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Letter from the Editor: Where to Begin

By Sonya Abrams



Sonya is an editor and photographer living in Cole Valley with her three children.

I'm not sure if it's the end of the beginning, or the beginning of the end, but in any case, things are changing. It appears that the pandemic has turned a corner and some semblance of the old world is beginning to appear. And, to be honest, it's a little terrifying. I've spent the past year settling into new routines in our shrunken world, forming a tight-knit group with a small handful of friends, engaging in the same activities week after week—beach, bonfire, park, pizza. My children's universes have also contracted, reduced to screen-based education and weekends spent outside, with my friends' children as their only peers, their own classmates still disembodied faces living inside Chromebooks. Though tedious at times, this new life has become comforting in its familiarity and predictability. But now, as vaccinations and encouraging infection numbers chip away at COVID, we're learning how to take tentative steps back into the larger world. This feels overwhelming. How will my children transition to a classroom, after more than a year of attending school in pajamas with breaks and snacks every few minutes? Will they know how to engage with their classmates? And how will I re-establish friendships with the people who drifted away during the pandemic? How should I rebuild my community, and what has the past year taught me about my true values?

We are also re-emerging into a larger world that's both similar yet fraught with new challenges. Entire industries have nearly disappeared, socioeconomic divisions have deepened, and the pandemic has only moved the Right and Left farther apart. Additionally, racism is on the rise, with Asians and Asian-Americans now bearing the brunt of the hatred that can be found in every corner of the country. How do we address these enormous challenges and heal? Our writers in this issue explore transitions we encounter on both personal and societal levels. Emily Beaven and Sallie Hess give advice on moving, within San Francisco as well as long haul. With COVID forcing more individuals and families into new homelessness, Veronica Reilly-Granich addresses how we can begin to find the language for and actions around supporting people suffering from food and housing insecurity. And Clare Deignan guides us through the urban renewal projects bringing new hope and beauty to our battered city.

“Though tedious at times, this new life has become comforting in its familiarity and predictability.”

As we take our first tentative steps into this strange and overwhelming new world, we can lean on each other for strength and support, hopefully from ever shrinking distances.

Sonya Abrams

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NEXT ISSUE: Sustainability

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

Letter from the Board: Starting Fresh

By Connie Lin

April is always a magical time in San Francisco because it's the beginning of the shift to sunnier weather and a little less rain. My family and I are proud to say that we struggled and survived more than a year of our world being turned upside down because of the pandemic, and in some ways, we are better for it. We had a few fun months of mommy-run school, starting with Scholastic videos and stories, frantic dashes to log in to multiple Zoom classes (some simultaneously), then outdoor soccer plus bubble time before oven-warmed chicken nuggets and afternoons filled with GoNoodles and games. Because they only had each other to play with, my 7-year-old and 4-year-old found ways to sort out their differences, happily venturing together into superhero territory as well as performing in dance and music shows for me and my husband. Of course, there were also fights and days that we all went to bed early.

“While some of the changes from last year have become our new normal[...] I'm cautiously optimistic about making plans beyond just a couple of months.”

This year I've looked forward to starting anew. While some of the changes from last year have become our new normal—from mask-wearing to eating at home a lot more—I'm cautiously optimistic about making plans beyond just a couple of months. This is a good time to revisit New Year's resolutions and see where and how we all want to change and contribute more to the world. To start, consider signing up to volunteer with GGMG. We would love to have you join the team. Email us at recruiting@ggm.org and let us know what

you are looking for—whether a small, flexible role or a leadership position with broader visibility. We have committee chair openings for Community Outreach, Volunteer Engagement, Member Experiences, Member Approvals, and more. When it is safe to do so, I look forward to seeing you in person at GGMG events, including our annual Spring Fling (shelved for now). In the meantime, our upcoming events feature ongoing get-togethers meant to help you connect with other mamas in the community and support yourself both mentally and physically. Talk with fellow toddler mamas on Tuesday afternoons from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., or get moving with the GGMG fitness series on Saturday mornings at 10:15 a.m. with Lily Brotherton (GGMG mom of two and certified fitness instructor). Alternatively, you could join us for a boba-making workshop led by Boba Guys founders Andrew and Bin on May 21, in support of a local Asian American owned business (#StopAsianHate). Then, you could tell us about the funny thing your kid did or what your mother-in-law said during our monthly Virtual Moms' Night In on Wednesday nights. Wishing you and your family a bright, safe, and healthy spring. Can't wait to see you again soon!



Connie is mom to two sweet and goofy kids and works for a large tech company. Sunshine at the beach, wine, and good friends have powered her through COVID-19 challenges.

Connie Lin

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: Jay Jay Chu, Carter Muits (7), Bunny (5 months)

Mini Gardens

By Christine Chen

The **Hidden Garden Steps** in the Inner Sunset, on 16th Avenue between Kirkham and Lawton, are a public art space, featuring a beautiful 148-step mosaic tile staircase. The artists, Aileen Barr and Colette Crutcher, also created the first ceramic-tiled stairway, the **Moraga Steps**, also in the Inner Sunset. The **Queen Wilhelmina Tulip Garden** in Golden Gate Park under an authentic Dutch windmill (once used to pump water to plants in the park) is a fabulous place to see tulips that bloom in red, pink, orange, and yellow clusters in the spring. More than 9,000 types of plants are flourishing at the **San Francisco Botanical Garden** in Golden Gate Park. The large, sprawling space includes the Succulent Garden, the Moon Viewing Garden, the Ancient Plant Garden, and the Garden of Fragrance, which contains only heavily scented flowers. The best time to visit the **Rose Garden** in Golden Gate Park is during the summer when everything is in bloom. I recall going once during the winter and we laughed that it literally was the Rose Garden because there was only one rose. The **Dahlia Garden** near the Conservatory of Flowers celebrates San Francisco's official flower in a thick, fenced-in area that starts to bloom in June and reaches its peak in late August and September. Not to be missed, of course, is the **Japanese Tea Garden**, with its beautiful bridges and serene atmosphere that is a draw for locals and tourists alike.

Christine loves gardens, though she herself has a black thumb and has never been able to keep a plant alive.



Photograph by Trace Nietert

Li'l Kid, Big City: Outer Richmond

By Jessica Perry

Nestled in the fog and against the Pacific lies San Francisco's Outer Richmond. Home to many families, some of the city's most beautiful recreation areas, and stellar restaurants, the Outer Richmond has something to offer everyone. Need some culture? Head to the **Legion of Honor**, where the kids can run around the fountain and through the museum. Feeling like a more rugged adventure? Hike on **Lands End Trail**, which boasts some of the most beautiful views of the Golden Gate Bridge and the Marin Headlands. Just at the bottom of Lands End Trail are the ruins of **Sutro Baths**, where the kids can explore saltwater pools and caves. Feeling hungry after the excitement of your day? Grab some food along the Balboa Corridor, home to the much-loved **Butter Love Bakeshop**, **Devil's Teeth Baking Company**, **Cassava**, and **Chino's Taqueria** among many other restaurants. Still need to burn off some energy after your food? Take a stroll down to **Golden Gate Park** to watch members of the SF Model Yacht Club test their watercraft on **Spreckels Lake** while your little ones feed the birds. A little further down JFK Drive is the **Bison Paddock**, whose residents are tended to by staff members from the San Francisco Zoo.

Jessica is a mom and longtime-resident of the Outer Richmond. She has enjoyed many a day taking beach walks and mom-bonding at the many Richmond playgrounds.

Jasmine Stirling

Photograph by Jasmine Stirling

Jasmine Stirling is embarking on an exciting journey as a published author. Her first book, *A Most Clever Girl: How Jane Austen Discovered Her Voice*, hit bookstores in March. Jasmine lives in San Francisco with her husband and two young daughters. Learn more at jasmineastirling.com or on Instagram [@jasmine.a.stirling.author](https://www.instagram.com/jasmine.a.stirling.author). GGMG writer Neha Masson had a conversation with Jasmine about her career, raising creative kids, and life as a writer.

Tell us about your background and history with San Francisco.

I have lived in San Francisco off and on since 1991. I grew up in Arizona as the only child of a single teenage mom. I first came to SF on a full academic scholarship at the University of San Francisco. I had short stints away from SF when I studied at Oxford University, then I lived in Japan and New York City. But we've set down roots here in Cole Valley with our girls.

You've had a successful business career, and now your first book is about to be published. Take us through your professional journey.

Nine years ago, I was a C-level executive at an education technology company. I loved my work, but I had to pause my career for personal reasons. When I left, it was a low point in my life. I asked myself, what do I want to do now?

I thought back to my childhood—I was a precocious young reader, I wrote poems for my mom starting at age three. Why hadn't I continued to do any creative writing in my adult life? Once I decided to be an author, I threw myself into it.

What was your process like to transition into writing?

I joined professional writing groups, attended conferences and workshops, and took creative writing classes. I was inspired to write regularly, without interruption, in 90 minute blocks after reading the book *Making Time*. These concepts apply to anything you have dreamed of doing, but have never made time for. I sought constant feedback. I must have rewritten portions of my picture book 50 times!

