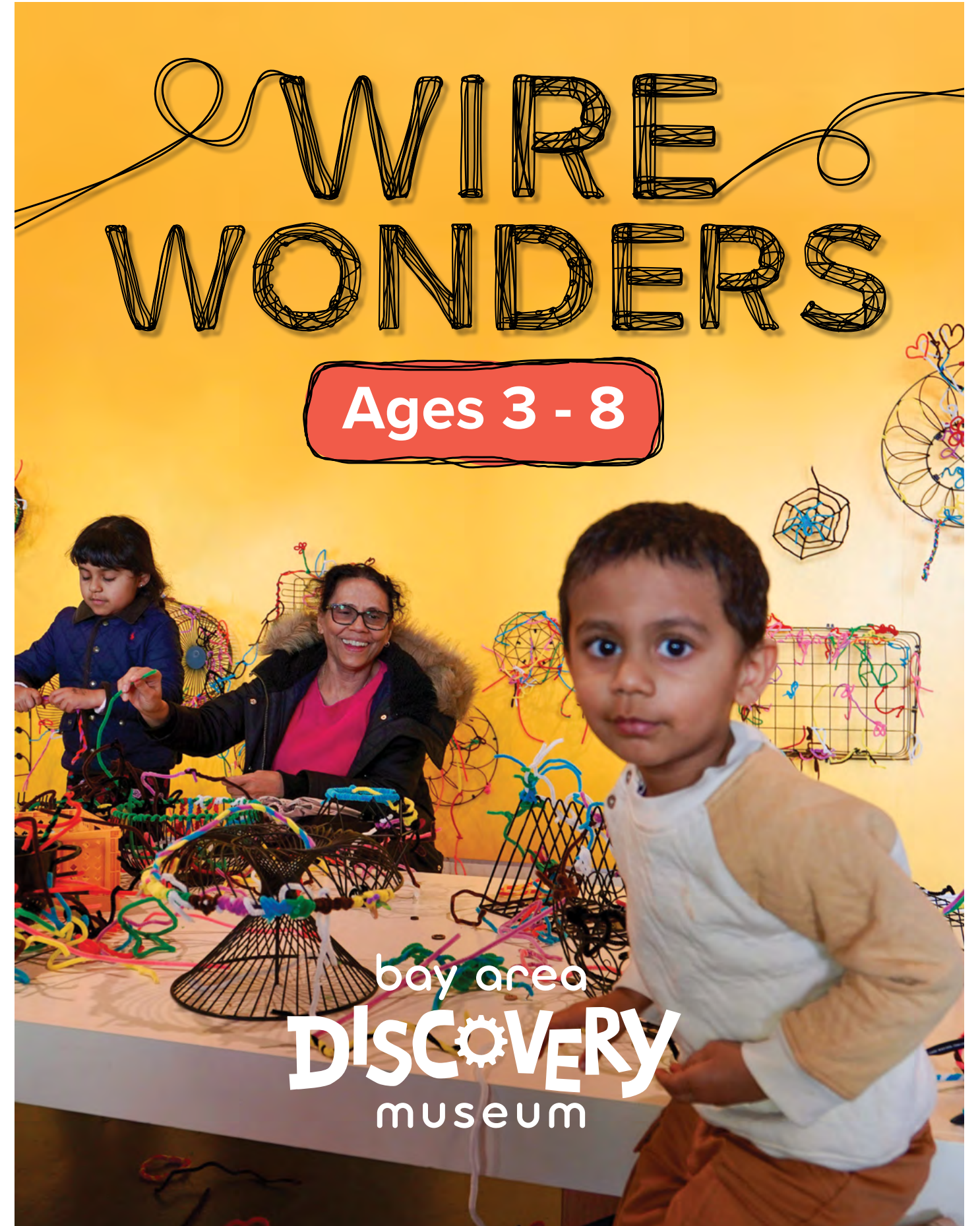
**Marina/Pac Heights/North Beach Monthly Moms Happy Hour**

Please join us for a monthly happy hour the first Thursday of each month at Wildseed. Drop in anytime for drinks and appetizers with other moms!

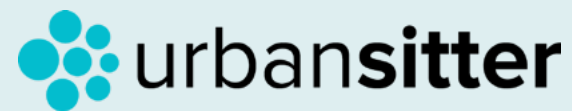
- Date:** First Thursday of every month
- Time:** 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.
- Place:** Wildseed, 2000 Union St.
- Cost:** Free for members
- Contact:** Please email Vanessa at *vanessa.kitchen@gmail.com* to RSVP or if you have any questions.



Register for events at [ggmg.org/calendar](http://ggmg.org/calendar) unless otherwise noted.







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## Something to Be Proud Of

By Colleen Morgan

Do you remember the first time you created something you were truly proud of? Something that would inspire you to congratulate your younger self on a job well done? For me, I'm transported back to my senior year of high school. After years of being forced to read classical English literature, which I despised, I was instructed to write a senior thesis on English culture. I gleefully interpreted this assignment as any rebellious, bored 18 year old would: I wrote about Oasis. More specifically, I wrote about how the English rock band Oasis hoped to be the Beatles of the '90s, but excessive drug and alcohol use, coupled with fights between bandmates, overshadowed their creative genius and thwarted their ascension to rock-and-roll legendary status. I took a gamble that my well-researched piece would impress my teacher, who I was convinced was a pot-smoking hippie back in the day. *How would he respond to my unconventional war of words?* To my delight, the gamble paid off: I got an A, along with a host of positive comments written in the margins of my creation.



in decades ... except babies, but I couldn't stack those neatly on my shelf.

