

JUNE/JULY 2021



GGMG

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MOTHERS GROUP®

magazine

# Sustainability







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# Letter from the Editor: What Is Sustainable?

By Sonya Abrams



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

Unsustainable for my family. Jettisoning frequent takeout in favor of more home-cooked meals? Sustainable, as it turns out, and better for the planet and our budget. But I often fight

“The goal is not perfection—we all know perfection is itself unsustainable—but simply to do better.”

the guilt of realizing I’m not doing nearly enough to be a good steward of the planet and a good example for my children. Our recycle and black bins overflow each trash day, I beat down on that “add to cart” button like it owes me money, and my bananas die a lonely blackened death, the promise of home-baked banana bread rarely realized. Sure, I make it a point to pick up three pieces of trash on every hike I take, but

One inescapable fact about pandemic life is that it’s allowed us to develop and try out habits. Without much changing in the outside world, we have found grooves, routines, ruts—choose your word based on your current level of optimism. We’ve tested out what’s worked for us this past year-plus. And we’ve certainly figured out what hasn’t. Homeschooling?

the sky-high number on my water bill clearly indicates I’m not doing nearly enough.

Our writers this issue train their eyes on the future while staying firmly rooted in the present and share practical advice on what we can all do to help instill good eco-values in our family and ensure we leave a habitable planet for future generations. Julia Rockwell dispels the myth of the zero-waste lifestyle (zero doesn’t really mean zero) and identifies places where we can reuse, reduce, and recycle in our homes and everyday lives. Neha Masson spends some time in the kitchen, a notorious source of waste, and helps us find ways to shop smarter and cook thoughtfully so that less food ends up in the trash at the end of the day. And Victoria Dvorak peeks inside our closets and reveals the true cost of our fast-fashion habits, which have ramifications both in terms of environmental impact and in terms of the treatment of the laborers behind our outfits. Though the most sustainable clothing is often among the priciest, Victoria suggests that we don’t need to go bankrupt in order to make an impact; there are more sustainable options at every budget (and wearing free hand-me-downs is among the most sustainable of options!).

As we think about how we can possibly make a difference given the sheer enormity of the challenges facing humanity and the planet, our writers, above all, remind us to be patient and extend a generous amount of grace to ourselves. The goal is not perfection—we all know perfection is itself unsustainable—but simply to do better. Something we can all agree is possible.

Sonya Abrams

## Housekeeping

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**NEXT ISSUE:** Uncertainty

Have an idea for an issue theme or article? Please email [editor@ggm.org](mailto:editor@ggm.org).

**THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY:** First family flight in nearly 1.5 years; a well-deserved break courtesy of vaccine side effects; feeling grateful for my health, this beautiful spring weather, my beautiful house and garden, and for being busy; MFA program deadlines, getting ready to move back across the country, spring flowers, walks on the beach and endless chai; selling a house, settling into a new one, and adjusting to suburban life; a day on the mountain, a day at the pool, and a day in the vines.

# Letter from the Board: Struggling With Making Sustainable Choices

By Erin Cahill

It is hard to believe we are already halfway through the year. Once again, all the New Year’s resolutions I made have been left far behind. You are probably wondering why I mention them—every year I promise myself that I am going to “go greener” and do things that will create a better Earth for my children and grandchildren. Then the year comes and goes and I again miss the mark on that resolution.

Reflecting back, I have tried to create better habits with mild success:

- Using rags to clean up rather than paper towels, which I probably achieve about 50 percent of the time.
- Using reusable snack bags, but I have reverted back to good ol’ Ziplocs.
- Creating less waste, which I have FAILED at: Amazon, takeout, online ordering galore, packaged goods at the grocery store. The list goes on and on.
- Drinking from a reusable water bottle or thermos, which I always do. A win!

One out of four isn’t bad, but I know I should do better. The struggle has to do with time. We are all busy with kids and family, jobs, our home, and friends. Sometimes we just fall back on what is easiest and quickest—order online versus going to my local shop, getting takeout and buying pre-packaged groceries. This is why I am very excited to read inspirational articles from this month’s issue on Zero Waste, Sustainable Fashion, and Food Sustainability, amongst others. I hope to get some great tips that will help kick those resolutions back into high gear for the remainder of 2021 and

beyond! I am also looking forward to some inspiration on how to do this with my kiddos and help them create green habits now in their lives. If we can do it together, it will be more enjoyable for all of us and maybe even a little bit fun.

What does sustainability mean to you? Be sure to check out my forum post this month to share your tips, tricks, and life hacks on the subject. Whether you are an avid forum user or not, I encourage you to try it this month. Our forums have a wealth of information and are a great way for us to support one another, share ideas, commiserate, or just have a laugh



Erin is both a mom—to Alyx, Jack, and two orange tabbies—and a partner in a large accounting firm. Her husband and co-parent, Niall, helps to make this all possible. When she has free time, of which lately there is not a lot, she enjoys hiking, running, and wine.

“If we can do it together, it will be more enjoyable for all of us and maybe even a little bit fun.”

sometimes.

Finally, now that we are starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel in the pandemic, we are expecting to have some in-person

events in the near term. I am looking forward to seeing many of you soon to re-establish that sense of community, support, and friendship that, for me, is easier to find in person.

Erin Cahill

## 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: Bradley (6)





# Bay Area’s Sustainable Fashion Stores

By Christine Chen

As a result of the pandemic, many small businesses, particularly apparel are suffering. As the world reopens, it’s time for a wardrobe refresh. Here are some SF-founded fashion brands that are sustainable, many of which also give back to the community.



**Allbirds:** Their comfortable minimalist sneakers and running shoes are made of recycled materials. Also, they have a shoe donation program and their packaging is made from 90% post-consumer recycled cardboard. Locations: Jackson Square, Hayes Valley, Livermore.

**American Giant** is Made in the USA with smart manufacturing processes to improve quality, reduce waste and offer fair prices for their activewear and casual clothing that is made out of innovative fabrics for both men and women. Location: SOMA.

**Amour Vert’s** soft, stylish apparel is Made in the USA, most near San Francisco. Their sustainable processes include materials, production, shipment, and recyclability. For every tee purchased, they will plant a tree in collaboration with American Forests. Locations: Marina, Stanford Shopping Center; Hayes Valley location temporarily closed.

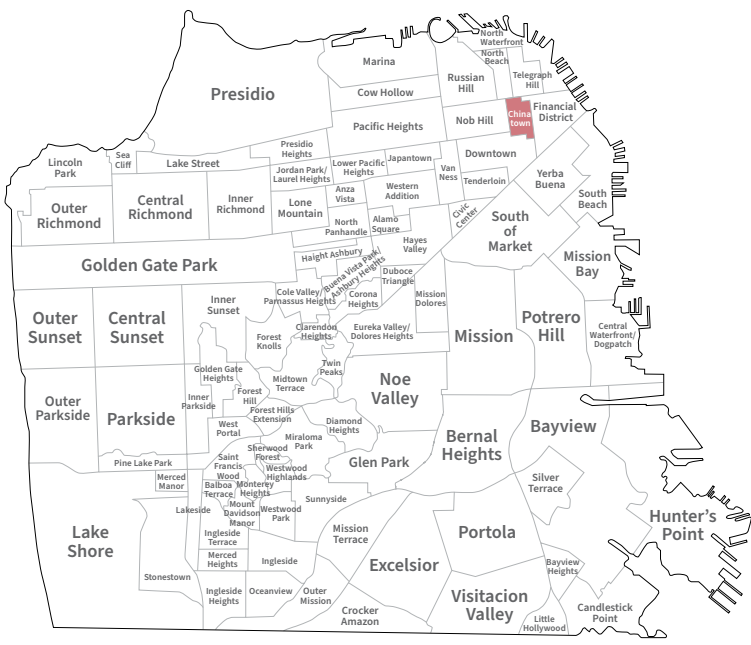
**Cuyana** believes in having fewer, better clothes and handbags which are made by skilled craftspeople around the world. Try their Lean Closet program: Fill a bag with used clothes and return it for free, so the items will reach a new home. In return, you get a \$10 voucher for your next purchase. Locations: Union Square, Stanford Shopping Center.

**Everlane:** Known for their transparent pricing model, Everlane makes clean, minimalist, and well-designed essentials for every wardrobe out of quality fabrics. They also use ethical factories to make sure that their supply chain has no unethical labor practices. Location: Mission.

**Rothy’s:** Comfortable, stylish, and machine washable, all Rothys shoes, bags, and now masks are made from 100% recycled plastic water bottles and post-consumer recycled materials. Location: Pacific Heights.

**tonlé.** This zero-waste, fair fashion brand combines using clothes from leftover materials and creative pattern making that uses 100% of a given material. They also have a resale platform called tonlé open closet where you can sell your pre-loved tonlé items for credits towards new purchases. Location: Exclusively online.

*Christine is a shopaholic who can’t wait to wear something besides yoga pants to go eat warm reject fortune cookies.*



# Li’l Kid, Big City: Chinatown

By Christine Chen

Hit hard by the pandemic, Chinatown is beginning to show signs of life again, though I confess there is something nice about being able to walk down the street without it being overly crowded. Hopefully, for the sake of the small family-run businesses, this changes soon. I am relieved to see that **Golden Gate Fortune Cookie Factory** on Ross Alley is still open. This authentic cookie factory is not just fun for tourists, but entertaining for kids (and their parents) to watch cookies being made; the imperfect ones that are still warm off the press are put in bags as samples with purchase. **Golden Gate Bakery** on Grant Street has the best egg custard tart, as well as many other delicious delights. **Willie “Woo Woo” Wong Playground**—recently renovated and reopened in February 2021—is located at 830 Sacramento Street. Named for a Chinese American USF basketball star, the park has two sand-floor playgrounds, tennis and volleyball courts, and a clubhouse with rooftop basketball court. **Chinatown Restaurant** (yes, that really is the name) on Washington Street is one of the few options for outdoor dining in Chinatown. Reminding me of lunch in Hong Kong, **Hon’s Wun-Tun House** on Kearny Street has the most fabulous and authentic wonton soups and noodles at very affordable prices.