Know a mom you want to spotlight in the next issue? Email editor@gmg.org with her name, email, and a few sentences about what makes her an awesome mom for our next Member Profile.

What is A Most Clever Girl about, and how did you choose this topic?

A Most Clever Girl: How Jane Austen Discovered Her Voice is focused on Jane Austen's journey as a writer who passed through many stages before perfecting her craft.

One of my goals in writing this story was to challenge the myth of the genius as someone who is born to succeed based on their innate talent. It's just not true. Mastery of any creative field, for anyone, requires careful nurturing, experimentation, persistence and many failed starts. Even Jane Austen didn't fully mature as a writer until she had been at it for a quarter of a century.

My hope is that if children are able to learn this young, they will be more encouraged to persist in their own creative pursuits, even when they get discouraged or wonder if they don't have "talent."

Tell us about Jane Austen as a role model.

I love that there's no male counterpart to her. She's arguably the greatest novelist in the English language. Her works portray real women faced with many limitations. Also, in her own life, she was one of the original career women and challenged gender norms with the choices she made.

To create the next stage of feminism, we need to retell the stories of the past. I have a book coming out next year for young adults titled *We Demand an*

Equal Voice: Carrie Chapman Catt and Votes for Women. Carrie Chapman Catt may have done more for women's rights than anyone in U.S. history, and yet so few of us know about her.

Where can we find your book?

A Most Clever Girl was just released in March! I'd love for parents and Austen fans in San Francisco to purchase from local bookstores—I'll be providing signed copies to Booksmith, Books Inc., Folio Books, Green Apple Books, and Book Passage. Check out the 'Giveaways' tab on my website, jasmineastirling.com, where I'll send you a free Jane Austen paper doll kit after you purchase. Then, make a day of it. Get the book, make the paper dolls, have a tea party, and discuss

Jane Austen the rebel, the genius, and the career woman with your kids!



Strike the Right Note in Your Child’s Musical Education

With Christine Morgan



Christine Morgan is an elementary school music teacher in North Reading, MA. She received her bachelor’s degree in music education from the University of Delaware and her master’s degree in music education from Gordon College.

Teachers have been incredibly resilient and creative this year. How has your job as an elementary school music teacher changed?

Our school has been operating on a hybrid schedule since

September, so sometimes students have music with me in person, and sometimes they have music remotely from home. Instead of teaching in my beautiful music room, I am traveling class to class with a cart—nicknamed Moz-Cart. Due to COVID, we have not been able to sing indoors and share many materials, which is the most difficult part. I’ve made a lot of changes to my curriculum and learned a LOT about technology—I even produced a virtual musical with my students last spring. There are some positives, such as some really successful lessons I’ve tried involving music technology, children’s books, and even cardio drumming. We are still making music—it is just different.

Are there easy, low-cost music options for children who cannot participate in person?

Yes. If your child is an infant, simply singing, humming, dancing, and listening to all different types of music can build early musical skills. Try singing lullabies or songs from your own childhood, or just have fun making up silly songs together. There are so many amazing YouTube channels geared towards making music with younger children—some of my favorites are Laurie Berkner, Raffi, Jill Trinka, Music For Kiddos, Mr. DelGaudio, and Miss Katie Sings. Carnegie Hall has an amazing Musical Explorers program as well as mini-episodes for families called Sing with Carnegie Hall. There are also a lot of ideas online for making your own instruments; the Dallas Symphony Orchestra website is a great resource. If you have older children looking for interactive music games, activities, and

music technology, check out sites like Chrome Music Lab, Incredibox, Bongo Cat, and Garageband.

How do I know if my child is ready for one-on-one music lessons?

It really depends on your child and the instrument. If your child is excited about learning an instrument and is able to focus for a 20 to 30 minute lesson, I would start looking into it. Some teachers are hesitant to teach instrumental lessons to kids under the age of 5 for a few different reasons including fine motor skills, coordination, and focus, but again, readiness varies from child to child. Keep in mind that voice lessons for young children should be a little different from traditional voice lessons because children’s voices don’t yet have the maturity or stamina for formal voice training. However, as long as the teacher uses different approaches with young children (for example, more creative play, movement and musicianship skills rather than singing for 30 straight minutes) it could be a wonderful experience.

How do I encourage my child to practice his/her instrument without resistance?

I think it’s really important to not make practicing seem like a chore (for example, try not to say, “You can’t watch TV until you play piano”)—practicing should be fun. Try letting your child choose when they would like to practice so it does not seem like homework. It helps when children learn music they truly enjoy—there is a lot of value in learning classical music,

but your child might be more excited to practice a pop song they love. Give a lot of positive reinforcement and praise. Find a great teacher who your child connects with, and don’t be afraid to switch teachers if something is not working.

What are the advantages of bringing music into a child’s life?

When children have early musical experiences, they build musical foundations that will stay with them throughout their lives. There are many links between music, mathematics, and literacy skills, such as pattern recognition, reasoning, and language development. Music is such a wonderful medium for children to express and process their feelings. Just one song has the power to calm, energize, support routines, inspire creativity, build confidence, and spread joy. And it’s never too late to introduce music into a child’s life.

“Just one song has the power to calm, energize, support routines, inspire creativity, build confidence, and spread joy.”

CONTEST

Practical Parenting

Fly Little Dragon is a community of parents and child development experts who share tips, tools, and toys. The company was founded by an entrepreneurial mom with a passion for connecting a community to best support children’s needs and helping parents enjoy parenting.

Their website, flylittledragon.com, offers toys, online programs, and printables recommended by experts.

Our two winners will each receive one of the following prizes:

One lucky winner will win the online series “Positive Parenting and Neuroscience: Practical Tools for Easier Parenting.” This series is for the parent who wants to stop yelling; create clear limits and follow through with them; and stop feeling frustrated with their children. It will teach simple steps that parents can take in their everyday life to make parenting easier through concrete tools applicable in daily life. It will include videos, a digital workbook,



digital posters, and digital cheat sheets to help you deal with common parenting struggles. The value of this prize is \$75.

Our second lucky winner will win the online package “Learn and Play for PreK: Animals Around the World.” This series is for children 3 to 5 years old and includes 10 videos approximately 20 minutes each, and a digital worksheet with crafts, games, and posters. The value of this prize is \$75.

Our two individual winners and their respective prizes are selected at random.

Please enter the contest by emailing contest@ggmg.org with the subject line “dragon.”

The winner of our last contest is **Jessica Perry**. Jessica has won a 60-minute video call and subsequent messaging access with Karen Brein, former GGMG Board Chair and founder of Happy Mama Nutrition, to develop a personalized wellness plan. Thanks to our generous prize donors; please patronize their services!



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Reflecting on the Upsides of the Last Year

By Kyle Pierce

This is my favorite time of year. The northern hemisphere has emerged from a period of rest and new growth is evident, everywhere. Out on the trails, California’s golden hills are still emerald green. Evenings grow longer and the sun is high enough in the sky to bring the light and warmth necessary for tomato starts. (Last year, raccoons ate our initial harvest and damaged the plants beyond repair, but I’ll be damned if that keeps me from trying again.)

I am the father of two boys, now 14 and 15 years old, and a gardener (among other things). Out in the garden, months of rain and quiet root development push new fronds from the earth, encourage deciduous trees to leaf out, and yield a riot of color in masses of spring flowers. Potential energy released.

Like you, we’ve taken a deep dive into the hyper-local this year. Many days, that meant not straying too far from the couch. But as Richmond District residents, we beat a pretty good path to Baker, China, and Marshall’s beaches, up and down Slow Streets, and through Golden Gate Park and the Presidio. I’m grateful for the wealth of year-round hiking opportunities at arm’s length; we’ve enjoyed hikes ranging from 2 to 16 miles, explored Point Reyes, Big Basin, Redwood Regional Park, Baltimore Canyon, Windy Hill Preserve, Muir Woods, Marin Headlands, Briones, the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed, and paddled miles in kayaks on the Bay.

How else do you cope when your world becomes small? Our boys shared a bedroom for nearly 14 years. But when their bedroom became a classroom, they wanted to rethink how our home was configured. Could they occupy the two rooms downstairs (our bedroom and office) and we move the contents of those rooms upstairs? We undertook a paring down, long overdue, (seriously, I got rid of 20 pairs of pants, some acquired in the mid ‘90s), to make change possible. The boys are still close—there is just a bathroom between their rooms—but there are now doors to close, providing them



privacy during the school day and the personal space to express themselves. They helped me tape and paint their rooms—one O’Reilly Green, the other Sea Haze (gray). We worked together to solve storage issues, staining, varnishing and assembling loft beds so we could hide our bikes beneath them. And now rugs, posters, and other décor serve to distinguish these personal expressions further. Inspired by their success, just yesterday they flipped the location of our living and dining rooms. What was old has become new.