Two years later, in the midst of a global pandemic, I took on a senior editing role. I learned quickly that an editor is the conductor of an intimate dance between writer and reader. As an insatiable bookworm, I knew the power of a well-crafted story; to draw one in and keep one wanting more, and to imbue such deep feelings that they take root in one's mind and body. *GGGM Magazine* provided a space for writer and reader to connect deeply: from the raw survival of new motherhood and the despair of a dissolved relationship to the awe of a neighborhood hidden gem and the exhilaration of

standing up for oneself as a mother, partner, or employee in a demanding, rapidly-changing world.

But words on a page only tell part of the story. It turns out that what I'm most proud of creating is not a printed product on glossy paper, but the real-life relationships forged behind the scenes. I discovered there is something magical about

**“[W]hen the first issue I helped create arrived in my mailbox, the weight of the familiar glossy paper felt strangely different in my hands. ...I was aglow with ... pride.”**

Sadly, my senior thesis felt like the peak of my writing career for decades. All other writing assignments before or after were exactly as described—assignments. Read this book and answer these questions. Write a 200-word character analysis. Interpret this poem. Fresh out of college as a physical therapist, my writing assignments became more tedious and mechanical—documenting every patient's diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes *ad infinitum* or the clinic wouldn't get paid. I found myself lightyears away from playfully transcribing my love/hate relationship with an English rock band.

When I was pregnant with my second child, unemployed after folding my small business and depleted from chasing a toddler around, I volunteered to be a copy editor for *GGGM Magazine*, primarily to stave off the monotony of new motherhood. I was familiar with the magazine, having received issues during the prior two years as a GGGM member. Yet, when the first issue I helped create arrived in my mailbox, the weight of the familiar glossy paper felt strangely different in my hands. I was aglow with the same sense of pride I had as a fresh-faced 18 year old. *I made something! And it's really, really good.* I hadn't made anything

working with a group of mothers. They know my truth because it's their truth as well—the dark fog of postpartum depression, the seemingly endless family crises, and the mind-numbing invisible labor of managing a household. To work together with other mothers who so naturally and effortlessly support each other has been an incredible gift, highlighting what many workplace cultures are lacking. To come together and agree that our magazine efforts are no longer sustainable demonstrates mothers acknowledging our limitations without regret or despair.

When this issue of *GGGM Magazine* arrives in my mailbox, I will place it on top of my teetering stack of prior issues—the last of its kind. In 20 years, when the ink has faded and the binding has torn, I will look back and congratulate myself—and the talented writers, editors, copy editors, designers, photographers, and advertising managers—on a job well done. *We made something! And it was really, really good.*

*Colleen thanks the entire GGGM Magazine staff, past and present, for their contributions and support. It's been a lovely, wild ride!*

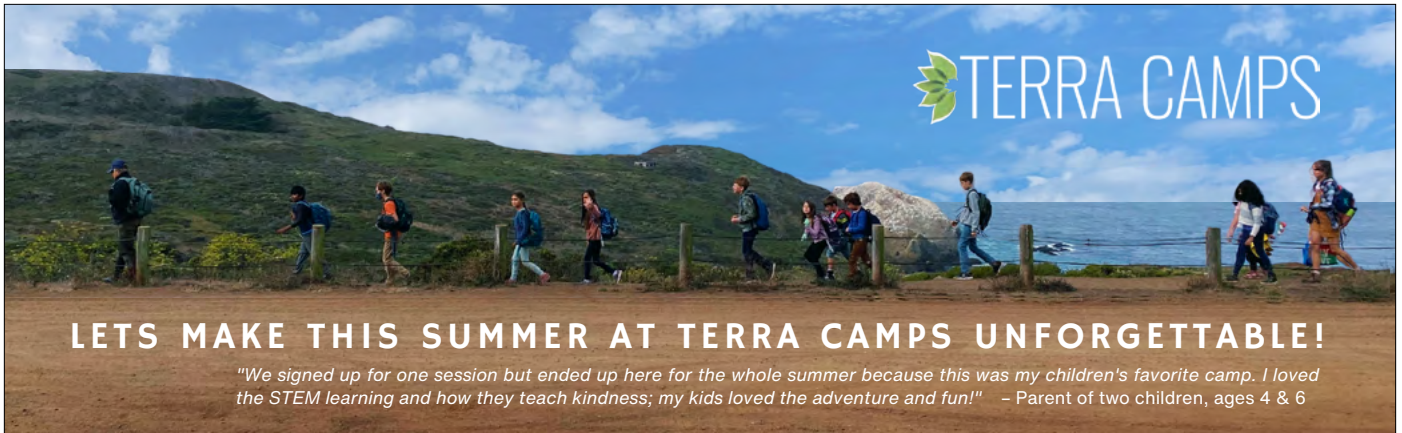




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