*Christine hoped you liked her article on sustainable fashion stores, where her bio can be found.*

# A Sweet Antidote to Button Battery Ingestion for Children Over 1

By Melissa Martin

As children grow and develop their senses, they begin to learn about their environment. During this exploration phase, small household objects like coins, safety pins, plastic toys, magnets, and batteries may be attractive items to place in the mouth. In some cases, swallowing these items can be an emergency. In the U.S., there are 70,000 pediatric ingestions annually and 3 in 4 occur in children below the age of 6. Most of these ingestions occur at home and many may be unwitnessed.

**What are the symptoms of a foreign body ingestion?** Symptoms can vary and may include pain, increased drooling, cough, vomiting, abdominal pain, bloody stool, and difficulty breathing, swallowing, and eating.

**What is one of the most dangerous items a child can swallow?** Button and lithium coin batteries are especially dangerous for children if swallowed because they can get lodged in the esophagus and, together with saliva, cause a current that leads to damage very quickly.

**What do I do if my child swallows a button battery?** Head to the emergency department (ED) **immediately**. Do not try to induce vomiting. If the ingestion occurred less than 12 hours prior and your child is at least 12 months old, administer **10 ml (2 teaspoons) of honey every 10 minutes for up to 6 doses** on your way to the ED. While honey does not completely stop damage, it can act as a barrier and slow the rate of injury. Tips: Use commercial honey, if available, rather than artisanal to reduce the risk of allergic reactions. Do not delay going to the ED to purchase honey if you do not have any at home.

**What if my child is younger than 12 months of age?** For children under 12 months of age, we do not recommend honey, as babies have a risk of botulism infection from the honey.

**What if the ingestion took place more than 12 hours ago?** After 12 hours, honey is no longer effective in slowing the progression of injury and we recommend avoiding its use. Consult the National Battery Ingestion Hotline at 1.800.498.8666.

*Melissa Martin, M.D., is a pediatric gastroenterologist at Stanford Children’s Health—San Francisco, located in the new medical office building at 1100 Van Ness Ave., across from Sutter CPMC’s new Van Ness Campus hospital. The CPMC Van Ness Campus features a pediatric emergency department to serve the unique needs of children.*



# Environmental Law

With Marie Logan



Marie is an attorney with Earthjustice, a nonprofit public interest environmental law firm. She attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate and studied law at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. She lives in Hayes Valley with her husband, two-year-old son, and one small sassy dog.

**What is your role at Earthjustice?**

I'm an environmental lawyer fighting to protect our planet and all the creatures that live here. I've worked at Earthjustice for the past five years, and have represented in court the interests of environmental advocates, local fishermen, and Native American tribes. Earthjustice is committed to protecting people's health, preserving magnificent places and wildlife, advancing clean energy, and combating climate change.

**Tell me about a case you're working on right now.**

Several of my current cases involve protecting endangered species like Pacific salmon that are hovering on the brink of extinction. Salmon have an incredible life history; they play a central role in the origin stories of many of California's native peoples. And yet many salmon populations are on the verge of collapse, in large part because of obsolete water management policies and the effects of climate change.

I don't think the stakes could be much higher. We're in the middle of the sixth mass extinction event in world history right now. Natural disasters were to blame for all prior mass extinctions, but humans are the cause of the current crisis. In fact, we've made such dramatic changes to our planet that many scientists now believe we've entered a new geologic era: the Anthropocene. (From the root anthropo-, meaning humankind.)

And yet there is hope. The Endangered Species Act is an incredible law that has been 99 percent effective at protecting species from extinction. We're using the power of that law to protect iconic species like salmon. I am committed to this work because I don't want the amazing biodiversity of our planet to be lost forever into history books.

**What does environmental sustainability mean to you?**

I like definitions of sustainability that are rooted in indigenous land stewardship practices. For example, the Haudenosaunee

people (whom the French termed the Iroquois) operated on the principle that their actions must result in a sustainable world for seven generations into the future. This way of thinking about sustainability really speaks to me as a parent.

**How much of this is up to us?**

Although we can all strive to avoid wasting resources like water and energy in our personal lives, the government can also play a crucial role in moving us toward a more sustainable future. For example, the U.S. government has long required automakers to incrementally improve fuel economy—and as a result, cars sold today now get nearly twice the mileage per gallon they did a few decades ago. (At times, Earthjustice has stepped in to defend those fuel economy regulations successfully in the courts.) Governments at many levels are also now committing to deploy zero-emissions technology in a wide range of industries. Moving toward a world free of fossil fuels feels especially urgent to me as we continue to witness the very real impacts of climate change in the gray, smoky skies of our Bay Area summers lately.

**How can we focus on sustainability as parents?**

As parents during the pandemic, we've all been tested deeply during the past year. The adage that "it takes a village to raise a child" wasn't an option while we were sheltering-in-place with our children, particularly for those of us without family nearby. As a result, we all deserve to give ourselves some grace for those times we've been unable to make sustainable choices. And when we have recharged sufficiently to step back into the fight, we should!

We can all make simple commitments in our daily lives to live more sustainably. As parents, we can instill in our children a respect for nature in our daily activities: for example, during a

visit to the beach or on a hike, bring a bag to collect trash together before you leave. As consumers, we can choose to support companies that source sustainably; we can also avoid purchasing plastic, especially single-use plastic items that take many hundreds of years to biodegrade and can harm wildlife. And as voters, we can urge our elected leaders to make forward-thinking environmental choices, such as committing to 100 percent clean energy rather than relying on dirty and toxic fossil fuels. Environmentalism is a cause that every parent can get behind. Because we all want to leave behind a healthier, safer world for our children.

Learn more about Earthjustice at [www.earthjustice.org](http://www.earthjustice.org).

**"Environmentalism is a cause that every parent can get behind. Because we all want to leave behind a healthier, safer world for our children."**



# Laure Latham

This year, Golden Gate Mothers Group celebrates its 25th year of supporting, nurturing, and connecting mothers in the Bay Area. The organization's growth would not be possible without women like Laure Latham, a 17-year member and volunteer, despite a move to London in 2012. She sat down with Co-managing Editor, Colleen Morgan, to discuss her history with GGMG and why she remains a part of a community that's 5,000 miles away.

**You are a regular contributing writer for GGMG Magazine. How has the magazine changed since you started?**

When I joined GGMG in March 2004, my first daughter was six months old. The GGMG newsletter was a black-and-white 16-pager featuring family news, newborn pictures, restaurant recommendations, and classified ads. It had a small village feel—which was the spirit of GGMG. The team was four people strong: two writers, an ads person, and a graphic designer. It gradually grew to a 40-pager, then shifted to magazine format in 2008, and finally to the color and glossy magazine of today. The team welcomed photographers, calendar editors, dad columnists, aspiring writers, and more. I started as a writer, then was Editor-in-Chief, a features writer, and the "Books for Kids" columnist.

**Why did you remain a GGMG member after your move to London in 2012?**

I made a lot of friends through GGMG at a time when I was far from my family and isolated with young children. GGMG became part of my life and I received so much from this wonderful group of moms that I was thrilled to continue a long-distance writing relationship with the "Books for Kids" column. I also stay connected through my travel/adventure blog, [frogmom.com](http://frogmom.com), which is my favorite creative outlet (aside from my daily journal).

**As the author of Best Hikes with Kids: San Francisco Bay Area, what recommendations do you have for parents to keep the outdoors interesting?**

Choosing themes or fun activities, geocaching, looking for fairy doors, foraging, and teaching kids fun facts about plants can keep the outdoors interesting. The ultimate fun, though, resides in finding remote tree swings (Bernal Heights), following secret forest paths (Sutro Forest

and Glen Canyon), and picnicking on the beach at Crissy Field. My favorite Bay Area place for adventures is the Marin Headlands: Hill 88, the Coastal Trail to Battery Townsley, Battery Wallace, Battery Alexander, and Point Bonita's lighthouse are all unique and amazing.

**Your story is such a wonderful reminder that a mother can sustain connections to activities and people that bring her joy despite juggling work, parenting, and distance. What fun adventures are you looking forward to this year?**

Now that I live in England, I have developed a passion for wild swimming, which is open water swimming without a wetsuit. I still hike with my girls, who are now 15 and 17. I look forward to backpacking to the ruins of an abbey, discovering outdoor filming locations of my favorite movies, or swimming around castle moats (done it twice, it's hilarious). I am also one of the newest rangers for London National Park City, so if you visit London, hit me up for fun activities!

**Your magazine bio always mentions cream teas. What are they and how do I get one?**

Oh my, cream teas are a revelation! It's actually black tea (in a china teapot if you do it proper) served with scones, clotted cream or butter, and berry jam. It is a common afternoon snack in the British countryside and I always plan my hikes to walk past cafes and tea rooms in villages or tourist spots. What a great way to refuel and have a warm, comforting drink before going on, particularly if the weather is iffy. National Cream Tea Day is June 24th, and you can celebrate by making them at home—King Arthur Baking Company's website has a recipe. Cheers to cream teas!

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



# Lessons From Longevity

By Lowell Sucherman

Recently I completed my 90<sup>th</sup> revolution around the sun and, luckily, I have had my best friend and the love of my life, Janice, for 63 of those revolutions. I have been blessed with good health, a great family, wonderful friends, and superb colleagues in my chosen profession of family law.

I was asked to share my observations about family life over my lifespan and make a few suggestions that might assist others in creating—and keeping—sustainable relationships.