As a parent, it has been an opportunity to model resilience—through quarantines, long hikes, and a deluge of Zoom meetings; patience for that which only

the passage of time can reach; gratefulness for our health—and despite all we’ve lost this past year—all we still have.

We have a 15-year-old that recently overtook me as the tallest member of our family (for better or worse, I remain heaviest). And a 14-year-old who set a goal to read 100 books this year (somehow he’s already read 45, not including comics). Our parents are vaccinated. There is toilet paper on the shelves. And light at the end of this distance-learning tunnel.

The boys’ soccer teams are ramping up to resume competitive play this spring, which—after a year of socially distant practices—sure feels new. Later this year we’ll have two high schoolers. And a 16-year-old (and eventually a new driver). And be vaccinated ourselves. And catch up with family and friends in-person. Maybe even inside. And travel, hiking further afield. And then we will come back to this home that we’ve made here in San Francisco.

Here we are, on the verge.

Kyle is a Bay Area native and 24-year resident of San Francisco where he lives with his wife and their two sons. He is a freelance illustrator and photographer who loves gardening and shares his passion for plants as a volunteer docent at the San Francisco Botanical Garden.

“How else do you cope when your world becomes small? [...] As a parent, it has been an opportunity to model resilience—through quarantines, long hikes, and a deluge of Zoom meetings.”

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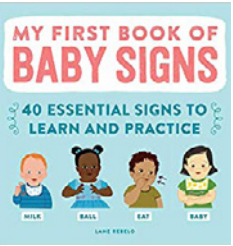
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New Beginnings

By Laure Latham

For a child, new beginnings can be routine things (though no less important) such as a new birthday, a new school, a new friend, a new science fact, or a new language. From baby signs to the life of flies, these books will delight and inspire all ages to experience life with a fresh eye.



My First Book of Baby Signs: 40 Essential Signs to Learn and Practice

Written and illustrated by Lane Rebelo

Non-verbal communication is one of the first skills your little ones will learn to get what they need and connect with you. Part of the American Sign Language, these signs relate to a baby’s daily life and include useful words such as milk, eating, shoes, and more (as in wanting more of something). Including instructions on how to do each sign, this book will make bedtime interactive and fun.

Ages: 0 to 3 years



Dream Machine

Written by Joshua Jay, illustrated by Andy J. Miller and Andy J. Pizza

Sweet dreams are made of a lot of fun stuff! This playful board book will turn bedtime into the ultimate Maker Faire adventure, with each page showing young ones how to create a dream from scratch. It may involve spinning a wheel to yawn, turning up the volume on the Snore Switch or tuning into your favorite Dream Channel. Most importantly, this book will make story time something to look forward to at bedtime. **Ages: 0 to 3 years**



Love Tails

Written and illustrated by Rob Sayegh Jr.

Did your family welcome a furry friend recently? If you did or if you are dog lovers, this book will make you smile. Introducing different breeds via their tail, the story tells the tale of every tail in happy detail. You will even learn the “tail-tale” sign that means “I love you” in dog language.

Ages: 3 to 5 years



13 Ways to Eat a Fly

Written by Sue Evanrich and Chenoa Egawa, illustrated by David Clark

Have you ever eaten a fly? Would you like

to know how it’s done by professionals? In this book, a swarm of thirteen flies hangs out outside when one by one, they are picked off by natural predators. Including a healthy dose of eww moments, this book should delight young children with a taste for creepy crawlies while teaching them important science facts. As a bonus, the end pages focus on flies as food for humans, which surely would be a first for many readers. **Ages: 4 to 8 years**



Jump at the Sun: The True Life Tale of Unstoppable Storycatcher Zora Neale Hurston

Written by Alicia D. Williams, illustrated by Jacqueline Alcántara

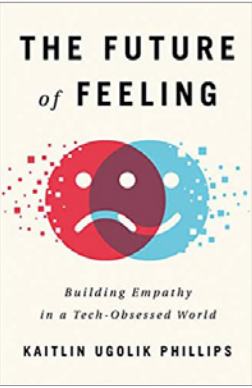
When Zora Neale Hurston heard African American folktales in the 1920s, she did what nobody else had ever dreamed of. She recorded these front porch stories in her hometown, in the local dialect, so that they would live on in posterity. She wrote them down so they wouldn’t die with the storytellers. Long forgotten by history, the remarkable literary work of Zora Neale Hurston was only recognized after her death. This book tells the story of young Zora to whom her mother said “Jump at de sun!” and how she became a writer and folklorist. A must read for story lovers. **Ages: 4 to 8 years**

Laure blogs on healthy living and adventure travel at Frog Mom (frogmom.com), and is the author of Best Hikes with Kids: San Francisco Bay Area. She works in legal marketing and lives in London, where she peppers adventures with her two teenage daughters with wild swims, foraging and cream teas. You can find her on social media @frogmomblog.

Empathy

By Gail Cornwall

How do we, as human beings and as mothers, recover from this devastating year and begin anew? With empathy. Only empathy will allow every one of us to move forward and only instilling empathy in our kids will prevent us from going back and allowing this level of suffering, so unfairly distributed, to recur.



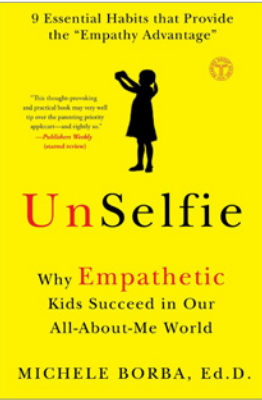
The Future of Feeling: Building Empathy in a Tech-Obsessed World

In *The Future of Feeling: Building Empathy in a Tech-Obsessed World*, Kaitlin Ugolik Phillips points to the online disinhibition effect and other research showing that empathy is harder on social media, which one of her sources describes as the 21st century’s cigarette. But “giving up on the possibility of empathic connection

via technology doesn’t feel like a real option.... [T]his is how we live now. And, barring some cataclysmic event, we’re only going to get more plugged in.” Much of her short book is dedicated to asking, “[C]an the same technologies that we blame for exacerbating these problems be used to help us fix them?” She looks at virtual reality headsets as a mechanism for understanding “refugees, Holocaust survivors, climate change, and more.”

But the most interesting bits tackle general concepts. There are two types of empathy, “cognitive empathy (understanding another person’s mental state) and affective empathy (responding emotionally to the other person’s mental state—i.e., sharing their feelings)...but people often use them interchangeably or say ‘empathy’ when what they really seem to mean is ‘compassion’ or ‘kindness.’” Compassion, she concludes, is feeling for someone, while empathy is feeling with them. Nunchi, Phillips explains, is a Korean concept that expects people to be able to listen to those around them and identify their moods. Yet “not all experts are convinced empathy is worth quite the praise we tend to give it.” After all, research has demonstrated that it’s easier to empathize with those who are similar to us, and that introduces bias: “If a leader is prone to overempathizing with some citizens and underempathizing with others, many citizens might prefer that leader rely more heavily on another emotion or skill.”

When it comes to empathy and tech, Phillips lands on a both/and: “[B]oth things are true—talking to people online can sometimes open our minds and allow us to give and receive empathy at levels never before possible, and it can also make us angry, resentful, bitter, hostile, and depressed.” Ultimately, I found the book interesting, though far from life-altering.



UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World

Unselfie, on the other hand, was both interesting and possibly life-altering, too. Dr. Michele Borba, an educational psychologist, “flew the world, spoke with

hundreds of researchers, conducted focus groups with more than 500 children, and visited dozens of schools.” Her conclusion? Empathy is neither a biological inheritance nor a trait, but a skill that can be taught: “a talent that kids can cultivate and improve, like riding a bike or learning a foreign language.” Borba identified “nine essential competencies,” including emotional literacy, moral identity, perspective taking, moral imagination, self-regulation, kindness, collaboration, moral courage, and altruistic leadership. Under each of these headings she doles out dozens of little strategies and techniques for inculcating “the foundation that helps our children become good, caring people,” as well as feeling more fulfilled.

Some of it gets filed away in the “duh” folder. For example, “parents who have warm, close relationships with their children are more likely to raise empathetic kids.” Other bits are less intuitive and far more specific. Take, for example, “Reverse sides. Next time there’s a sibling battle or friendship tiff, don’t offer advice. Instead, make your kids ‘reverse sides’ to see things from another perspective.” All of it is worth your time.

Ultimately, Borba leans more Luddite than Phillips: “The single best predictor of healthy emotional interactions is a lot of face-to-face communication.” And I leaned right along with her. If you want empathetic kids and aren’t sure where to start, get the paperback...or the e-book.

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/articles or by finding her on Facebook and Twitter.

Nineteen Years After Her Death, My Mother Finally Came Back to Me

By Colleen Morgan

I dread meeting new people. While I enjoy social gatherings, at some point in the relationship, whether it's a friend, classmate, coworker, or even a stranger, the story may emerge—my mother died when I was a teenager. The reactions are always the same—a mixture of surprise, sadness, and discomfort—often on my behalf, but also for the person's own sudden awareness of how their life story would change without a mother present. The conversation typically ends there. I prefer it this way, as talking about her loss has never been easy despite 19 years of practice. On a regular day, conversations about my mother are awkward and uncomfortable, but during big life events—birthdays, graduations, weddings—they are unbearable.

