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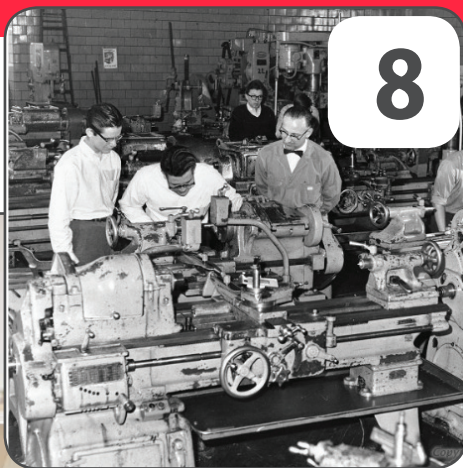
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8

what's inside

your community parenting resource for 30 years!

14



27

in this issue

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Createlt
Making a spring rain cloud in a jar | 16 TeensToday
Why teens turn from parents to peers |
| 4 Editor'sNote
Heartbreak to Hope update | 20 SteamForward
Life lessons from a robot |
| 8 CoverStory
Career and technical training | 25 What'sNew
Local grad founds StudyGoat |
| 14 SpecialNeeds
Labeled as disabled | 29 Around & About
Calendar of activities and events |

featured topics

- 5** Guide to summer tutoring
- 6** Make the most of family camping
- 18** Raising a happy only child
- 26** Farm activities for the whole family
- 27** Letting go of mommy guilt

special section



Annual Business Profiles

22 - 24



Family Camping

6 - 7

correction

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From Heartbreak to Hope: An update on Sarah

The opioid epidemic is still making headlines across our nation and many families are still suffering and grieving the loss of a son or daughter. Last August we introduced you to Sarah Womack in a three part series: *From Heartbreak to Hope* on her addiction and recovery – and her journey as a mom. As Mother's Day approaches I want to take this opportunity to update you on Sarah and her girls.

Lucy, the child Sarah was carrying during our series, was born on July 14 at West Penn Hospital. She went to the NICU immediately for meconium aspiration and underdeveloped lungs for a three-week stay. She is now a happy and healthy eight-month-old baby girl who obviously adores her big sister Lola in the many photos Sarah posts of her girls and her journey on Facebook.

Lola, Sarah's first child who was taken into the court system during her addiction struggles, began her transition home with overnights in late August. On January 10, 2018, PA Common Pleas Court Judge Paul Cozza granted full physical custody back to Sarah. It was a long and rough ride for the formerly addicted mom but she faithfully completed all of the requirements to regain custody of her first-born daughter.

"Lola takes her big sister role very seriously. She is a great protector and just taught Lucy how to clap! She's very proud of that and is now working on teaching her to blow kisses," says Sarah. "When I sit back and look at my girls. MY GIRLS. I couldn't imagine my life any other way."

Throughout Sarah's journey she developed a strong desire to help other women whose lives were being torn apart by addictions. She says, "My lived experience is something you can't learn in class, through books or teacher's. You have to go through it. I want my story to help other women."



Sarah & Vinnie with
Lola & Lucy as they
celebrated Christmas

With this goal in mind, Sarah has pursued becoming a certified Recovery Specialist. She says "Pro-A and Allegheny County Drug and Alcohol accepted me into their training program and I started classes - my board exam is coming up April 26. And if I can help just one mom get through a similar situation and come out on the other side then my journey will have even greater purpose."

"I thank God for All he's blessed me with and I remain so grateful each and every day that I can be the mom my girls need and deserve. I need them. They need me. They need each other. We had our first Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter together under one roof and just celebrated Lola's fifth birthday at my house. It was the first time since her first birthday that she was living with me on her birthday. Through this process I've learned that anything is possible with the power of a mother's love."