Most of us haven’t been given any guidance concerning how to deal with marriage and our children. We proceed with the most important chore of our lives as prepared for the future as newborn babies. It is a trial and error approach, which is not a good omen for a successful outcome. So here are a few observations that might assist you in dealing with your family.



lives. However, you should also be aware that you are not the only on-the-ground influencers in their lives, especially after they enter school and begin interacting with the world.

Most parents work hard to give their children the best start possible. However, they should remember that children come into the world with their own personalities and goals. Some parents want to push their children down a specific path. They should remember their job is to allow their children to pursue whatever path they choose. Encouraging

them to explore various interests early on, with no agenda of your own, is key.

Our world is changing rapidly and parenting can become a tough exercise. Don’t follow others in making it a competitive sport. The core needs of developing children are relatively static. They need and are entitled to stability, safety, structure, support, and most importantly, love.

Numerous studies suggest that well-adjusted children are reared by parents who find a way to combine warmth and sensitivity. The difficulty is keeping these rules in mind when we are busy

with our own problems. It is hard work, but certainly important enough. In my own parenting journey, I always kept the following rules I learned from my grade school teacher in mind, which he taught us would ultimately lead to wisdom if used appropriately. Here they are from my memory:

- 1. I’m sorry. 2. I was wrong. 3. I need help. 4. I don’t know.**

Of course, these four sentences will not guarantee peace or sustainability, and we have to do the hard work to make and keep our relationships strong. But it is a starting point, and I’ve found over my life that the most important thing we can do is keep trying. Keep working to be better; to make ourselves better. By extension, it puts us in a place to hear what we might need to hear to make our relationships better, too. Cherish your loved ones and don’t lose sight of your vulnerability or that of your loved ones. If you work hard on the little things, the big things will fall into place. Your life will become easier and you and your family will flourish.

*Lowell is a Korean War veteran. He has been practicing family law for over 40 years, and is nationally and internationally recognized as a family law expert, having tried cases in several different states and countries. He has been married to his wife, Janice, for over 60 years, and has two children and two grandchildren.*

**“Most of us haven’t been given any guidance concerning how to deal with marriage and our children. We proceed with the most important chore of our lives as prepared for the future as newborn babies.”**

### Your Life Partner:

Do your best to make your life partner your best friend. Work on it. Open up to him or her—share your ups and downs. If something is bothering you, share it with your partner. Compliment your partner often, even for what may feel like little things. You may think they know you appreciate them, but verbalizing it never hurts. Don’t take these things for granted. Try not to be a sourpuss, and above all, don’t hold a grudge!! It is usually a little thing that is bugging you, and if you hold a grudge it will grow into a roadblock that can ruin your relationship. You will be amazed that these little things can solve many of the problems couples have and that they can even revitalize a marriage.

### Your Children:

How do you deal with your kids? First of all: Do no harm. You have a sacred duty to assist your children to become healthy adults.

Remember, your children will do as you do, not as you say. Encourage their schoolwork and sports or other extracurricular activities. However, I do not approve of the “Everyone gets a trophy” approach. Teach them to earn their accomplishments. You as a parent will have great influence over their

## CONTEST



### Remodeling Dream Instead of Remodeling Nightmare!

Thinking of remodeling your outdated home into a more family-friendly oasis? Who can you ask when you’re stuck in the process?

80% of home improvement projects are initiated by women, yet the construction industry is more than 90% male. Kickstart House focuses on empowering women with the resources, coaching, and community to navigate renovations without confusion and stress.

Founder, serial renovator, and Bay Area licensed architect, Mona Ying Reeves, describes her company, Kickstart House as your support system to change “your boring house to your dream home.” Kickstart House provides a roadmap to help you with all stages of a renovation—from research and planning, to developing a design, building a team, all the way through living in construction dust. You CAN achieve your dream home without the stress.

The winner of this month’s prize will receive a video consultation with Kickstart House. The consultation is a fast-track way to gain clarity, move past decision paralysis, and get clarity on your next steps. Get your questions and concerns addressed without the commitment and cost of engaging a full-service architect or build team. Kickstart House helps with your individual hurdles, so you can get the most out of your team and project. This remote video consultation is with a House Coach for up to one hour. The value of this prize is \$250.

Enter this month’s contest by emailing [contest@ggmg.org](mailto:contest@ggmg.org) with the subject line “Remodel.” Prize winner is selected at random. Contest entries must be received by July 15.

Congratulations to the winners of our last contest with Fly Little Dragon! Gretchen P. has won the online video series, “Positive Parenting and Neuroscience,” a digital workbook, digital posters, and digital cheat sheets valued at \$75. Colleen M. has won the online package, “Learn and Play for PreK: Animals around the World,” valued at \$75.

Thanks to our generous prize donors; please patronize their services!

## NEW ARRIVALS



Congratulations to Stephanie H.! She will be getting joyful moments captured by Anna Munandar from Mini Anna Photography.

Anna specializes in capturing joy and every milestone in your family, from birth to college.

See her work: [minianna.com](http://minianna.com)

Kate S.    **Baby Charlotte Sophia**  
Stephanie H.    **Baby Quentin**



To announce your new arrival in the magazine and for a chance to win a \$150 gift card from **Mini Anna Photography**, fill out the form at [tinyurl.com/ggmgNewArrivals](http://tinyurl.com/ggmgNewArrivals).

Taking Care of Our Future

By Laure Latham

Sustainability is the balance between the environment, equity, and economy, which are big concepts for small kids. Fortunately, sustainability is all around us in our daily lives, from how we eat to what we do and how we live. This selection of books touches on various aspects of sustainability in language that’s child-friendly and based on scientifically correct facts. Take them as conversation starters or inspiration for new family activities. Enjoy!



The Wheels on the Garbage Truck

Written and illustrated by Lane Rebelo  
Garbage trucks are the best! Going around the neighborhood, they help collect trash, sort waste so things can get recycled, and do a lot more on their daily runs. For toddlers

obsessed with things on wheels or the garbage truck or your compost bin (or all of these), this book is heaven. Though some of the rhymes are clunky, it can almost be sung to the tune of The Wheels on the Bus. **Ages: 0 to 3 years**



The Worm Family Has Its Picture Taken

Written by Jennifer Frank, illustrated by David Ezra Stein  
Mrs. Worm would love to have her family picture taken, but young Emma is worried. How will their family

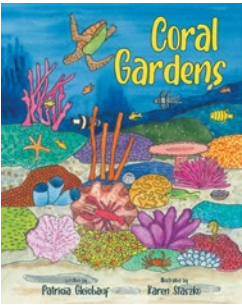
picture look compared to her friends’ families? She comes up with a plan so they have fake teeth to smile and fake hair to style, but that’s not working. They don’t look like worms anymore. The true nature of worms and their contribution to the natural cycle is at the heart of this cute book on the power of being different. **Ages: 3 to 5 years**



Fatima’s Great Outdoors

Written Ambreen Tariq, illustrated by Stevie Lewis  
Young Fatima is new to her school and things aren’t going so well with her new classmates, her new city, or her new country. When her family, originally from India, escapes for the weekend to go camping, Fatima is

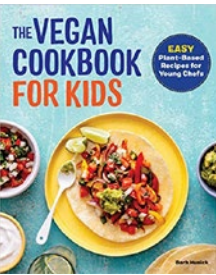
thrilled. Not only will she discover the great outdoors for the first time, but she will also learn to build a campfire or put up a tent. Celebrating a different camping reality to what mainstream media shows, this book is by the founder of an online community called “Brown People Camping.” Showing an Indian cultural approach to camping, this story will inspire more diversity outside and show that all families are welcome to the great outdoors. **Ages: 4 to 8 years**



Coral Gardens

Written by Patricia Gleichauf, illustrated by Karen Staszko  
How do coral reefs grow and what do they do? This book is part of an award-winning Under the Sea series that teaches children how valuable this tiny saltwater animal is in keeping our oceans healthy and clean. In simple terms, your budding

ocean lovers will uncover the fascinating science behind coral reefs, from coral babies to marine creatures that inhabit corals or the formation of beaches. Before your next family trip to the aquarium or the beach, your child will know all there is to know about corals, both under and above the sea. **Ages: 4 to 8 years**



The Vegan Cookbook for Kids

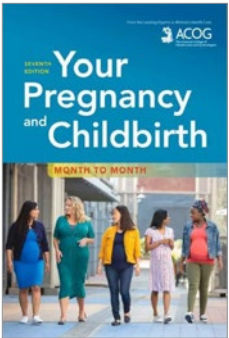
Written and illustrated by Barb Musick  
Making scrumptious plant-based meals at home is easy with this fun cookbook. Featuring 50 recipes that are both playful and wholesome, this book will help your children hone their cooking skills while cooking meals that are gentle for the planet. If you have been curious about plant alternatives to your favorite dishes, this vegan cookbook is a great place to start and covers all meals from breakfast to snacks, salads, sandwiches, dinners and desserts! **Ages: 8 to 12 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.

Healthy Decision Making

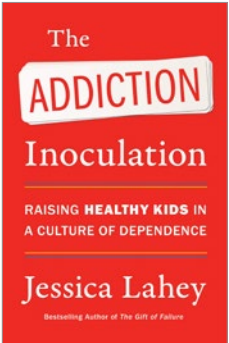
By Gail Cornwall

A lot of books offer advice for sustaining good decision making from cradle to college. These books figure it’s best to err on the side of too much information rather than too little.



Your Pregnancy and Childbirth: Month to Month

Imagine a bunch of OBs and gynecologists getting their hands on *What to Expect When You’re Expecting* and rewriting it with the goal of preparing those in the perinatal period to participate in shared decision-making for their medical care. This book from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists is as thick as it is thorough, but diagrams and text that aims to be jargon-free help distill a massive amount of information. If you’re the kind of person who wants to pick a doctor and take their word for the best course of action, this will not be your jam. If you want to analyze the potential costs and benefits of decisions about labor, delivery, and more, dig in without delay. I found the book interesting, though far from life-altering.