For me, like so many mothers, the biggest of big life events was the birth of my first child. Since it was an “easy” pregnancy, I was shocked by how terrible I felt postpartum. A fiercely independent person since my mother's death, I spent my entire adult life taking care of myself: moving further and further away from my family, hometown, and the memory of my happy childhood cut short. But the transition to motherhood triggered a longing to be cared for or mothered, a feeling I had not experienced since I was a teenager. Where was the homemade wonton soup, the warm compress, and the Advil delivered bedside for my aching body? Where was my mother who drove me to the doctor's office and tucked me into bed when I was sick? As I longed for someone to mother me, I stumbled through mothering my own son, not knowing how to breastfeed him or soothe him. I had so many questions and the person I trusted most to answer them was nowhere to be found. Suddenly, I was overwhelmed by memories of my absent mother—the feel of her rough hand in mine, the sound of her voice calling me to dinner. She was everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

As I found myself mourning the loss of my mother all over again, I began feeling connected to her in a way I never had before through my own experiences as a new mom: the



uninhibited displays of affection between mother and child; the indignities of being peed on and screamed at; the feelings of sadness and pride as my child grew increasingly independent. Surely she must have experienced these same emotions. These interconnected feelings of loss and found kinship only intensified with the birth of my daughter two and a half years later. Each time I brush my daughter's hair or put on her ballet slippers, I am transported back in time, remembering the happy little girl I once was—skinned knees, crooked pigtails, and toothy grin. I can't help but smile and laugh. And as my daughter grows, I'm sure I will be transported to my adolescent and teen years, filled with curiosity, restlessness, and resistance.

My greatest hope is that I will be lucky enough to celebrate her and her brother's big life events—birthdays, graduations, weddings, and perhaps, the birth of a first child.

These days, conversations about my mother happen on a near daily basis with my 4-year-old son. But unlike awkward moments with acquaintances or strangers, these conversations are far from uncomfortable. They help me heal and celebrate my mother by sharing the story of our relationship with my own children.

For years after the loss of my mother, I felt my life was split in two parts: the time before my mother died, when I was a happy, carefree child, and the time after when I stubbornly faced adulthood on my own. But becoming a mother has created a third phase in my life: if not a new beginning, then a continuation of a story that never truly reached its end. It is a story so familiar to all mothers, filled with joy and sadness, pride and frustration, appreciation and resentment, loneliness and unconditional love. It is a multigenerational story shared between mother and child—working through the past while building the future.

Colleen is a mother, daughter, wife, and friend living in San Francisco. You can find her simultaneously rolling her eyes and smiling at her messy, loud family. She dedicates this story to her mother, Casey Birmingham, and her children, Finley and Eva.



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Building Community Six Feet Apart

Keeping people connected, safe, and hopeful during COVID-19

By Clare Deignan

Photographs by Jessica Franklin



Isolation and loneliness are two by-products of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the better part of last year, many densely populated areas have been under shelter-in-place orders or in lockdown. The Bay Area is no exception. Reports of anxiety and depression are hitting all-time highs. Although separated from extended family, neighbors, school, and work communities, San Franciscans are still discovering ways to connect through initiatives such as community farming, city transportation initiatives, and public art—even while remaining six feet apart.

Urban renewal in the Bayview

“We are bringing together these diverse populations in the Bayview and creating an identity,” explains Ted Fang, co-founder and executive director of Florence Fang Community Farm. The farm serves the Bayview-Hunters Point community, a neighborhood labeled a food desert by the United States Department of Agriculture and one of the most diverse neighborhoods in San Francisco. Named after Ted’s mother, San Francisco publisher and philanthropist Florence Fang, the farm aims to strengthen the neighborhood’s

diverse community through local farming and providing nutritious food to residents. Fang emphasizes that the Florence Fang Community Farm is for everyone.

Established in 2014 as the Florence Fang Community Garden, the project arose out of an initiative of the AsianWeek Foundation, an organization encouraging and creating a connection between Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Previously the Diana Street Farm, which operated from the early 1900s until the late 1980s, the abandoned one-acre lot became a community site through an

agreement between CalTrain and the AsianWeek Foundation. In 2020, Florence Fang Community Garden changed its name from “garden” to “farm.” Now, the Florence Fang Community Farm continues the tradition of farming in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood.

“Mostly, we are operated by a group of actual farmers, farming the land themselves. Many of them are Chinese seniors, and some of our farmers are Black.” Fang continues, “We’re really building this as a community, which is why we want to call ourselves a community farm.”

Instrumental in getting the project off the ground, many seniors and local families tend to the garden regularly with the support of volunteers from diverse youth and professional groups. “We do intergenerational stuff. Most of the farmers are older Chinese immigrants, and we recently started a youth program with the after-school program Faces San Francisco, so they interact with the elder Chinese. It’s a very interesting dynamic,” describes Fang.

Florence Fang Community Farm is now an even more integral part of the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood. “During the COVID pandemic, everything shut down, and we shut down. But quickly, we realized the need is now more than ever.” Fang elaborates, “We found new partners with the SF Produce Market, everybody redoubled their efforts, and we worked with the Department of Public Health to find out what we can do and can’t do.”

Out of this grew a new purpose for the community farm. Fang says, “We started our COVID pandemic food program, trying to grow more food of our own, trying to cover those farmers that couldn’t come because of COVID, and then also getting

food from the produce market and then distributing it to the neighborhood.”

The community farm also has a food pantry that services more than 100 families. They are currently working with Habitat for Humanity to expand their pantry area to reach even more residents. In the future, Fang hopes the farm will provide neighborhood grocers and restaurants with local, organic vegetables creating a sustainable food system in the Bayview.

All are welcome to volunteer on the farm on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. You can learn more at ffcommunityfarm.org.

Connecting San Francisco with rides, slow streets, and art

Beyond grassroots urban renewal projects, the San Francisco Municipal Transit Association (SFMTA) is doing its part to connect the city, through extending reduced fares to essential workers, designating streets for social distanced exercise and travel, and beautifying temporary MUNI platforms.

Even when there were many unknowns about COVID-19, essential workers kept San Francisco going. The SFMTA extended reduced fares to essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the San Francisco Department of the Environment’s website, San Francisco’s city

is \$70 per trip, and an application is necessary for an essential worker to receive a free and safe ride home.

Another COVID-19 initiative of the city is the Slow Streets program. During the pandemic, if you’ve taken a turn and ended up down a road marked “Road Closed to Through Traffic,” then you are on a Slow Street. As explained on the SFMTA website, the city designated Slow Streets to prioritize walking, biking, and space to social distance. It’s important to remember that these streets aren’t completely closed and that pedestrians and bicyclists don’t have the right of way. Although it can be frustrating to figure out what streets you can and cannot drive down in San Francisco these days, Slow Streets give neighbors more opportunity to get outside, stretch, and social distance safely during COVID-19.

Public art is another initiative of the SFMTA COVID-19 response. According to the SFMTA blog post, “Temporary Ramps Provide a Platform for Local Artists,” by Jonathan Streeter, the SFMTA partnered with Paint the Void, an organization keeping artists working during COVID-19. The goal was to paint murals on its newly constructed temporary platforms, transforming the ordinary to extraordinary. Artists Simón Malvaez and Emily Fromm’s

“While businesses and locals face unknown futures, Paint the Void’s murals inspire awe, instill hope, and even encourage following COVID-19 guidelines.”

is providing 10 taxi rides per month to those essential workers left without a ride due to MUNI schedule reductions. The limit

murals can be found on the J Church platform and West Portal platform, respectively. Malvaez and Fromm were commissioned to capture the spirit of the neighborhood surrounding the designated lines.

Painting hope

Paint the Void’s work doesn’t stop there. There’s more, lots more. As shelter-in-place closed one business after another, leaving much of the city’s store windows boarded up, an idea began forming in a few local artists’ minds. As many artists were out of work, a need emerged to keep them working, and so Paint the Void was born. Paint the Void boosts hope over calamity, using boarded-up businesses as its canvas.



While businesses and locals face unknown futures, Paint the Void's murals inspire awe, instill hope, and even encourage following COVID-19 guidelines.

"During this time, boarded storefronts were super apocalyptic and really scary. And at a time that everything was so uncertain, the murals brought a little bit of hope and beauty to the street," shares Meredith Winner, Co-Founder and Managing Director at Paint The Void. She's also the COO and Co-Creative Director at Building 180, Paint the Void's parent company.

Many of the artists have never done a mural or not done a mural on this scale. An important aspect of Paint the Void's mission is grounding the artist and their mural in the neighborhood they live. "That just makes it more of a neighborhood-centric community initiative, and it really is inspiring to see what's possible within our own community," emphasizes Winner.