Thank you Sarah for sharing the story of your addiction and recovery journey with our readers. May your future be full of blessings and love. And, Happy Mother's Day to you all! ■

Pat



Lola & Lucy

Pittsburgh Parent

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A guide to summer tutoring

By Jill L. Ferguson

Your child may be counting down the days until summer vacation, but is taking a break from academics completely exactly what he or she needs? Mark J. Griffin, Ph.D. writes on Understood.org, "The long vacation doesn't simply hit the 'pause' button on reading, math and writing skills. It can actually erode these skills. When it comes to certain kinds of knowledge, kids really do have to 'use it or lose it.' This is especially true for kids with learning and attention issues. Summer learning loss can set kids with learning and attention issues back as much as two to three months." Griffin is the Founding Headmaster of Eagle Hill School, a boarding school for children with special learning disabilities in Greenwich, Connecticut.

Griffin says, "A good tutor may be the single best way to maintain and perhaps increase your child's skills over the summer." The tutor can work weekly or every other week with your child on a particular subject area, with assigning readings and work to be done in between face-to-face sessions.

Tutoring can also take place more informally. For example, you and your children could read the same books over the summer and discuss each book on given deadlines. Or you could work on math ratios by cooking or baking together. Or your child could practice writing by keeping a journal to be shared with you and corrected for spelling and grammar by you or you could encourage your child to do creative writing that can be corrected for the same things. Enrolling your child in a volunteer opportunity, such as reading books to people in a senior living facility or working in a library or a lab may help prevent summer brain drain.

How to find a tutor

But if finding a regularly scheduled tutor is more ideal for your child's learning, here are some places you can find tutors:

- Some school districts work with local organizations to pair students up with volunteer tutors. You may also want to ask your child's classroom aide about tutoring. These aides often charge less for tutoring than certified teachers do. Another upside to classroom aides is that they're familiar with the curriculum and with the teachers' expectations. And of course some teachers offering tutoring services during the summer so check with your child's teacher if that seems like a good fit.
- Also, if your child has a specific learning issue, a nonprofit might be able to help with tutoring. For example, Scottish Rite Masons have Children's Dyslexia Centers in Pittsburgh and New Castle that offer accredited tutoring services. The centers provide two years of free one-on-one, multisensory structured language instruction for students who have been formally diagnosed with dyslexia.
- Another place you could find a tutor is by contacting the college or university nearest you and ask if students who are education majors (or done with their bachelors degree and getting teaching credentials) are looking for tutoring opportunities.
- Or, there are plenty of in-person tutoring centers sprinkled throughout the Pittsburgh area that offer formal tutoring relationships in almost every subject.
- And lastly, online tutoring is available for as little as \$5 through a number of for-profit businesses. Do a Google search and then cross reference with online reviews on Yelp and other third party-sites to ensure quality and effectiveness.

Reinforcement of learning is most effective when it is done regularly and consistently, for even a few minutes per day. And with the right framework, tutoring can be not just work but also infused with fun. ■

Jill L. Ferguson is a writer, artist and entrepreneur originally from Pittsburgh.



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How to make the most of your family camping getaway

By Kimberly Blaker

Camping is the ultimate in outdoor family fun and is loaded with benefits for parents and kids alike. It provides unlimited opportunities to experience the great outdoors and for kids to learn about nature, from plants and animals to the weather and skies. It offers lessons in history through visits to historical landmarks and different regions. It gives parents a break from daily responsibilities and time to relax and provides adventure for kids. Moreover, it's an affordable way for families to vacation.

What's the best way to camp?

Your family can choose from a wide variety of camping options. If you love the experience of roughin' it, pitch a tent and haul the bare necessities. Just don't forget the padding or blow up mattresses to insulate against the cold ground.

If your family likes the sound of roughing it, but needs some of the comforts of home, a pop-up camper is the best of both worlds. The sides and pullout sections of pop-up campers are made of canvas and are completely surrounded with screens to give the feeling of sleeping in the fresh outdoors.

Some families prefer to do it in style. Travel trailers and motor homes offer a luxurious nighttime retreat after a day of outdoor fun including toilets, showers, a kitchen and bedrooms for complete privacy.

Does your family like the sound of a cozy cabin in the woods? If so, look for a campground that has cabin rentals. Cabins come in a variety of sizes with a variety of amenities ranging from basic single room shelters containing only beds to two or three room units furnished with kitchenettes and furniture.