The Addiction Inoculation: Raising Healthy Kids in a Culture of Dependence

In many ways, *The Addiction Inoculation* is a weird book, seemingly written for different audiences in different parts. Opening as a memoir, it makes its way through the history and science of adolescent addiction, and then blooms into a parenting advice tome. That last piece is why it’s worth reading this review, even if you’ve got a newborn.

Right around the time Jess Lahey published the wildly successful book *The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed*, she realized she was an alcoholic. As a mom, her thoughts quickly moved from her own wellbeing to that of her kids. What could she do to spare them the suffering of following in her footsteps? Despite knowledge accumulated during 20 years of teaching—five of them in a drug and alcohol rehabilitation clinic for adolescents—she needed guidance. “The one book I wanted most was the one I could not find, a memoir of substance use disorder and long-term recovery paired with research-backed parenting and teaching advice.”

Lahey makes no apologies for her conservative approach. She believes in gateway drugs (“if we can keep kids away from cigarettes, vaping, beer, and marijuana, we are more

likely to keep them off the harder stuff”), that the situation is both dire and time-sensitive (“[k]ids need to know that if they start using alcohol now, they are much, much more likely to develop substance use disorder than if they wait until their brain is done developing in their early twenties, and the earlier kids start using any addictive substance, the more damage it does to their brains and bodies”), and in zero-tolerance policies. (She quotes an expert saying, “you should have an unrealistic no alcohol or drug use policy until they are out of high school.”)

Her arguments are research-backed, though many would take issue with Lahey’s slants. For example, Ayelet Waldman presented a very different spin on LSD in *A Really Good Day*. And Lahey’s approach to divorce doesn’t jibe with what I’ve read. She’s got all the right pieces: high-conflict divorce constitutes an adverse childhood event, pre-split dynamics and economic hardship explain a lot of kids’ distress, and co-parents can do loads to decrease the stress surrounding familial restructuring. But she puts them together in a way that’s unhelpful for families for whom divorce is the best option.

That said, there’s a consistent logic to Lahey’s conclusions: anchoring. Aim high, think in absolutes, and you risk falling less far. Take that zero-tolerance policy. A lot of kids are going to deviate from their parents’ recommendations, but deviating a bit from “don’t do it at all” is likely to have far less severe consequences than starting with permissiveness and moving a bit deeper from there.

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](http://gailcornwall.com) or by finding her on Facebook and Twitter.



# Preparing for Baby and Saving the Earth

By Veronica Reilly-Granich

Preparing for the arrival of a new baby is very exciting, but it can also be overwhelming. One question that comes up a lot is, *What do I need?* Here's how to make sustainable, environmentally conscious choices in several major areas of a baby's life.

### Diapers

In the United States, about 7 percent of all non-durable household waste in landfills is composed of disposable diapers, according to an EPA report from 2014. The average child will go through between 5,000 and 6,000 diapers before potty training. Cloth diapers are a great alternative, especially if you can get them used. Many people resell well cared for cloth diapers, or even give them away when their children outgrow them. Although they do require more energy to create initially than disposable diapers, you can keep literally tons of waste out of landfills if you use them for several children. The most sustainable way to care for them is to machine wash and line dry them at home.

If you're considering compostable diapers, you will need to hire a service like Earth Baby or Tiny Tots to pick them up for you weekly. Recology does not accept biodegradable diapers in compost bins in San Francisco, because properly processing human waste requires specialized procedures they aren't equipped for. A diaper service might add to your cost, but it could also be more convenient. Tiny Tots also offers a mixed cloth and compostable diaper pickup and delivery service, so you can mix and match.

Whatever your diaper choice, also consider reusable wipes. Etsy is a great place to look for premade versions, but you can make your own out of old t-shirts or other soft, absorbent fabric. You'll need a wet bag or diaper pail to store them in until they can be washed, as with cloth diapers.

Finally, don't buy a fancy new diaper bag! It is more sustainable to repurpose a backpack or shoulder bag to carry around all the stuff you'll need with your little one. If you want something new, choose a bag you'll be able to use for other purposes after your child outgrows diapers.

### Eating/Drinking

It pays to be mindful when choosing products to help nourish your new family member. Even mothers who breastfeed



exclusively will likely need a bottle now and then. Glass is a sustainable option that you can often find for free or at minimal cost on Buy Nothing sites or by asking within GGMG. Consider a stainless steel bottle that transitions into a sippy cup, such as the Think Baby system. This gives the bottle a longer life cycle in your family, and metal is recyclable.

When introducing solids, you can find a variety of foods available in recyclable glass jars at grocery stores. However, a more sustainable choice is to make your own baby food. *The Amazing Make-Ahead Baby Food Book* explains how to easily make purees for your child and freeze them for use over several months. To blend food as needed, purchase an immersion blender over a specialized baby food machine because it is an appliance you can use beyond the baby years. Of course, baby-led weaning using the exact same foods the parents are eating is another sustainable option that might work for your family.

### Clothing and toys

Avoid synthetics, especially plastics or petroleum-derived products, as much as possible. Look for natural fibers for clothing. Consider toys made of wood, fabric, and other sustainable materials. Silicone can be a good alternative to plastic for items like teething rings and bottle nipples. It tends to have a much longer lifespan than plastic and does not have the same types of harmful chemicals.

Reduce your consumption by focusing on what you don't need to get in the first place. Less is more before your baby arrives, then get secondhand items as much as possible, although be careful with safety issues around large items like cribs and car seats. Make sure to pass everything on as well. When you can't avoid a disposable item, make sure it is recyclable or compostable. Finally, make the best choices you can. Every little bit you do helps create a healthier future for all children.

*Veronica Reilly-Granich is an educator and mom of two young girls. She also writes fiction and loves to travel.*

**“Reduce your consumption by focusing on what you don't need to get in the first place. Less is more before your baby arrives.”**

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# Zero Waste 101: A Beginner’s Guide

## From realization to action: A common sense guide to start reducing your environmental footprint

By Julia Rockwell

**Y**ears back, I was hauling our family’s Recology bins out to the curb and was mortified by the dozens of online shipping boxes and food containers that were reaching skyward to such a height that their peak rivaled the Salesforce Tower. And it wasn’t just our recycling waste that was setting records; a bag full of dirty diapers was poking out of the top of our trash can, bringing with it a smell that outstank the forgotten Easter egg we had found in our backyard months after our hunt.

As a Marin County native, I was raised with environmentalism on the brain, but as I stood there, I could not help but wonder, *How did I get here?* I had always thought of myself as eco-friendly. I drove a Prius. I carried a refillable water bottle. I voted for representatives who supported green initiatives. How had things gotten so out of hand? This clearly was not sustainable living. It was time to take action.

Within 6 months, my husband and I reduced our trash by 95 percent and our recycling by 75 percent. Our family of four has been living a zero waste lifestyle for three years now, and with that has come joy, community, savings, less clutter, and more time for what matters.

*For every can of garbage at the curb, there are 87 cans worth of materials that come from the extraction industries—such as timber, agricultural, mining, and petroleum—that manufacture natural resources into finished products.*

—World Resources Institute

While the term zero waste conjures up images of people storing a year’s worth of trash in a single mason jar, such extreme measures are not necessary to reduce your footprint and lead a sustainable lifestyle. It’s about starting where you are, bringing consciousness to your Earth-damaging habits and choices, and doing what you can.

### What Is Zero Waste?

The simple answer: zero waste is about reducing the amount of waste (trash, recycling, and compost) you generate.

The more complex answer: It also means looking at the full environmental impact of an item through its entire lifecycle (from the design and materials used to its disposal) to ensure the conservation of resources and reduce the risk of harm to land, water, air, ecosystems, animals, and people.

### Zero Waste Myths

**Myth: Zero waste means I need to live my life 100 percent trash-free.**

The zero in zero waste concept is not possible. It is like a carrot at the end of a stick that you can always strive for but will never reach. This is not a bad thing, as it keeps us always working to reduce as much as possible. Zero waste is a journey—not a destination.

**Myth: Living sustainably costs more money.**

Living sustainably isn’t about going out and buying a bunch of “sustainable stuff.” It’s about using what you have. Overconsumption, even of sustainable items, is not sustainable. By reducing how much you buy, and reusing and repurposing what you own, you can actually save money.

**Myth: It takes a lot of time.**

Living sustainably does take a little bit of time up front. It may take a moment to orient yourself with some incredible secondhand clothing shops or find new plastic-free bathroom products, but once you get the hang of it, it becomes the new normal and doesn’t require much additional brain space or time.

### Bea Johnson’s Five Rs of Zero Waste

**No. 1. Refuse:** The first step to living zero waste is to refuse what you do not need. This includes recyclables, compostables, and trash. By saying no up front, particularly to single-use items, you can signifi-

“While the term zero waste conjures up images of people storing a year’s worth of trash in a single mason jar, such extreme measures are not necessary to reduce your footprint and lead a sustainable lifestyle.”

cantly reduce the amount of waste you generate. Here are a few things you could start refusing today: straws, utensils that come with takeout, disposable coffee cups, junk mail (you can opt-out at Catalog Choice online), freebies from events, etc.

**No. 2. Reduce:** The second step is reducing items that you do need. Before



purchasing anything (food, clothing, toys for your kids, toiletries), ask yourself, “*Do we really need this?*” If the answer is no, move on. If the answer is yes, you may want to consider the following questions:

- **Quantity:** Do I need the amount that I am buying?
- **Quality:** Is the product well made? Will it last?
- **Material:** Is this made from a sustainable material?
- **Who:** Was this product ethically made?
- **Secondhand:** Can I get this product secondhand?
- **Packaging:** Can I find this product with no packaging? If not, can I find it

packaged without plastic?