Local support is one of the strengths behind the project; Paint the Void was able to raise \$10,000 within 48 hours, exceeding \$200,000 at the time of publication.

"The funding really was a local initiative. For the first \$50,000 or so, it was all through small contributions from community members." Winner continues, "There were over 400 small donations to make up that first chunk of money, which really shows people care about the community, want to see artists thrive, and that art is really important to people."

In the beginning, Paint the Void just connected businesses with artists. They



didn't influence what the artists created. That was between the artists and the business owner. Winner describes, "Around the time of the murder of George Floyd, there were a lot of social justice themes that popped up in the murals, and it was very topical at the time. And now it's gone into the phase of the health and safety surrounding COVID-19."

Currently, Paint the Void has been commissioned to do 30 more murals through a grant from the city of San Francisco in collaboration with the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts to encourage COVID-19 protocols.

Paint the Void's next step is preservation. As stores open, the murals are coming down. Winner notes this is a big cumbersome job, but it's important since they hold a piece of San Francisco's

pandemic history. They are curating and storing the pieces for an exhibition sometime in the future and an art book showcasing each mural.

With more than 100 murals completed, Paint the Void has turned San Francisco streets into an art gallery. "Oftentimes art is inaccessible because of monetary value. But when you put something into the street and have the community behind it, it becomes an effort of the community and for the community."

A map of the murals can be found at paintthevoid.org/murals

Learn more about Paint the Void at paintthevoid.org.

Clare is a freelance journalist and mother of two daughters.



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Nurturing Resilience: How to Make A Difference Locally

Ways to help our neighbors experiencing homelessness and food insecurity

By Veronica Reilly-Granich

Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit the Bay Area, the region already had one of the highest populations of people experiencing homelessness in the United States, trailing behind only New York City and Los Angeles, according to the 2019 Homeless Point in Time Count and other data. The pandemic has only exacerbated the challenges of living in this high-cost area for those who were already struggling to survive, including families. People who were previously on the edge of poverty have been pushed over the edge, frequently losing the struggle to maintain housing, food, and other basic supplies. Low-wage workers in service industries have been devastated by business closures, layoffs, and reductions in hours. A year into the COVID-19 crisis, many have exhausted emergency options,

such as nest eggs and sympathetic friends, and are turning to a support system that is already overwhelmed by need. As an example of the increased demand for food in San Francisco, the SF-Marin food bank doubled its distribution by the end of April 2020, and requests have continued to grow.

Many of our neighbors who are undergoing homelessness right now are new to this experience and are finding it challenging to navigate the complex web of services that provide a sustainable path into housing. Misa Perron-Burdick, an OB-GYN who works at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital, says, “A lot of programs [that provide long-term resources] require an interview for families, but they don’t know where they are staying that night. In that situation, it is hard to have the bandwidth to engage in programs that

may provide more ongoing support.” In response, she began the Patient Pantry, with key initial participation from a group of mothers she connected with through GGMG. It ran out of her garage for the first four months of the pandemic but now has found the space it needs to grow and serve more families through the Homeless Prenatal Program. It was initially envisioned as a temporary stop-gap. However, around the time she started the pantry, she said that routine conversations she typically had with patients about how to navigate work while pregnant changed to serious discussions about how to get basic needs met after losing their jobs. She adds, “The pantry was started because I was worried about pregnant patients who were immunocompromised having trouble finding groceries or getting price gouged.

Every single patient lost their jobs almost overnight.” Patients now fill out a form with their needs, which include food, but extends to other supplies, such as diapers and wipes.

Help someone move toward a new beginning

You may not be ready to start a pantry out of your garage, but there is still a broad range of actions each of us can take to provide support for our friends and neighbors, seen and unseen, who are experiencing homelessness and food insecurity in these challenging times. Take on what you can today and give as generously as you are able, not just of your money, but of your time and awareness as well.

Be thoughtful about the language you use

Using person-centered language is a great place to start when you are thinking about these issues. This is especially important to model for our children. Instead of saying “a homeless person” talk about “a person experiencing homelessness.” For the younger set, you might just say that a person doesn’t have anywhere to live right now. It may seem like a subtle shift, but it helps to emphasize the individual’s humanity over their current lack of housing. You can add in your feelings about the situation, such as feeling sad or frustrated that some people don’t have enough to eat or a safe place to live. By focusing first on our connections as human beings as well as the transience of their experience, we are more able to see our commonality with one another, rather than the differences between us, and this is a wonderful way to instill compassion and empathy in your children at a young age.

Be kind to those around you who may be experiencing homelessness and food insecurity

Jackie Newton, a primary care provider who works with people experiencing homelessness, said, “When living in a neighborhood, you might see someone who is experiencing homelessness and not know what to do. You can decide how much to give. Giving can be monetary, but

it can also be giving kindness, learning a person’s name and making eye contact.” Living on the street without stable housing for any period of time can be very lonely and demoralizing. Just acknowledging that you see someone can brighten their day.

“Take on what you can today and give as generously as you are able, not just of your money, but of your time and awareness as well.”

Kids are naturally friendly so you can model for them safe ways to acknowledge people you encounter while walking around the city.

Support local businesses and service workers

The pandemic has caused significant income loss for businesses across the service sector, including restaurants, arts venues, hotels, and many others. If you can, order food from restaurants and tip the server or delivery person well. Keep in mind that even those who are still working have seen up to a two-thirds reduction in their income. As *The New York Times* reported in an article last month, although prices have fallen in rental markets in major urban areas, the vacancy rates in the most affordable buildings have stayed flat. This

reflects the lack of affordable housing in many areas, including the Bay Area. People are being forced to choose between paying their rent and buying other essential items, including food and medicine. So give where you can and buy local.

Support local, grassroots organizations

Many organizations are working to address issues related to homelessness and poverty. Your time and money will make the biggest impact if you seek out local, grassroots organizations. They are usually small and often run by members of the community they serve, which allows them to be more flexible and responsive to the real-time needs of a specific neighborhood or population. In addition, they don’t have the type of overhead that larger organizations tend to have, especially in terms of physical facilities and staffing. When choosing the group(s) you wish to contribute to, consider whether their work aims to break the cycle of poverty in addition to meeting immediate needs.

Perron-Burdick points out, based on her experience running the Patient Pantry, that giving money or time is far more valuable than giving things, especially when you are trying to support these smaller organizations. For example, if you are hoping to help people who are experiencing hunger, a place like the Patient Pantry can make a dollar go much further through wholesale purchasing power. Cash donations also



Many organizations are working to meet immediate needs for food and shelter while also breaking the cycle of poverty. Here are a few:

- Homeless Prenatal Program** partners with families to break the cycle of childhood poverty. homelessprenatal.org
- Meals on Wheels San Francisco** provides a network of services that allows thousands of seniors to live in their homes with dignity and independence as long as possible. mowsf.org
- Mission Meals Coalition** is a mutual aid collective of organizers, community groups and small businesses dedicated to connecting SF Bay Area community members to food resources weekly. It was founded as a direct response to the COVID-19 crisis. missionmealscoalition.org
- One Love Black Community** centers Black community in San Francisco by providing food, essential resources and more. You can donate and learn more at gofundme.com/f/one-love-black-community.
- San Francisco African American Faith-Based Coalition** is a coalition of 21 churches working together to address the health inequities among African Americans in San Francisco. Since March 2020 they have delivered over 175,000 prepared meals to at least 3,000 households. sfaafbcalition.org
- SF-Marin Food Bank** works to end hunger in San Francisco and Marin and offers opportunities to volunteer with children as young as 8 years old. sfmfoodbank.org
- ZSFG/UCSF Patient Pantry** serves low resource families throughout San Francisco by providing medical supplies, home goods, and groceries. Visit homelessprenatal.org to get involved. You can make a monetary donation by clicking “donate” on the homepage; make sure to choose ZSFGH Patient Pantry on the drop-down menu under “Please designate my gift to support.”

my own.” It shouldn’t be this easy to lose housing. Safe, affordable housing is a human right, as written in Article Twenty-five, Section One of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights—proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

“Your time and money will make the biggest impact if you seek out local, grassroots organizations.”

You can most effectively advocate for long-term changes that will reduce the number of people who find themselves in crisis by learning about and raising awareness around the importance of a living wage and affordable housing. A good place to start learning more about these issues on a national level is from The National Coalition for the Homeless (nationalhomeless.org). You can also find many great children’s books about poverty and homelessness to read and discuss with your kids. Start with *Sam and the Lucky Money* (Chinn), *Last Stop on Market Street* (de la Peña), or *Changing Places: A Kid’s View of Shelter Living* (Wallace).

Make a plan
Every little bit makes a difference. Take a few minutes right now and choose one thing you can do in the next few days, then commit to taking action. It might be learning the name of someone who regularly spends time on the street in your neighborhood and who may be experiencing homelessness. Alternatively, you may set aside 15 or 20 minutes to learn more about affordable housing. Or you might use the sidebar in this article to choose an organization where you can donate your time or money. You could even just start by getting a book to read with your child from the suggestions above. Working together, we can help our neighbors and our city to have a fresh start after the tumult of the past year.