Experienced campers with older children might try a hike-in shelter for a true wilderness experience. Check with state and national parks for shelters that are sometimes set up along extended trails. After a day of hiking, roll out your sleeping bags under one of these small shelters for a dry night's sleep.

Camping costs

The costs of travel make family vacations a rare treat. However, the affordability of camping, allows for frequent family getaways. Overnight fees vary widely from a free night's stay

“the affordability of camping, allows for frequent family getaways.”

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at some state park's rustic sites (no showers, toilets, electricity or water) to \$50 or more a night at some of the top KOA and Jellystone Camp Park-Resorts. These top of the line campgrounds are loaded with amenities from built-in swimming pools to live entertainment.

State park campgrounds vary from state to state. However, these are often the best deal for families interested in experiencing all that nature has to offer. Many state parks have modern facilities including flush toilets, showers, grassy or gravel sites, playgrounds, park stores for firewood and ice and more. Fees for overnight accommodations in state parks typically range from \$15 to \$35. Furthermore, state parks frequently offer miles of wooded hiking or biking trails, natural wonders, historical sites and much more that may not be found at private camp resorts.

Camping keeps other vacation expenses to a minimum as well including meal and entertainment costs. When camping,

many families prefer cooking over the campfire rather than eating out. Furthermore, most outdoor camping activities are free or available at minimal cost.

Fun camping activities

Whatever your family's interests, there are plenty of things to see and do when you camp. Even if you have to beg your kids to do some of these activities at home, you'll discover camping brings about a renewed interest and appreciation for these simple activities.

On your camping trip go hiking or mountain biking, participate in nature programs, fish or swim, visit nature centers and historical sites, have marshmallow roasts, collect rocks, leaves or insects, go canoeing, row boating or horse back riding, climb mountains or dunes, fly a kite, rollerblade on paved trails, star gaze, view wild life, read or play cards and games and find lots of other fun, unique adventures found at many campgrounds.

What to take

Be prepared before you head off on your outing. These are some of the basics you'll want to pack:

- A cooking source such as a one or two-burner stove
- Paper plates and styrofoam bowls
- Paper towels, food storage bags and tinfoil
- Plastic cups (labeled to save on washing)
- Silverware
- An aluminum pot and skillet
- Cooking utensils and can opener
- Coffee pot
- Tablecloth
- Ice chest, food and drinks
- Drinking water and large water container
- Dish soap and dishcloths
- Insect repellent and sunscreen
- Folding chairs
- Backpack
- Radio, flashlight and batteries
- Lantern and matches
- Firewood (unless available near your campground)
- Knife and hatchet
- Rope and twine
- First-aid kit
- Sleeping bags, blankets and pillows
- Air mattress or padding
- Personal hygiene items and toilet paper
- Towels and washcloths
- Bikes, rollerblades, balls, fishing and other sports equipment
- Camera and binoculars
- Clothing for all types of weather, rain gear and walking shoes or hiking boots

What not to take

Don't get carried away with packing, or before long, camping will become a chore rather than a treat. After making your list go through and weed out items you don't really need.

Portable televisions detract from outdoor fun, so leave yours at home.

Think it through before taking your family pet. First, make sure your campground allows pets. If so, find out the campground's rules. Most don't allow pets to be left alone. This can hinder many of the things you might want to see and do, including hitting the beaches where dogs often aren't allowed.

Resources to find the perfect campground for your family trip

- Contact the travel or visitor's bureau in the state you plan to visit.
- If you're a AAA member, pick up one of their regional Camp Books at your local branch office.
- Visit the website for Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp-Resorts at campjellystone.com or call (800) 558-2954.
- Call for your KOA Directory at (406)248-7444 or go to koa.com to make your online reservation.
- Visit usparks.about.com/blstparklistings.htm for the contact information on state park services in all 50 states.
- Visit the National Park Service at nps.gov/findapark/index.htm
- For a comprehensive directory of private, state, and national campgrounds, pick up Woodall's North American Campground Directory found in most camping supply stores, or order online at woodalls.com. ■

Kimberly Blaker is the author of a kid's STEM book, *Horoscopes: Reality or Trickery?*

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Easy camp foods

Unless cooking is your thing, keep meals simple while you camp. This cuts back on packing and keeps preparation and clean up to a minimum. Easy foods for camping include: burgers, hot dogs, chicken, steak, sandwiches, eggs, bacon, sausage, crock pot meals, canned spaghetti or ravioli, sweet corn, potatoes, fresh fruit, vegetables and dip, bagels, English muffins, cereal, fruit juice and hot cocoa.