- **End of Life:** Can this product be composted or recycled? (Yay!) Or is it destined for the landfill? (Boo.)

Of course, cost is also a factor. It is about striving to choose the most environmentally conscious option that you can afford,

and that you have access to.

**No. 3. Reuse:** Next, you will want to start reusing more. There are several ways that reusing plays out in zero waste living. Here are a few:

- **Use What You Have:** Using items you already have is more sustainable than buying something new—even if that something new is sustainably made. So shop your closet, dig into the back of your medicine cabinet, and finish up the half-full bottles of lotion you have hiding back there, or create a toy rotation to re-spark the joy.
- **Reusables:** Break up with single-use items and swap them for reusable items instead. Need a few suggestions on where to start? Here you go: Swap plastic snack baggies for washable containers, cling wrap for beeswax wraps or glass Tupperware, paper coffee filters for washable filters or a French press, tampons for a menstrual cup, paper towels for a Swedish dishcloth and tea towels, and disposable batteries for rechargeable ones. Just remember to use up what you have first before buying a reusable replacement.
- **Mend It:** Repair items that you already own (either by doing it yourself or bringing it to a professional) before going out to buy a new one.





Recycling contamination is also a recycling issue. Food and water impact all of the recyclables in your entire recycling bin. If paper gets wet, it cannot be recycled. Plus, a lot of people “wishcycle.” What’s that? It’s when you toss something into the recycling hoping it will be recycled, but you aren’t really sure if it can be. Checking Recology’s website or app for the What Goes Where tool will help keep your recycling uncontaminated.

**No. 5. Rot:** The fifth step is to compost whatever is remaining. Food waste is a major contributor to climate change, so keeping food waste out of the trash is essential. When food rots in a landfill it emits methane, a greenhouse gas up to 30 times more potent than carbon.

Limiting food waste in your

home is essential, but when food does need to be disposed of, composting is the answer.

After these five steps have been taken, you should have very little in your trash can. It might not fit in a mason jar, but it will likely be significantly less than what’s currently going to the landfill.

## Where to Start?

### Three Beginner Steps

#### 1. Do a Trash Audit

A good place to start is to do a trash and recycling audit. Before you take your bins to the curb this week, take a minute and look at what’s actually in there.

- **Step One: Make a list!** Is there a lot of food packaging? Takeout containers? Single-use disposables like plastic wrap? Bathroom trash like shampoo bottles, floss, and tampon wrappers? This will help you start to notice where you are generating the most waste and will give you a place to start!

- **Step Two: Pick one theme** to undertake (online shopping, food packaging, bathroom trash, etc.) or choose to start with one room in your home like the kitchen, closet, or bathroom.
- **Step Three: Go through the Five Rs of Zero Waste** listed above (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot) to start making changes.
- **Step Four: Once you feel like you’ve gotten those steps down**, refer back to your trash audit and take on the next area on the list.

#### 2. Take a Buy Nothing New Challenge

Try buying nothing new for an entire month. The first time we did it, it was an eye-opening experience. This excludes essentials like food, personal items (no secondhand floss or toilet paper—that would just be gross), medical needs, bills, repairs, essential services, pet food, etc. For anything else you need to buy (clothing, makeup, toys, books, kitchen supplies, decor items, and more) look to filling these needs/wants by using what you already own, buying it secondhand, getting it for free (join a Buy Nothing Group or Freecycle), borrowing it from a friend, or renting it. Optional: You can give yourself one free pass for the month to buy something new. See if you can make it without doing so but know you can keep that one pass in your back pocket, just in case. But then that’s it, so be mindful of your free pass choice.

#### 3. Be Patient with Yourself (and Others)

Living sustainably doesn’t happen overnight. It takes time. (Trust me, it took over a year for our pantry to start looking like a zero waste Pinterest photo). Be patient with yourself and with others (family members included). If you can’t get your partner on board, focus on your own choices. Once you start to shift your habits, they will start to feel like second nature. And just remember, you don’t have to be perfect. You just have to begin.

*Julia is a mother and zero waste expert, educator, and writer. She is the founder of Our Simple Song, an eco-lifestyle website dedicated to helping others live sustainably. Additionally, she works with families and individuals to help them reduce their carbon, plastic, and waste footprints. You can follow her on Instagram at @oursimplesong.*

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# Waste Not, Want Not: How to Build Sustainable Food Practices into Your Daily Life

Food waste is a huge global problem. But a few small changes at home can make a big difference locally.

By Neha Masson



By now, we have all seen the shocking statistics on how much food is wasted annually in America. According to ReFED, a national nonprofit dedicated to ending food loss and waste, 35 percent of all food in the United States went unsold or uneaten in 2019. Perhaps nothing illustrates the juxtaposition of our country better than the coexistence of food wastage at this scale with widespread food insecurity. One in six Americans, including children, lacks reliable access to sufficient, affordable, and nutritious food, according to ReFED. Sadly, a significant portion of food waste is perfectly edible

and could have gone to those in need, but inefficiencies and avoidable waste plague our food system.

We all care about this problem, but it can seem overwhelming to understand it and figure out how to help. Food loss and waste occur for multiple reasons at each stage of the supply chain, with the majority of waste happening at consumer-facing businesses such as grocery stores or restaurants, and in homes. Both food loss (which mainly occurs at the production stage) and food waste (which occurs when edible food is intentionally thrown out by consumers) is systemic, and it's important

to recognize that what happens at one stage is often influenced by what occurred at another stage.

For example, tons of unharvested produce go to waste annually, often because of lack of demand, or when the produce doesn't meet appearance guidelines set by grocery stores. These beauty standards reflect consumer expectations. We expect to buy unblemished, picture-perfect fruit and vegetables, discarding or shaking our heads at bruised apples and misshapen carrots when we shop. If you've ever grown fruit or vegetables yourself, you know how rare it is to

harvest unblemished produce or the "perfect" size, color, and shape. Imagine how much produce is unwanted when those standards are applied.

Alison Mountford, founder and CEO of Ends+Stems, a meal planning service designed to reduce household food waste, puts the size of this problem into perspective. "We simply cannot keep wasting food at this rate," she says. "By 2050, we're on track to add a couple billion more people to our population. We're already growing enough food to feed all of them, yet we throw away surplus and people are starving. If we keep doing this, we'll have to farm another landmass the size of China and Mongolia combined, and we just don't have that space."

There's a huge environmental toll from this waste as well. When food is wasted, it means that the land, water, labor, and the myriad resources and greenhouse gases emitted in producing it were unnecessary. According to Project Drawdown, a nonprofit that seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the food we waste globally is responsible for roughly 8 percent of global emissions.

The problem seems astronomical and hard to make sense of at times. "You need to focus on a few sustainable actions without taking on the burden of saving the planet," Mountford says. "If it isn't folded into your life, it won't happen."

Luckily, there are easy, actionable steps we can build into our daily lives to become a meaningful part of the solution.

## Start with buying less and shopping smarter

Remember the moldy strawberries, stale crackers, and old salsa you cleaned out of the kitchen last week? Food is abundant and relatively cheap for many of us, so we tend to overbuy. This especially occurs when there is a lack of meal planning, which leads to throwing out perfectly good food that's gone bad. "The easiest thing to do is to buy less food," Mountford shares. "Think of what you bring home in an average grocery week, and on a week that's not too overwhelming for you, buy 25 percent less and see what happens."

By simply buying less food, you'll likely get creative and eat more of what you

have on hand. When you reach for an apple but don't have it, you'll probably just grab the banana you do have. You'll eat the crackers already in the pantry, and avoid collecting boxes of snacks left half uneaten. If not for the environment, do it for your

**“Perhaps most important of all is appreciating how hard it is to get the food you eat into your kitchen. There is a considerable amount of labor, resources, supply chain logistics, and at the very core of it, nature that puts that food on your table.”**

wallet. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that each year, around \$1,500 of food goes uneaten per family of four. This is a significant amount of money that could be spent on other things.

The second part is shopping smarter, which primarily means planning your food needs *before* hitting the grocery store (or shopping app). "A meal plan can be as simple as a piece of paper or chalkboard where you jot down what you expect to make and eat over the next few days," Mountford says. "The less comfortable you are in the kitchen, the more detailed a plan you should make to ensure you get what you need. But it's still pretty simple."

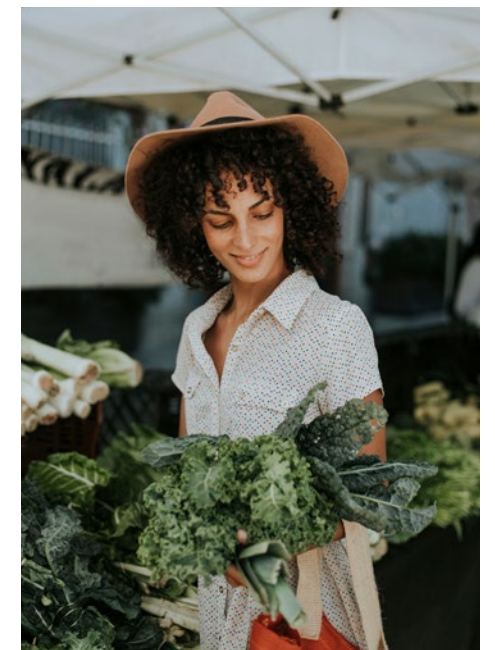
Start with family favorites and easy weeknight meals that are feasible with your workload. Take an inventory of your fridge and pantry to avoid buying duplicate items and instead, use what you already have. Then, create a shopping list at home before you go to the store. Having a list will cut down the time you spend shopping, reduce impulse buys, and hopefully eliminate unnecessary purchases. "Leave a little room for improvisation," Mountford advises. "Your list can include 'two green veggies to roast' and then you buy what's freshest or most compelling. Limit yourself to one to three impulse items."