Veronica is a writer and educator with two young children. She learned a great deal from talking to Jackie Newton and Misa Perron-Burdick for this article. All mistakes are her own.

Due to the ongoing shelter-in-place and related COVID-19 shutdowns, we are not planning events more than 3 to 4 weeks ahead. As things slowly start to open back up, and we add more events, we will update the events calendar on the GGMG website as well as the GGMG Facebook page. Hope you are all safe and healthy.



DATES: Saturday, April 3, Saturday, April 10, Saturday, April 17, Saturday, April 24
TIME: 10:15 a.m. to 11 a.m.
PLACE: Zoom
COST: FREE

Virtual Moms Night In: Every Last Wednesday of the Month
Looking to keep social connections alive during shelter in place? Come hang every month at our Virtual Moms Night In via Zoom!

Wine, pajamas, messy bun—all are accepted. There is no agenda, just hanging out and connecting with each other. This event will take place the last Wednesday of every month.
DATE: Every Last Wednesday of the month
TIME: 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.
PLACE: Zoom
COST: FREE for members

Boba Workshop with Boba Guys
Do you and your family love boba tea? Let Bin and Andrew teach you and you family how to make boba in the comfort of your own home. This is a great activity to involve the kids and the end result everyone will enjoy! In one hour, they will walk you through step-by-step how to make boba and drinks the Boba Guys way.

A boba kit worth \$50 will be shipped to your house before the event.
DATE: Friday, May 21
TIME: Noon to 1 p.m.
PLACE: Zoom
COST: \$50 for the first 20 GGMG members, then \$65 for the rest and non-GGMG members

Monthly Queer Family Hike
Join queer families for a COVID-safe 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!
The safety requirements are:
• Socially-distanced families
• Adults and kids (2+) able to be masked the whole time.
• Groups will be organized in families of three to four.

Please email Dy Nguyen (dy.nguyen@gmail.com) for RSVP and details.
DATE: First Saturday of the month
TIME: 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.
PLACE: TBD
COST: FREE

REGISTER FOR EVENTS AT GGMG.ORG/CALENDAR UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

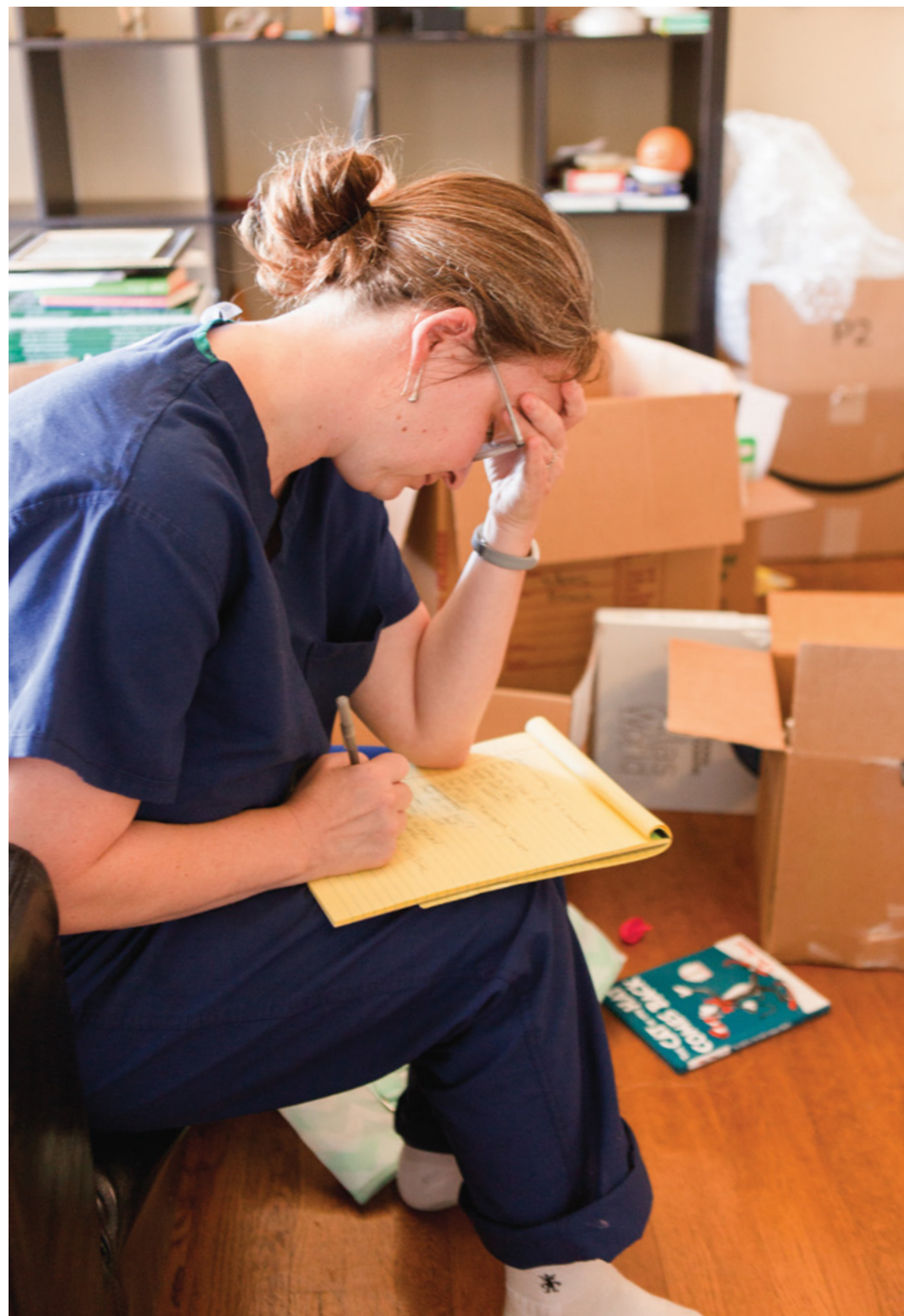
Packing It In

Planning and preparation are essential for a major move. And don't forget the packing paper!

By Sallie Hess

Photographs by Carolyn Soling Photography

Originally published in September 2016



I recently moved from San Francisco to the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C. When I say recently, I mean my movers left Saturday night at 8 p.m., and I am putting the finishing touches on this article the following Thursday morning. The pain is fresh.

This was my 20th move, my third with children, but even though I've been around the block a bunch of times, there is always something new to learn.

Planning your move

There are timing considerations beyond the basics of closing dates and school calendars. Movers charge more at the end of the month. You want to be in your new house before Thanksgiving? So does everyone else. It's just like air travel. So think carefully, get on the calendar, and lock in your estimate before moving companies start blacking out dates; they simply run out of trucks.

Interview movers. Get estimates. Go with a national outfit if you are moving long-distance. This is not the time to take a chance on the little guy. The estimator goes through your house counting your stuff, then enters it all into a program that spits out an estimated weight. That is when you say to yourself, "Game on. I can lose 1,000 pounds in three months, no problem." My estimates ranged from \$14,000 to \$21,000 for about the same weight, and I didn't have them pack for me. And yeah, that's a lot of money, but keep your receipts: at tax time, a long-distance move is deductible.

Moving in San Francisco will require special parking signs, which some outfits will get for you, but you can get them by calling 311. You will also likely need a "shuttle" (small truck) within the city, which costs extra. My guys showed up with a shipping container on an 18-wheeler semi-truck and could not get into our new driveway, so they spent the day shuttling back and forth. That means my stuff was moved at least four times: house to shuttle, shuttle to semi, semi to shuttle, shuttle to house. Check to see if the shuttle at your destination is included or not. If you suspect you might need one, let movers know in advance. Pack well, and get the good insurance.

Lastly, think about your cars if you are moving far away. We donated one and

shipped one. Neither is complicated but both require planning. That also meant that we needed a car for two weeks while we waited for the shipped car, so we bought a car on the East Coast upon arrival.

Long distance or local?

There are differences between an in-town move and a long-distance move. First, and most simply, moving companies charge by weight for long-distance moves and by the hour for local moves. So if you are moving far away, think about whether you really need those old economics textbooks.

When you are moving locally, you can carry stuff back and forth in your car, you can supervise painting and closet outfitting, you can look at that bottle of hazelnut oil and say, "You will live to fight another day." Of course, that means there is a lot of schlepping across town.

Kids, though, make "quick errands" twice as long and twice as frustrating. What if your painter needs more paint? Maybe it's time for prayers at the mosque across the street from the paint store, so you can't get a parking spot for love or money, and your 2-year-old announces he needs to poop while you are circling the block for the seventh time. I have dozens of these stories from my last in-town move.