CAREER & TECHNICAL TRAINING: A Bright New Future

By Ann K. Howley



South Vocational Machine shop class 1965.

In a scene from the 1985 movie, *The Breakfast Club*, a brainy kid named Brian confesses to his fellow teens in detention that he felt humiliated when he failed shop because the lamp he made didn't work. When he complains that he only signed up for shop class because he figured it would be an easy A, he offends the rebel of the group, John, who also takes shop.

"Did you know without trigonometry there'd be no engineering?" Brian asks, getting defensive.

"Without lamps, there'd be no light," smart-aleck John retorts.

More than thirty years later, this scene still highlights a basic fact of society. We will always need skilled workers who can fix cars, install air conditioners, prepare food... and make lamps.

The vocations versus college debate

For a significant portion of the 20th century, when coal, steel and blue collar jobs were plentiful in the Pittsburgh region, the conventional wisdom was to teach young people specific skills in industries that would employ them for their entire working lives. Fifty years ago, students at the now defunct South Vocational-Technical High School on the South Side were learning how to weld, repair shoes, make candy and build airplanes.

Eventually, technology and globalization changed everything, and the Pittsburgh story is well known. Steel collapsed, mines closed, and the closer we got to the 21st century, good jobs that required only a high school education grew scarce. As Pittsburgh moved away from its industrial past and reinvented itself as a hub of technology and innovation, studies showed that college graduates earned significantly more money throughout their lifetime than those with only a high school education. In the last two decades, parents, educators and politicians began to believe that sending kids to college was the best way to prepare students for life after high school.

"Vocational education has always been in schools, but there was a period of time when everyone believed that college was the way to be successful, so college prep curriculums were promoted while vocations were not," explains Angela Mike, Director of Career & Technical Education (CTE) for Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS).

As college tuition fees and student debt skyrocketed, parents and students were forced to consider whether or not a college education was worth the cost. Was a four year degree worth taking on as much as a six-figure debt?

It's a tough question, but a looming crisis raises another one. As the baby boomer labor force retires, cities across the country are asking this: will there be enough skilled workers to replace them?

In Pittsburgh, the scary answer is no.

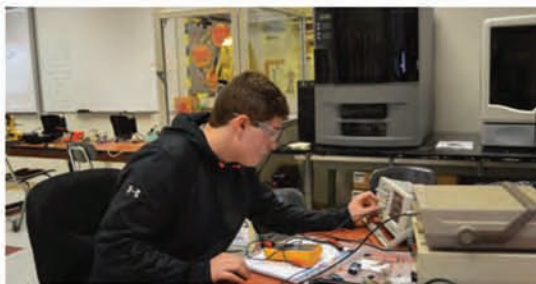
In 2016, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development released a report that estimated our region is losing 8,000 workers per year. If this projection holds true, the Pittsburgh region will face a shortage of 80,000 workers by 2025.

continued on page 10

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Is CTE the answer?

"Jobs don't look like they did ten years ago," Angela Mike says. "Due to the advancement in technology and digital literacy in the 21st century, skills such as leadership management, team-building and communication are needed to be prepared to compete in the global economy."

It used to be that if you had a fender bender and went to an auto repair shop, the mechanic simply needed the tools and skill to bang out the dent and paint over it. Now automotive repair classes utilize Hunter Frame Alignment, a machine that scans the entire vehicle and prints out a detailed report of the damage, which students must learn to read and interpret.

"Technology is infused in all career fields and here at PPS-CTE, we make sure technology is incorporated into their learning," she says.

Angela has a difficult job. She knows the research and statistics and understands how important CTE is to the future health of our region. Her job is to make sure PPS students, parents and the community at large are aware that CTE is a great opportunity to fast track a career and leave high school with stackable industry certifications, up to twelve college credits and, importantly, job opportunities.