## Use everything

A simple habit to build is consciously reducing leftovers, and when you do have leftovers, eating them. When planning and cooking meals, cut recipes to the appropriate portion size for your family, especially if you never eat leftovers. If you have excess food, have a leftover night or "eat the fridge/freezer" night once a week. This saves on cooking time and gets your family eating more of what you have.

There's an art to packaging up leftovers, according to Mountford. "Pack your leftover food in separate containers." For example, if you made chicken, rice, and veggies, each component goes into a separate container. "It's simple, really," Mountford explains. "Throwing multiple things into one container can make the food soggy or unappealing when you attempt to eat it later. As a bonus, when items are separated, it's much easier to use as building blocks for new meals." So your leftover rice can become fried rice tomorrow, with the addition of those neglected frozen veggies and sauce you randomly grabbed months ago.

When food does go into the trash, it becomes organic waste which generates methane, a potent greenhouse gas borne from the anaerobic decomposition in a landfill. In contrast, compost decomposes aerobically (with oxygen), producing mainly CO<sub>2</sub> which is far less harmful. Most cities in the Bay Area have composting programs (your green trash can), so embrace it! An

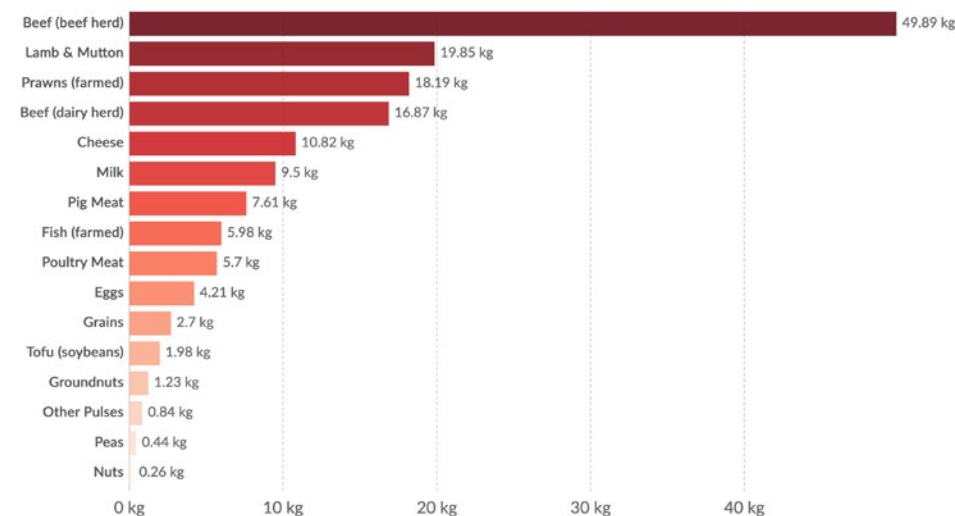




## Greenhouse gas emissions per 100 grams of protein

Greenhouse gas emissions are measured in kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalents (kgCO<sub>2</sub>e) per 100 grams of protein. This means non-CO<sub>2</sub> greenhouse gases are included and weighted by their relative warming impact.

Our World  
in Data



Source: Poore, J., & Nemecek, T. (2018). Additional calculations by Our World in Data.  
Note: Data represents the global average greenhouse gas emissions of food products based on a large meta-analysis of food production covering 38,700 commercially viable farms in 119 countries.

easy practice is to keep a small compost bin lined with compostable bags accessible in your kitchen. During food prep, throw in vegetable scraps, peels, bones, and other unavoidable food waste into the container. Better yet, use those scraps to make a broth! But, we're not all Martha Stewart, so it's okay to take baby steps towards wasting less.

The lesson here is that while *eating* food is the very best thing to do, composting is much preferred over throwing organic waste into the trash.

## Make more sustainable food choices

Every piece of food grown has an environmental impact—the land use, water consumption and overall carbon footprints of our food are considerable. According to [ourworldindata.org](https://ourworldindata.org), food production accounts for 26 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. So wasting that food means all those resources were for nothing.

We can also get smarter about making choices that reduce our environmental toll. If you want to reduce the carbon footprint of your food, focus most on *what* you eat. Greenhouse gas emissions for various proteins vary wildly. The immense land, water, and grain needed for cows ranks beef as the number one contributor of greenhouse gas emissions per 100 grams

of protein, according to [ourworldindata.org](https://ourworldindata.org). Lamb, farmed prawns, cheese, milk, and pork round out the top of that list. In contrast, eggs, grains, and lentils are at the bottom of the list.

"You don't have to be a vegetarian to reduce your impact," says Mountford. "Just be aware of your impact when you buy certain foods. For high-impact foods like beef and dairy, buy a little less if you can. Instead of four pounds of beef, buy half and add more vegetables and grains to your meal." Manufacturing has continued to bring down the price (and often quality) of proteins, so it's easy to stock up on ten pounds of meat at Costco, only to throw half of it out. If you do buy high-impact foods, pledge to not waste any of them. Treat it like the precious resource it is.

Foods that heavily tax our environment are not just limited to animal products but include tomatoes, almonds, and other things that require tons of water. To put that into perspective, growing one pound of nuts like walnuts, almonds, or cashews requires over 1,000 gallons of water. One glass of orange juice requires 45 gallons of water to produce! Challenge your family to research and make easy food swaps that are impactful such as replacing almond milk with oat milk, trying sunflower butter instead of nut butter, and eating more plant-based meals.

Again, the goal is to be aware, reduce your consumption where possible, and avoid wasting any of these things.

## Learn about sustainable food sources and decide what's right for you

In the Bay Area, we're lucky to be surrounded by farms that have CSA programs, seafood share programs, and farmer's markets that allow us to eat locally while supporting individual farmers. When you shorten the distance between the food source and yourself, you reduce your carbon footprint and eat fresher food.

In addition, the last five years have seen the rise of several VC-backed startups which claim to divert "ugly produce" and unwanted food from the trash and into your kitchen. Whether it's Imperfect Produce, Misfits Market, or others, these companies are expanding rapidly as consumer awareness of food wastage grows. While the idea is admirable, some are skeptical. In a 2018 op-ed for "The Counter," the heads of two food-justice nonprofits in Oakland wrote that "[Imperfect Produce] has helped to create a market for the 'waste' created by industrial agribusiness... branding it as a form of environmental activism. This produce used to be readily available to food banks but now that 'ugly' and 'imperfect' produce can turn a profit, they are less available to those in need."

As a counterpoint Mountford says, "Look, it's easy to poke holes in anything, but I'm generally a fan of this concept and have read compelling arguments on both sides. It's hard to say that if they didn't sell those



oranges to me, would they truly have been wasted?" Even if they're not literally saving food from a landfill, she says, these companies are bringing awareness to the issue. At the very least, they're tracking the problem, giving money to related causes, and often buying from small businesses. "At worst, they're just PR for the cause," she explains. "And at best, they're truly saving food from landfills."

As for meal kit services such as Hello Fresh, Blue Apron, and the rest, Mountford is less of a fan. "These companies are adding yet another step in the process of getting food from the farm to your table. Think about the consistency they need to deliver—the right-sized avocado, the portioned garlic cloves, and all that they promise in the thousands of kits they sell daily. There's no way there isn't waste in that process." This is on top of the often copious amounts of packaging and delivery carbon emissions. At the same time, she acknowledges the role these services play in people's need for no-fuss meal planning. She prefers the approach vertically integrated companies such as Good Eggs are taking. "This is probably my favorite meal kit approach because they can be strategic in selling produce by the pound and utilizing excess in meal kits."

## Stop and smell the strawberries

Perhaps most important of all is appreciating how hard it is to get the food you eat into your kitchen. There is a considerable amount of labor, resources, supply chain logistics, and at the very core of it, nature that puts that food on your table. To sow a strawberry from seed to fruit is a beautiful, time-consuming and frankly, miraculous thing. To do that at a scale to feed billions of people is nothing short of magic.

For centuries, humans hunted and gathered their food and deeply understood what it took to harvest food. But now, humans are almost entirely removed from these processes. We've lost the sense of appreciation for how hard it is to grow something, how time-intensive it is to fish for salmon, or how nearly impossible it is to generate enough milk for our cheese needs. This disconnect has resulted in many issues, including vast proportions of food being thrown into the trash as if it were nothing.

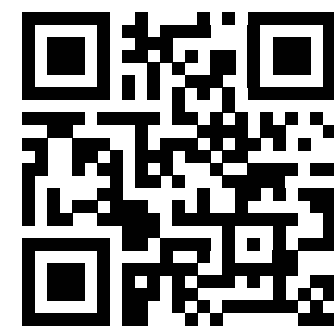
"If I'm honest," Mountford shares, "by throwing out half an onion on occasion, you won't save or ruin the world. The larger step is to be aware of how precious it all is; how hard it is to get us the food we need." Use that as motivation to bring home only what you need, eat what you have, and avoid throwing food away. By taking these small steps, we empower ourselves to change our home's culture around food, to be more thoughtful and respectful. This attitude then spreads to our communities as we share and educate each other, or cast an educated vote on measures that impact our food system. You'll figure out ways to use things in new ways and over time, habitually consume and waste less. Until reducing your impact, one strawberry at a time becomes your new norm.