When you are moving across the country, though, you callously pour out the open bottles of hazelnut oil. Stop buying toiletries and use up the samples. Start sacrificing maraschino cherries and chickpea flour while there is still space in the compost. Invite your friends over to drink down the bar and eat all those olives. Otherwise, your recycling bin will look like some bizarre hand soap, olive, and Midori party happened at your house in the last week. Or worse, there is no more room in the bins.

Speaking of packing...

People will tell you to get packers. It is, indeed, easier—sort of. They will pack the trash if you aren't watching, and they don't give a tinker's damn about your grandmother's teapot. I have unpacked things with my heart in my throat and a curse in my mouth. Know whether you are more comfortable blaming yourself or somebody else if something breaks.

You can always do a hybrid and pack



everything but the kitchen and the breakables. I have unpacked professional packing so I know how to pack a china barrel, and I am confident in my ability to do it well, but not everyone is. Again, there is a difference between long-distance and local movers on this. Most local movers



break. You can crumple it up to cushion the bottoms and sides of a box of electronics, and wrap up your cooking utensils in groups so they don't clang around in the boxes.

Movers will charge you more for boxes than it will cost to get boxes yourself. If you

"You need to push through your own exhaustion and find the nightlights and towels and sheets because your babies need a warm bath and their own soft beds."

charge by the hour for packing, while long-distance movers charge by the box.

I chose to pack myself this time because I'm a masochist. Just kidding. I chose to do it myself because I had time (both kids were in school), and because I wanted to touch everything and reassess its value to me. I made six full carloads of donations in the months before my move. I sold things on Craigslist. I lost that thousand pounds. Last but not least, I saved us a few thousand dollars by investing sweat equity.

If you want to pack, there are some things to know. Rule number one: you will need three times as much paper as you think you do. Paper is for more than just wrapping up china to make sure it doesn't

are moving long-distance, and if there is a chance your stuff will require shuttling more than once, definitely get new boxes instead of used ones. My boxes look like they have been through a war and they were new just a few weeks ago.

Unpacking

If you are moving locally, bring an emergency kit in the car. If not, buy essentials when you arrive. If there is something you need on a daily basis, don't pack it in a box. Make sure that you have several box cutters, because you will lose a couple.

Unpack the kitchen first. Use post-it notes to move around on the cabinet doors



until you find the best configuration. Don't let anyone rush you on the kitchen. It's better to do it well now.

As you start unpacking, you will accumulate a huge pile of paper. Remember all that paper we talked about before? Flatten it out. It's an extra step, but if you crumple it up, you will be filling up your recycling and compost bins until doomsday.

What about the children?!

I was lucky in that my kids were in school for most of the time I was packing. If you don't have a formal plan for the kids, hire babysitters and take your friends up on offers for help.

The last week in our house was a bit of a nightmare. I had to pack the kitchen, my kids were out of school, and my husband was called to New York. The kids watched a lot of TV and I hired babysitters. I was running on fumes and couldn't blow off the packing to take them to the zoo one last time.

If you move during the summer like I did, try to find day camps in your new locale. Again, I lucked out that our new school in Virginia has a summer camp so I didn't have to do research. Just make sure that you get your health forms and birth certificates all sorted out in advance and bring them with you in your suitcase, even

if you mailed copies. You don't want any hiccups in this; what if the truck is late and your documents are on it?

We were in limbo for two weeks, staying with friends and family. We had just a few books and the kids grew tired of the same bedtime stories. I grew tired of entertaining them in someone else's house. They watched a lot of TV. We made forays to Target for new games and toys. It was hard on them living out of a suitcase. They didn't believe me at first when we got to our new house.

Anything else?

My last weeks in San Francisco felt a lot like college exam time. There was a lot of takeout and not enough hours in the day. I had a decade's worth of friends to say goodbye to. I hired a dozen babysitters in the last three weeks alone. I had so many loose ends to tie up. I had a legal pad covered in lists. I had to hand over volunteer commitments. I had a business to close. I had to call and cancel and start services and utilities in both places. The kids didn't have summer clothes. There were large-item pickups to schedule with Recology and donations to deliver.

Then, poof, just like after college graduation, we scattered. We got on a plane. I stopped caring about the recycling

being so full or whether the new owners would know what to do with my garden. It was over. But it wasn't.

Now that we are here, I am still going. I spent 90 minutes Sunday morning at the grocery store because we had nothing to eat but granola bars and peanuts and no laundry or dish soap. I spent two days in big-box stores getting things like shower curtains and trash cans.

While you are at it, buy yourself some extra underwear. Mom's clothes will be unpacked last, because the ultimate lesson in moving with kids is that the buck stops here. You can't eat tuna out of the can and push off unpacking the kitchen; kids need familiar meals. You need to push through your own exhaustion and find the night-lights and towels and sheets because your babies need a warm bath and their own soft beds. But if you played your cards right, the kids are in camp, and you can unpack in peace.

Sallie Hess has retired to the Virginia countryside, where her children are slowly acclimating to thunderstorms and wildlife. She is probably still unpacking.

Discovering a New Neighborhood to Call Home in San Francisco

By Emily Beaven

Having lived in San Francisco for a decade, five of those working in residential real estate, I can attest that the City by the Bay truly has something for everyone. Realtors divide the city into 10 districts (different from your voting district), and each has its unique charms, perspective, microclimate, and pros and cons. Often, families move after they've had kids. They can get by in their rent-controlled apartment with one baby and then after two, they want to upgrade. If they don't head to the suburbs, they often seek neighborhoods that offer more space, a backyard, and conveniences like parking and storage. If you're thinking about making a change, get out and explore. San Franciscans tend to stay in their neighborhoods, so when I started working in real estate, I knew nothing about neighborhoods like Miraloma Park or West Portal. That said, when I told people about

places in my neighborhood like Levi's Plaza or one of my favorite restaurants, Hillstone, they had no idea what I was talking about. I recall a former boss who lived in the Inner Richmond and I thought it was so far "out there." Now I know it's a fantastic neighborhood—close to Clement Street and the Presidio, with beautiful architecture and big backyards.

COVID has reduced city traffic, making it a great time to get outside and explore the city safely. The parks and playgrounds are open, so pick a new area to explore around that. For example, the recently renovated Glen Canyon Park is a fantastic place that I only recently discovered after having my second child. In addition, San Francisco's Crosstown Trail is a hiking and biking pathway that stretches 16.7 miles from Candlestick Point to Lands End and gives you a chance to explore lesser-known areas in SF.

San Francisco Neighborhood Highlights

District 1 (Northwest)

Sea Cliff, Lake District, Jordan Park/Laurel Heights, Lone Mountain, Inner, Central, and Outer Richmond

Highlights: Some areas have great views, access to Marin, shopping on California and Clement Streets; Mountain Lake Park. Large, deep lots. A mix of architectural styles and property types.

District 2 (Central West)

Inner, Central, and Outer Sunset, Golden Gate Heights, Inner and Outer Parkside

Highlights: Mostly single-family homes, shopping on Irving Street, ocean proximity, Golden Gate Park, views in certain areas. N Judah is great for commuters working downtown.

District 3 (Southwest)

Ingleside and Ingleside Heights, Oceanview, Stonestown, Pine Lake Park, Lake Shore, Merced Manor and Heights, Lakeside

Highlights: Easy access to South Bay, Stonestown Galleria shopping, Lake Merced, SF Zoo, Ocean Avenue shopping, Stern Grove.

District 4 (Twin Peaks)

Forest Knolls, Midtown Terrace, Miraloma Park, Diamond Heights, Sherwood Forest, Westwood Highlands, Westwood Park, Monterey Heights, Sunnyside, Ingleside Terrace, Mount Davidson Manor, Balboa Terrace, St. Francis Wood, Forest Hill and Extension, Forest Knolls

Highlights: Larger single-family detached homes with 3+ bedrooms, some areas have gorgeous city views. Some older neighborhoods with architectural detail.

District 5 (Central)

Buena Vista/Ashbury Heights, Duboce Triangle, Haight Ashbury, Cole Valley/Parnassus Heights, Corona Heights, Twin Peaks, Eureka Valley/Dolores Heights, Mission Dolores, Noe Valley, Glen Park

Highlights: Center of the city and close to Highway 101; some of the city's warmest weather. Ample shopping, restaurants, many parks including Duboce, Glen Canyon, Mission Dolores.

District 6 (Central North)

Anza Valley, Hayes Valley, Lower Pacific Heights, Western Addition, Alamo Square, North Panhandle

Highlights: Great shopping on Fillmore Street and in Hayes Valley, Alamo Square, close to the Financial District.

District 7 (North)

Marina, Pacific Heights, Presidio Heights, Cow Hollow

Highlights: Some of the best views of the Golden Gate Bridge, close to the Presidio and Marina Green, bustling neighborhoods on Union, Chestnut, and Sacramento Streets, close to Marin. New playgrounds on Chestnut Street. Older architecture.

District 8 (Northeast)

Downtown, Financial District/Barbary Coast, Nob Hill, North Beach, Russian Hill, Van Ness/Civic Center, Telegraph Hill, North Waterfront, Tenderloin

Highlights: More urban, very close to Financial District, mostly condos. Huntington and the newer Joe Dimaggio Park and Russian Hill Park are opening soon.