"This is very different from what some people think," she says.

CTE is not a watered down high school education. The CTE curriculums infuse Pennsylvania Common Core Standards in math, science and English, along with industry standards.

"The courses' technical manuals are extremely rigorous and help build students critical thinking skills," she says.

Angela knows from experience how CTE's hands-on learning approach can benefit students.

"I went to Westinghouse High School," she says. "I was an okay student but school didn't excite me."

That changed when she signed up for the cosmetology program, which incorporated academics in a way that she understood. When she was learning to cut hair and had to use 90 and 180 degree angles, the teacher made sure students understood that this was geometry. Later, when she studied angles in geometry class, it made more sense to her.

"I couldn't believe this kind of learning existed. It fit my learning style. It was relevant, practical, hands-on, project-based learning," she says. "Westinghouse's CTE program made my high school experience extremely rewarding."

Six schools in the PPS district offer 15 different CTE programs, with a total of 21, from finance to carpentry to emergency response technology. Each career track is designed to help prepare students for jobs that are in demand by employers in this area. The most popular CTE courses, like health careers, culinary arts, business, and information technology, reflect the fastest growing fields in our region, according to the Allegheny Conference report.

Starting in the tenth grade, CTE students devote three class periods every day to their career track through their senior year. Students have a lot of flexibility as to how and where they take CTE courses. If their selected field of study is available at their home high school, they can stay in their own building. Students can also complete their regular curriculum in their school and travel in a school-provided bus to another campus to attend their CTE courses. Another option is to transfer to the school where their program is housed.

Although there is a voluntary ten-day window to drop courses, it rarely happens in the CTE program because these kids are interested and committed to their career track.

In 2016, the graduation rate for seniors at the Pittsburgh Public Schools was 79.8 percent.

"For CTE students, it was 100 percent," says Angela.

* Photo's courtesy of Pittsburgh Public Schools CTE



Health Careers Technology class *



Emergency Response Technology class *



The Pittsburgh region's workforce will be entirely transformed over the next decade due to retirements, job growth and occupational transitions that will require specific skills training. **Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs provide today's students with the tools they need for success in tomorrow's economy.**

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CCAC is stepping up

For more than 50 years, Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC) has played an important role in providing courses and programs that support the needs of the community, businesses and workforce. This puts the college in a unique position to be a leader in addressing the challenges of the changing economy.

In September 2017, Governor Tom Wolf, Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, CCAC Board Chair Frederick Thieman, and CCAC President Quintin Bullock announced the launch of a new collaborative workforce initiative, which includes a partnership to fund construction of a Workforce Training Center at the college's Allegheny Campus on Pittsburgh's North Side. With assistance from the state through financing from the Pennsylvania Department of Education that will cover one-half of the annual capital cost of a 20-year, \$20 million bond with the balance funded locally, the new facility will be a state-of-the-art, LEED-certified space with smart classrooms, labs and multi-use areas designed to provide innovative and cross-disciplinary approaches to learning.

Dr. Bullock explains to me the importance that this new Workforce Training Center will have for our region.



CCAC's 3-D printer is put to the test in the college's Innovation Lab. **



Program Instructor Paul Blackford and students with one of the program's robots. **

"Four year universities are developing solid entrepreneurs, engineers, IT professionals and researchers," he says. "But there is also a need for workers and technicians to support those roles. Two thirds of future jobs will require some level of postsecondary education and/or industry-recognized certification."

The new Center will provide courses of study for our region's four highest-demand fields: healthcare, finance, information technology and advanced manufacturing. In addition to providing training for traditional trades like plumbing, HVAC, welding and carpentry, the new Center will also expand its advanced manufacturing offerings to include plastics technology, process technology, additive manufacturing, robotics and autonomous vehicle technology.

** Photo's courtesy of CCAC

continued on page 12

Ten years ago, CCAC opened a new campus in the West Hills to provide workforce training in fields and trades, like welding, HVAC, and plumbing, which are also areas of high demand. Although the programs have been highly successful, many commuters found it difficult to get to the Oakdale location without a vehicle.