*Neha is a marketing executive in tech and lives in San Francisco with her husband and two kids. They embrace Meatless Mondays and are trying out Eat the Fridge Wednesdays in an effort to waste less food.*

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# Feeling Good About Fashion Choices

## Tips to help break the cycle of fast fashion and its impact on our environment.

By Victoria Dvorak

The hardest part about speaking out against fast fashion, clothing produced rapidly by mass-market-retailers in response to the latest trends, which is almost always synonymous with low prices, is owning the inherent privilege of consumer choice, while honoring that low-priced clothing is the only accessible option for many. This is because fast fashion conjures up qualities important to equity and social justice: you don't have to be wealthy to look good, and you too can "get the look," no matter your budget. This appeals to us because "Fashion" is undeniably pretentious with its labels and high prices. Perusing fashion magazines in my youth, I never assumed I could buy anything off its glossy pages. Even without social media, labels like Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Hermes were attributed with status and wealth. With social media, the metric used to assert worth is based on how a person looks. Clothing and makeup is the fastest and cheapest way to look like your favorite Kardashian, and therein lies

the fast fashion conundrum. It gives those who previously could not, the ability to dress like the rich and famous, and because it gives the have-nots a sense of equity, no one pays attention to the devastation caused on the other side of fast fashion with the environmental damage and the humanitarian crisis our desire of cheap clothing leaves in its wake.

### The uncomfortable facts

According to Smarter Business, an independent business consultancy based in the UK, the fashion industry is the second most water-intensive industry in the world. The Global Fashion Agenda cites a report done in 2015, that the fashion industry consumed 79 billion cubic meters, or 32 million olympic sized pools' worth of water in a year. It should be noted that cotton is among the top five thirstiest crops, and fashion isn't fashion without cotton. In fact, it takes roughly 2,700 liters of water to make one cotton t-shirt. 2,700 liters is enough drinking water for one person for 900 days.

So why am I picking on cotton? Isn't it the most eco-choice because it's not a synthetic fiber and will naturally biodegrade, which for me, is a huge plus?

Let's start with the National Cotton Council of America (NCC). Sounds legit, doesn't it? The NCC is an organized body for U.S. cotton growers. The ugly truth is that the NCC's affiliates are cotton producers and growers; people who have a vested interest in furthering cotton's appeal. The NCC heavily lobbies Congress, and because the U.S. cotton industry is a major employer, there is little pushback from senators. When a large, organizing body provides seemingly "free information" to the public and drops in key words like "conservation" and "sustainable," they epitomize greenwashing. "Greenwashing," also called "green sheen," is a form of marketing spin in which green PR and green marketing are deceptively used to persuade the public that an organization's products, aims and policies are environmentally friendly.

### Follow the money

According to Lucy Siegle's book, *To Die For: Is Fashion Wearing Out The World?*, "California is where the top 1 percent of farming subsidy recipients grow mainly cotton. In 2009 alone, this top percentile reaped \$57 million in subsidies, predominantly for cotton." The top recipient received a federal farm payout of over \$2 million, while the producers of fruits and vegetables receive vastly smaller amounts. So how is this related to a humanitarian crisis? A 2010 report titled, "The Great Cotton Stitch Up" by the UK's Fairtrade Foundation, shows \$40 billion collectively given by the U.S., China, EU, and India to their own cotton growers, these countries' cotton producers can afford to sell their cotton below the cost of actual, unsubsidized production. Of this number, the U.S. cotton farmers received over half.

In Africa, all cotton is grown and produced in poverty-stricken Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Benin. Where poverty exists, the low cost of labor means countries can produce cotton more cheaply than anywhere in the world. One would think that because cotton is used in 60 percent of all U.S.-produced apparel and home furnishings, the demand for cotton remains high, and thus these countries producing cotton more cheaply should be lifted out of poverty, right? Wrong. The subsidies the developed and semi-developed worlds provide to their cotton growers allow those subsidized farmers to sell their cotton at prices below the cost of production, even beating the low cost of African cotton production. They can't make enough of a profit because the subsidies provided to the farmers in more developed countries make the selling of raw cotton inequitable. Cotton growing doesn't provide nearly enough, but discontinuing it isn't an option. A drop of water is still water to a person dying of thirst.

### Child labor

Uzbekistan does not use mechanized cotton picking because there's a cheaper way to pick cotton—through the forced labor of children. The Environmental Justice Foundation estimates that in 2009, between one and two million children were forced out into Uzbekistan's fields.



Siegle reports that in Uzbekistan, each September, teenaged Uzbek students are loaded onto buses and driven out to the cotton fields. Families can't opt out of this conscription. Students are given a quota of about 60 kilos per day. When you consider how light one ball of cotton is, you get an

cotton, but don't let these organic molecules' origins greenwash these fabrics for you. Viscose is steeped in chemicals and an arsenal of sodium hydroxide and sulphuric acid. All this requires a huge amount of energy to produce, and it also releases nitrous oxide, a poisonous

**“Choice is a privilege and exercising that choice to seek out responsible, sustainable clothing brands is not realistic for everyone.”**

idea of how much cotton 60 kilos, or 132 pounds, is. There is a suggestion that should you meet your quota, you are paid, but the government also deducts a 30 to 50 percent portion for food allowance. This is the provenance of much of our cotton.

Some of you may be thinking, *Well, what about the synthetic stuff? What about nylon and polyester? What about organic textiles like silk and leather?* Suffice to say that "humane" is not synonymous with the conventional ways of producing silk and leather, or any animal hide.

Let's start with viscose. Viscose, at its origins, starts as an organic material, so it's not exactly a synthetic. Neither is rayon or acetate. All have origins as wood pulp or

greenhouse gas. A polyester blouse would take about 200 years to decompose. Even with this horrific outcome, its provenance has distinct advantages over organic fibers. Polyester, derived from petrochemicals, is synthesized in labs and then dyed as the yarns are being synthesized. This process eradicates the human cost of bare feet and hands stomping on and washing fabrics, and skins coming into direct contact with chemical-laden dyes, usually done near river banks where fragile communities live downstream.

It is worth mentioning that bamboo, which has exploded in recent years, also comes with a cautionary tale. Bamboo, like viscose, starts out as organic pulp but if



you're buying fast fashion bamboo, chances are you are buying something that has been through just as much ecologically damaging processes as viscose. Bamboo, when processed responsibly, is pulped mechanically into a linen. This is a very expensive process and you will most likely only find true bamboo in higher end products. But bamboo is still a far superior crop to grow compared to cotton, as it absorbs large amounts of carbon, doesn't require loads of water, grows fast, and, because of its root structure, doesn't need to be reseeded.

To me, the real crisis is the human crisis. I recently bought some pleather pants at Target, on sale for \$9.99—over 50 percent off of the original retail price of \$21. I will never truly know the human and environmental cost of my bargain. I'm too far removed from it. The fast fashion companies have a literal army of cheap labor. Companies who turn textiles into clothing have zero control over the cost of fabric, but must make their services appealing to help them stand out in a sea of similar companies. Something has to give, and that give is the cost of human labor.

What's being done?

There is a bright side. In a 2020 article, The Business Research Company cited that "there is an increasing awareness regarding the adverse effects of pollution caused by apparel manufacturing... All these factors are making it necessary for customers to focus on sustainability." While social media can add pressure for us to look and be our best selves, there is an upside and that happens when influencers use it as a platform to raise awareness. The article goes on to say, "In response to such activism and education, in 2019, Internet searches for 'sustainable fashion' increased by more than three times compared to 2016, and this trend is expected to continue in the forecast period... Increasing awareness will urge customers towards ethical fashion and will drive the market."



To achieve this, many brands have adopted slow fashion. These brands hold themselves accountable, but have also taken responsibility for the supply chain. H&M has a "Conscious Growth Strategy" division, clothing manufactured from sustainable materials to reduce its carbon

“... look for certifications like Skal (which reads EKO on clothing tags) or Oeko Tex, which have developed standards for all natural fibers like bamboo, linen, and hemp.”

footprint on the environment and increase its business presence in the sustainable or ethical fashion apparel market. While I applaud this effort, considering the amount of clothing H&M sells, one division won't cut it. If companies took responsibility for their supply chain, from raw material to finished product, this would be a non-issue. If we as consumers hold our favorite brands accountable, soon the term fast fashion will be as off-putting as saturated fats or GMO.

My personal pledge

Now that I've depressed myself and maybe you, I'll share what I'm committing to going forward. First, I will check my favorite labels on [goodonyou.eco](#). They rate clothing brands on ecological integrity and social justice, and they offer full disclosure on their rating system. Second, I intend to pay more attention to the fabric content and look for

certifications like Skal (which reads EKO on clothing tags) or Oeko Tex, which have developed standards for all natural fibers like bamboo, linen, and hemp. To know if the bamboo leggings you're wearing are from a socially and ecologically just provenance, look for the unsexy ISO14001 certification in addition to a Skal or Oeko Tex. With these certifications comes the guarantee that the brand is truly sustainable and that farm visits, and social and crop examinations, are performed by actual objective third parties not affiliated with the brand.

Third, I will simply buy less. Most who have cleaned out their closet inevitably have that stack of shame. You know that stack. It's the stack of stuff you've bought with the rationalization that you'll drop those last few pounds, or if you're like me, have visions of living in a world similar to "Downton Abbey". When I do buy new, I plan to put the bulk into fewer, quality items. I then want to look into

Peace Silk, silk that's made without killing silkworms. Lastly, when I do buy, I will buy

second-hand more often, and I will put back into that second-hand cycle what I take out of it. One of my favorite ways to do this is to send a big box to thredUP. Anyone who's sent stuff into thredUP knows that you get paid nothing for your average item—as in zip, zero, zilch, pennies on the dollar; BUT, if you opt to get a store credit to one of the 15 or so cleanup partners like Gap, Reebok, and Reformation, you immediately get a store credit to your store of choice plus a 15 to 20 percent boost in earnings.

Choice is a privilege and exercising that choice to seek out responsible, sustainable clothing brands is not realistic for everyone. As of now, most eco-brands are not in the affordable range, but I do maintain that buying fewer items at better quality will not only last longer, but will benefit the entire chain of how clothing is made.