District 9 (Central East)

Bernal Heights, Inner Mission, Mission Bay, Potrero Hill, South of Market, Yerba Buena, South Beach, Central Waterfront/Dogpatch

Highlights: Downtown location, close to Ferry Building, stadiums for Warriors and Giants, public transportation, up and coming areas (Dogpatch), one of the easiest walking districts, weather, views. New playground in Mission Bay. Mostly condos, currently presenting a lot of value.

District 10 (Southeast)

Bayview, Crocker Amazon, Excelsior, Outer Mission, Visitacion Valley, Portola, Silver Terrace, Mission Terrace, Hunters Point, Bayview, Candlestick Point, Little Hollywood

Highlights: Offers some of the best values in the city, close to the freeway, Crocker Amazon Playground. Mostly single-family homes. Warmer weather.

Emily considers herself blessed to get to see different parts of San Francisco every day as a Realtor at Compass. A mom of two, she and her family currently live in the Presidio.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Ways to Support the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Community

The AAPI community has had a long history of discrimination in the United States, from the early days with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the current pandemic-spurred influx of racial slurs and violence towards the Asian community. The most commonly-asked question has been, “what can we do to help?” To answer this, we look to the sorts of things we can and have been doing with respect to other groups of people who are commonly discriminated against.



Photograph by Kae Ng

End the model minority myth
The AAPI community is a hugely diverse and culturally rich group. Work against the assumptions that Asians are stoic, studious, tiger moms, quiet, or any other stereotype. NPR’s Code Switch podcast has a great article by Kat Chow who writes about how the “Model Minority” trope is used as a racial wedge between Asians and Blacks.

Volunteer/donate
Compassion In Oakland
Formed as a response to Anti-Asian attacks in the Bay Area.
Stop AAPI Hate
Report Anti-Asian incidents at stopaapihate.org.

Asian Americans Advancing Justice
Their mission is to advance the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and to build and promote a fair and equitable society for all.

Chinese for Affirmative Action
Based out of San Francisco, this organization supports the broader Asian American and Pacific Islander community and advocates for systemic change that protects immigrant rights, promotes language diversity, and remedies racial and social injustice.

Support local businesses
Various Asian-owned businesses have been devastated during the pandemic. Donations to support and save San Francisco’s Chinatown can be made through Chinatown Community Development Center’s Feed + Fuel Chinatown 2.0 fund.

Japantown in San Francisco is also on the verge of dismantling. Tenants of the Japantown Mall currently face tens of thousands of dollars in back rent owed to building landlords. KQED posted an article entitled “What’s Lost in Bay Area Asian Culture When SF Eviction Moratorium Ends?”

Magnify AAPI authors, activists, and artists
Expand your typical searches when looking for recommendations of new books to read. Follow AAPI activists and read/listen to their viewpoints and concerns about what is happening in their communities.

Check out your local community centers for more localized information:

- SF Filipino Community Center
- Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California
- Chinese Cultural Center of San Francisco
- Oakland Asian Cultural Center
- Vietnamese American Community Center of the East Bay

Speak up and challenge racist thoughts
Think of your sphere of influence (family, friends, work/school, community, and social networks) and approach those relationships accordingly with compassion and resolve. HollaBack! provides resources on “The 5D’s of Bystander Intervention.” Remember that exposure to different races, ethnicities and cultures is not the same as being racially literate. It is hard and continuous work.



Photograph by Stephen Leonardi



Photograph by Merrit Thomas

MEMBER SUPPORT

Member Support’s goal is to be a helping hand for our members who are experiencing tough times, looking for member-vetted resources, or need a lighter load. You may occasionally see us responding to forum posts, but much of our work occurs behind the scenes as we offer meals, babysitting credits (more of this post-COVID!), and membership scholarships to moms seeking support. Last year, we helped our community through challenges including illness, divorce and marriage counseling, challenging kids, and postpartum depression. We also began single moms group meetups and look forward to offering more connection opportunities in the future.

If you are experiencing a tough time and need assistance, please reach out to member.support@gmg.org.

We’re also looking for volunteers for our highly impactful committee! It’s a great way to have a direct impact on other moms in our community.

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Volunteer with GGMG

We’re looking for GGMG volunteers to work with our board and revamp the forum posting guidelines. This is a unique way to volunteer on a short-term basis and help us keep our forums a safe and supportive place for everyone.

Email recruiting@gmg.org if you want to get involved with this project or one of the many, wonderful volunteer roles we have available! Feel free to reach out and see what volunteering might look like for you. We’re flexible and excited to connect with new mamas!

There are some amazing perks to volunteering as well:

- Free GGMG membership (after 1 year of service)
- Annual GGMG Volunteer Appreciation Event
- Dinner and drinks at volunteer meetings every other month (post-COVID)
- Extra partner perks on top of the member perks you already have access to, like \$100 UrbanSitter credits for babysitting

PARTNERSHIPS

Our team of amazing women works with local businesses to bring exclusive deals to our members. We are in constant search of ongoing partners for an annual contractual basis. Previous partners include: JCCSF, Peekadoodle, and UrbanSitter. Through our Friends Program, we work with various local companies to obtain substantial promotions and discounts for GGMG members.

With our large member base, we use the power of our community to gain exclusive deals on everything from childcare to adult fitness classes to food delivery services. We look forward to continuing to support our GGMG community with new and relevant discounts through these times.

Current discounts and benefits for GGMG members are listed in the “Member Perks” section of our website: gmg.org/member-perks/friends (Friends Program) and gmg.org/member-perks/partners (Partners Program).

And look for our monthly GGMG Member Perks email highlighting many of these great deals! We are always searching for new members to join our committee. If you are interested in joining, please contact Director of Partnerships Catherine St. Clair at partnerships@gmg.org.



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Little Ones Working Through Big Feelings

By Sameen Shahid

Our daughter Noor's transition to preschool over the last month has been an incredible emotional rollercoaster and a learning opportunity for us all. She tends to be shy in new environments, and I was so grateful that her first experience was at an outdoor forest school, which meant I could accompany her at first (indoor preschools can't have any parents in the building nowadays because of COVID). The first day, she primarily stuck by me and wanted me to do everything with her. From the second day onward, she was happy playing with the other kids and exploring the outdoors. She didn't need me much but came by to show me something or other every hour or so (of the three hours we would be there). A few days later, we came to the difficult part: it was time for her to stay by herself. Our preschool director has a system to help kids through this process. Any child who is experiencing big (or small) feelings they want to share with their parents can ask the director to type a message and text it to their parents. He told me he would be offering that to Noor, and that I should expect to receive some messages. That day, I walked her to her outdoor "class," hugged her, and walked away.

Crying ensued. "Mama, don't go. I want to go with my Mama!" The five-minute walk back to the car felt like the longest five minutes of my life. Then a few minutes later, I got the first text message. "I love you mommy I don't want this I want you to stay with me all day mommy come back right now I want my mom and my dad." Followed by, "Hello mama mama mom mama, I am here mama come here." And then, "Come here come back right now don't leave me alone I am so sad." And then five minutes later, "I want to go home right now I'm going home right now I'm going home right now I'm going home right now. I wanna go back to mama OK. I will go back home mama I wanna go back home mama I wanna go back home mama."

Receiving these messages over the course of those 15 minutes was VERY difficult. I was mentally preparing myself



for a very heavy day. And then just like that, she sent a panda emoji and a heart emoji. I replied, asking what that meant. The teacher replied, "She is happy."

The next day was a shorter period of being upset. She sent a message "Mama I want to go home. Mama come back right now." She sent an emoji of a rabbit whose head is exploding. And 3 minutes later, I received a heart emoji. It had taken her just 5 minutes to calm down this time.

Two days later at dropoff, she told me, "Mama, you can go now" before it was time for me to go. I stuttered and responded, "you would like me to leave now?" "Yes," she replied. And so it was that the "transition" had turned a most significant corner.

While the text messages were painful to receive in the moment, they provided a rare opportunity to witness a very significant transition in my child's life. Usually, if I am with her

when she is having big feelings, my role is to comfort her and eventually help her stabilize. Here was a chance to see her being comforted by other caring adults, and see how she learns to stabilize on her own. To see through time-stamped text messages, how she went from resisting a new

beginning, to coming to terms with it, and eventually embracing and looking forward to it, was incredible! In fact, as I am typing this, I have received a funny face emoji from her teacher with the quote "I want to send mama a funny face."

So a big thank you to Noor's teachers who have so beautifully helped her transition into a new phase in her life, and whose ongoing support to a mom who sometimes struggles with her 3-year-old's emotions reminds me of this quote from Brené Brown: "We don't have to do it all alone. We were never meant to."

Sameen cares about social impact and connecting with parents who want to do better. She is a certified coach and facilitates women's circles. Reach out at sameenshahid@gmail.com.



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