Since the Allegheny Campus is on the T and bus lines, it will be easier for students to get to the new Workforce Training Center.

"We can't do it alone," Dr. Bullock says. "All educational institutions must work together to strategize, plan, design programs and make necessary changes that will support the workforce."

CCAC is working with secondary schools to introduce and advise future students with types of career courses they can take in high school to be able to complete their education and get a job in a timely manner.

For example, Dr. Bullock points out that while young people love their smart phones and electronic gadgets, they may not know that there are good-paying IT jobs available.

"Students need to be aware of the fields they can work in," he says.



CCAC students hone their skills in CCAC's Mechatronics Technology Program training lab. **

** Photo's courtesy of CCAC

IS COLLEGE REALLY FOR EVERYONE?

CCAC engaged Campos, a research strategy firm, to study trends in workforce development and evaluate the construction of a new workforce training facility. Part of their analysis involved reaching out to Pittsburgh-area business, education and labor leaders to gain their input. This is what some of these leaders had to say:

"I had a father who worked in the mill every day. I was told, 'You want to do more than this, you need to get a college education so you can get a desk job versus going to the factory... the factory, manufacturing is different now because it requires more of a skill set. It's not just hard, physical labor. You have to apply math, reading, computer skills, where historically you didn't. The perception of the workforce is wrong. Manufacturing today is different than it was when my father did this.'" Mary Beth Moore, Vice President, Human Resources, ATI

"There are a lot of good jobs you can have without a four-year degree. That's the biggest stigma people need to get over." Leroy Ball, President and CEO, Koppers

"Right now... between 25-30 percent of our apprentices have college degrees of some sort or have graduated from trade school. They're coming into our program with \$80,000, \$100,000 in debt and they're making more money now as an apprentice than they did. We're getting feedback... parents are upset, since they're funding a lot of these young adults at schools and they were misdirected... There are people that don't know what we have to offer and don't know what a great opportunity it is to be a carpenter." Dave Plutt, Instructor, KML Council of Carpenters

"Saying to some kid, 'we're going to teach you how to do robotics,' is a lot sexier than 'we're going to send you into the steel mill.' I think some of it is semantics, because the steel mill is going to be full of robots too and full of high tech equipment. And so part of it is just perceptions about what kind of work they're going to be doing." Thomas Conway, International Vice President, United Steel Workers

The new future for our kids

"Where on campus will the new Workforce Training Center be built?" I ask Dr. Bullock, wondering how they are going to squeeze in a 70,000 to 90,000 square foot building on a campus that already feels fully developed.

"On the Hill," Dr. Bullock tells me.

The Hill, I discover, is the steep green space from the street level upward, located next to the Foerster Student Service Center. Before I leave campus, I drive down Ridge Road to take a peek at the space. At the stoplight at Brighton Road, I look right and imagine the gleaming new building with shiny windows that will someday be sitting on the Hill. I feel a tinge of excitement about the possibilities that will soon open up to our young people.

I also feel a sense of pride in the strength and ingenuity of Pittsburgh. No matter what the future holds, whether we need to make lamps or build robots, I know that we are going to show the world that we can reinvent ourselves again. ■

Author, teacher and popular speaker, Ann K. Howley, is a regular contributor to Pittsburgh Parent. Contact her at akhowley@gmail.com.



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Labeled as **DISABLED**?

Tia is a beautiful person inside and out. She's highly educated with a great career in finance and her son just graduated from high school. Tia lives a full and vibrant life that she loves. But when most people meet Tia for the first time, they see that Tia can't walk or function like they can.