*Victoria, mother of three, lives in San Francisco and is an introverted reformed Fast fashion hound.*

GGMG NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS

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](mailto: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 for members

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

Crochet Cute Stuffed Toys

Workshops are 1-hour long and taught by fellow crochet designer (and new mom, also in the Bay Area!), Amy. We will purchase a beginner Woobles kit to partake in the workshop, since it comes pre-started to get the hardest step out of the way. The kits can be different, since the first few rounds are the same. You'll cover how to do the following:

- Hold a crochet hook and yarn
- Identify and count stitches
- Read a crochet pattern
- Crochet single crochet and increase stitches
- Use a stitch marker

**DATE:** TBD in June/July (check the bulletins)  
**TIME:** TBD (it will be 1-hour long)  
**PLACE:** TBD (in person instruction is available to fully vaccinated GGMG members in addition to simultaneous online instruction through Zoom for all others)  
**COST:** GGMG members will receive a 10% discount on each kit. Free shipping is also available to members who order more than one kit.

REGISTER FOR EVENTS AT [GGMG.ORG/CALENDAR](https://www.ggmgsf.org/calendar)



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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

How to Celebrate Juneteenth with Your Kids

Juneteenth, also known as Jubilee Day and Freedom Day, is a holiday celebrating the end of slavery in the United States. It takes place on the anniversary date of June 19, 1865, when Gordon Granger of the Union Army proclaimed freedom from slavery in Texas. While the Emancipation Proclamation had officially outlawed slavery in all states in rebellion against the Union in September 1862, enforcement in Texas was inconsistent before the announcement by Granger. It is also worth noting that slavery was not made illegal in two Union border states, Delaware and Kentucky, until the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in December 1865.

Yearly celebrations began in Texas in 1866 and eventually spread from there to the rest of the country. Now the holiday is officially recognized by all but three states, and there is an ongoing effort to make Juneteenth a national holiday.

Celebrate Juneteenth with your little ones with these activities!

Read about Juneteenth Together

*Juneteenth for Mazie* by Floyd Cooper: Mazie gets ready for a day of celebration.

*Juneteenth Jamboree* by Carole Boston Weatherford: A little girl celebrates Juneteenth with her community.

*All Different Now: Juneteenth, the First Day of Freedom* by Angela Johnson: A historical look at the first day Juneteenth was celebrated

Draw and Create African Flags

If your little one loves art, celebrate Juneteenth by making a banner of African flags. This is a great way to learn about and

CAREERS AND ENTREPRENEURS

Are you passionate about supporting women in their careers? The Careers & Entrepreneurs Committee is looking for new volunteers, as well as a new committee co-chair. If you are interested in either position, please email [entrepreneurs@gmg.org](mailto:entrepreneurs@gmg.org) so we can share more details with you and answer any questions that you have. There are many ways to contribute, and we would love to have your help!!

honor other cultures, as well as explore different colors! Draw and color or paint flags, or cut and paste different colored materials together.



Have a Juneteenth Feast

A customary meal for Juneteenth includes red foods and drinks. This color symbolizes perseverance, strength, and resilience. Strawberries, apples, hibiscus tea, red velvet cake, sausages, pasta with meat sauce—these are just some of the many red foods you can choose from. Have your little one help with the cooking and talk about the importance of Juneteenth during your meal.

Visit San Francisco’s New Public Art Installation, Monumental Reckoning

San Francisco is currently planning a new public art installation to honor Black lives and the history of African Americans. Monumental Reckoning, by Dana King, honors the first 350 Africans who were stolen and sold into chattel slavery in 1619 with 350 sculptural figures. Installation in Golden Gate Park’s Music Concourse is anticipated in time for this year’s Juneteenth celebration, and the design is intended to allow visitors to “commune” with the figures. As King states, “The memory of African descendants deserves to be told truthfully and publicly.” Use this art experience as an opportunity to start deeper conversations with kids about racism and systems of oppression.

KIDS ACTIVITIES + DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

Celebrate Pride Crafting Event at Golden Gate Park

Come celebrate Pride Month and join us for some kid-friendly crafting activities. We’ll be making tie-dye shirts, rainbow crafts, and designing our own masks. Come out and meet some new friends and celebrate the diversity and vibrancy of San Francisco! We will provide all crafting supplies. Hosted by Kids Activities and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion committees.

**DATE:** Sunday, June 27  
**TIME:** 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Hellman Hollow in Golden Gate Park  
**COST:** \$5  
**RSVP:** [gmg.org](http://gmg.org) calendar

SOCIAL MEDIA

For a committee that primarily stays busy by promoting and sharing photos of in-person events, being on lockdown has not been easy! Nonetheless, the past year marked an increase in user engagement on all of GGMG’s social media platforms. We now have nearly 1,800 Instagram followers compared to 1,400 when we went into lockdown. We are followed by nearly 7,000 people on Facebook—an increase of about 1,000 since spring of 2020. Many thanks to all of you for your support!

In light of our growing work—and the need to be particularly creative during these strange times—we’d love to add more volunteers to our committee! If you’re interested in social media or public relations and want to get more involved in GGMG, please reach out to [socialmedia@gmg.org](mailto:socialmedia@gmg.org).

We’d like to hear what kind of content most appeals to you. Information on virtual events? Informative articles? A dose of humor? We want to make sure we’re catering to YOU, so send us a note and let us know.

Please like/follow us on all forms of social media ([@gmgssf](https://www.instagram.com/gmg_sf)) and re-post/share to your heart’s content. And if you attend a virtual GGMG event, post your pictures with the hashtag [#gmgssf](https://www.instagram.com/gmg_sf). You may just get re-posted/shared yourself!

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## To Hell and (Slowly) Back

By Sandy Woo

**Y**our son is 8 and ran out of the house?" the 911 dispatcher asked in disbelief. The second time the police arrived at our home within a month felt like an eternity, though it was only five minutes. "This is a recent picture of your son, right?" an officer I hadn't previously met asked. I nodded, heart in my mouth.

The tears would not come until some five hours later, after I called off the private search party of support people. After knowing he ran off to his favorite spots in the Presidio and was on his way home when the cops saw him. After he had been brought home in a patrol car. After multiple masked hugs.

This had to end. This unsustainable, harrowing nightmare of a relationship. As is the definition of an abyss, the free fall from the spiral of behavior changes was endless. At first, it was kind of funny. My friends giggle about the scolding I received from all the cartoon characters he drew on his white board after I inadvertently gave him rug "birn" by dragging him in a fit of Zoom rage.

In retrospect, my son's refusal of sweets was an opening salvo to the battle for his mind, a scary-ass, white-knuckled, derailed roller coaster my family has been riding this past year. My little love, M, was diagnosed with severe OCD in January, without previous warning except for the craziness of the months before evaluation.

Obsessive compulsive disorder isn't a punchline about hand washing or neatness like I once ignorantly thought. The obsessions (intrusive thoughts) are absurd—even to the sufferer—but the anxiety they cause is very real. And the compulsions are just that: you feel *compelled* to take an action to relieve anxiety. The disorder debilitates the affected as well as the whole family.

The compulsive part of M's disorder manifests as nonstop movement; he exercises to extreme exhaustion or injury. Somehow, the intrusive thought of "I am lazy" got lodged into his head. To alleviate this fear of rest, he does compulsions (he doesn't sit—not even on the toilet, restricts food, runs and cartwheels EVERYWHERE constantly, fights sleep, adds extra movement into everything). Initially, we thought it was bad behavior associated with remote learning fatigue and social isolation, so we dialed up discipline, which backfired spectacularly. His symptoms escalated with such breathtaking speed



that the mental illness consumed us.

Crisis intervention, panic attacks, life hating, house ransacking, yelling, crying (everyone)... became unacceptably common. His brain hijacked, M was often unrecognizable to us, so unlike the sweet child we had known for the last eight years. Though he externalized his OCD by naming it Wiley, he no doubt also internalized this hatred of his "monster." Sometimes M couldn't

differentiate himself from the beast and neither could we. I *hated* all of it. Doubting I could even *mother* anymore, I often wanted nothing to do with him. See the forest for the trees? F@\$!!.

In the depths of this madness, M refused comfort from me, purposely sabotaging affection. Bedtime was fraught, as it equates with rest, fear, *and* main exposure wrapped together. During moments of clarity, he professed that "he loved [me]

more," that he'd do *anything* for me if it weren't for his OCD, that he hated himself because of how he treats me. I was never strong enough for such heartache.

It is a Herculean feat, this fighting for M's life, yet he is doing it, in fits and starts. He

completed one intensive outpatient program to treat OCD. The treatment is exposure response and prevention therapy (ERP). Imagine summoning the willpower to expose yourself to something you irrationally fear, something intended to spike your anxiety. Then sitting with the overpowering feeling, whereas before, you might do 100 jumping jacks (compulsion) to temporarily "relieve" it. Problem is, the more you scratch this "itch", the itchier it gets, and so the vicious cycle repeats. He must *choose* to resist doing compulsions and sit with anxiety—a tall ask even for adults. Every time M resists, he forges new neural pathways, healthy coping ones; every time he compulses, he reinforces maladaptive ones. Fortunately, neuroplasticity is real, and M is clawing his way back from hell.

We have special playtime these days, M and I. We sit—or rather, I sit, and he squats next to me. He requests that I draw with him, and with every drawing, we mend the trauma. Both he and we aren't completely out of the woods yet, and maybe we won't ever entirely be. It's just life, and we live in moments that take our breath away.

*Sandy is grateful for therapy, her extended village, FMLA, neuroplasticity, and chocolate. Lots of it.*

**"Imagine summoning the willpower to expose yourself to something you irrationally fear, something intended to spike your anxiety."**





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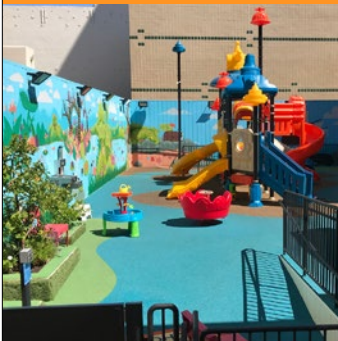


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