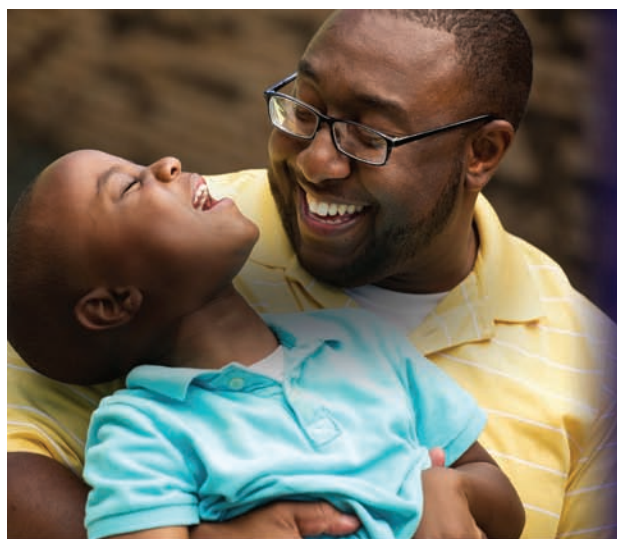
Tia was born with a disability. So, her inabilities have become her identity. But why is that? Why do people become their disabilities?

Everyone faces barriers in their life at some point, so really, in our own individual, unconventional ways, we are all disabled. Whether our inhibitions are physical, mental or maybe even social, each one of us encounters some sort of daily difficulty. Why then, are those who have had to face a visibly debilitating condition all or most of their lives treated differently from everyone else?

The problem lies in how people think about disability. Disability is perceived rather narrowly. For instance, when someone is missing a limb, paralyzed, uses a wheelchair or unable to see or hear, they are considered disabled. So, a "DISABILITY" is any condition that is obvious and limits people from doing things that so-called "NORMAL" people can do.

But, the fact is we're all disabled in one way or another. To help clarify this notion, let's break down the word disabled. It means "not able."

Well, aren't we all not able in some way? Is everyone able to do everything? No, many people are not able to do a lot of things. Some are not able to dunk a basketball. Others can't climb mountains. And, some people have truly terrible



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voices so they are not able to sing.

Does that make them disabled? Of course not, because these individuals are able to function perfectly well in most aspects of life.

Many people who are labeled as disabled can also lead predominantly normal lives. They work, marry, have children, play sports, the list goes on. If you really think about it, there are far more things that most people with disabilities can do than not do.

So, why should what they are not able to do define how others view them when they don't define themselves that way? People should not be defined based on their inability to walk, see or hear...anymore than being judged for their inability to play basketball, climb mountains or sing.

Realistically, it's not surprising for people to develop certain perceptions about people with disabilities. We naturally make judgments based on information that is most readily available.

And, in most cases, a person's disabilities are what stand out whereas, their inner qualities, such as incisive intelligence, brilliant thinking, a great sense of humor or immense compassion, are often less obvious and therefore hidden.

So, next time you meet persons with disabilities, try two things with them. First, rather than paying attention to their disabilities, find out what their abilities are and learn how they define themselves. Second, don't treat them disabled or "not able". Instead, just treat them like a normal person.

You know why? Because just as everyone is disabled to some extent, we're all normal in our own unique way.

And, more importantly, no one wants to be viewed and treated differently based on their disability, that is, one small aspect of who they are (however noticeable and intrusive the disability may be).

We all have beautiful gifts and abilities. So, let's open our minds and our hearts to discover the imperfections that make each one of us uniquely perfect! ■

Mona Chabra is a local freelance writer.



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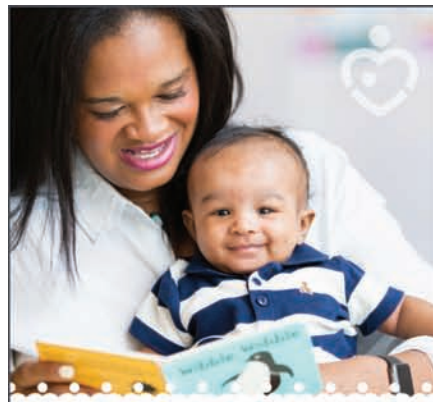
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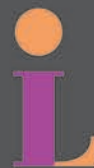
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Why teens Turn from parents to peers

You've made it through toddler temper tantrums and those "end of the world" school-age dilemmas. Then why are you so worried about tackling the teenage years? Well, the teen years are a period of intense growth, not only physically but emotionally and intellectually. So, it's understandable that it's a time of confusion and chaos for everyone involved.

One major change during adolescence is your teen's decreased focus on mom and dad and increased focus on friends. Peer relationships are very important to young people because:

- Friendships provide teens with opportunities to develop conflict resolution skills. Teens can learn how to end a fight and still remain friends.
- Friends provide fun and excitement through companionship and recreation.
- Friends also give advice to one another. Teens talk through lots of issues and problems with their friends.
- Loyalty is a valued trait in friendship. Teens are looking for loyal allies that can help them out at school or in their own neighborhood.
- Friendships provide stability during

times of stress or transition. It is helpful to teens to have a friend who is going through the same situations and can ease the anxieties.

When we understand the developmental importance of becoming a member of a peer group, we can begin to understand why teens place such importance on fitting in and making friends. It also explains why at times teens even become rebels without a cause just to fit in.

For many parents, the truth is hard to admit. Starting to let go is difficult. But teens' reliance on their friends is actually good for their development and sense of belonging.

A recent study found that this is especially true following a stressful event, like failing a test. Researchers found that, after something bad happens, they cope better emotionally when they're with peers rather than with adults. They also found that teens who were communicating with friends after a stressful event reported lower levels of sadness, jealousy and worry.

What happens when kids don't have friends? Teens without friends tend to be more lonely and unhappy. They tend to have lower levels of academic achieve-



ment and lower self esteem. As they get older, they are more apt to drop out of school and to get involved in delinquent activities.

Friendships change as kids move into their teen years. Teens spend more time with their peers. They are also more mobile so more time is spent with peers without parental supervision.

During the teen years, there will be increased contact with opposite-sex peers as well. In the early teen years, often small groups of friends or cliques are formed which help to boost their confidence and give them a sense of identity.

Another feature of the teen years is the emergence of crowds. These are large

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groups of teens who gather together because they have similar characteristics.

Crowds help teens sort peers into groups of people they would like to spend time with and those they wouldn't. Through crowds and cliques, teens show other people who they are.

As parents, it is important to encourage friendships among teens. However, it is vital to know who your teen's friends are and to communicate openly about changes in peer relationships and friendships with your teens.


It's important to remember that although adolescence includes many challenges, it's an incredible and unique time in which the foundation is being laid for the years to come. The better we can understand the unique challenges and opportunities of adolescence, the better we can support our teens.

Despite some adults' negative perceptions about teens, they are often energetic, thoughtful and idealistic, with a deep interest in what's fair and right. So, although it can be a period of conflict between parent and child, the teen years are also a time to help kids grow into the distinct individuals they will become. ■

Mona Chabra is a local freelance writer from Sewickley.



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No siblings, No problem! Raising a happy only child

By Malia Jacobson

Parenting an only child comes with plenty of perks. Just ask Hope Austin, she has plenty of time and energy to play with her three-year-old daughter Grace, she isn't drowning in childcare expenses and she knows Grace will have more money for college.

But that doesn't mean raising a singleton is easy. "With the cost of childcare and the fact that I'm about to go back to school, I just don't know if I can give her a sibling. But I wonder if I'm doing the right thing."

Increasingly, researchers say that she is. Like Austin, many of today's parents are opting for just one child, and new research is challenging long-held assumptions that siblings are a must for a happy childhood. In fact, some researchers and authors are making a convincing case that only children may have an edge over kids with siblings in some areas—academics, for example.

In her 2011 book *The Case For the Only Child*, social psychologist and author Susan Newman, Ph.D. writes that many women are having children later in life and more and more families are concerned about the cost of raising children. With these demographic and economic trends dovetailing with research showing that only children aren't disadvantaged at all, it's not hard to understand why single-child families are growing at a faster rate than families with more than one child, she says.

Downsizing the family

The iconic image of two parents surrounded by two or three rosy-cheeked children is dated – and quickly disappearing, says Newman. Until 1967, over two-thirds of Americans preferred a family of three or more children, but in a 2007 Gallup poll, half of Americans said the ideal family contains one, two or no children.

According to government reports, America's birth rate declined from its 1957 peak of 3.7 children per woman to 1.9 children per woman in 1980. Today, the number of children per family hovers at 1.88 and over 20 percent of women have only one child.

A singular advantage?

A century after iconic psychologist G. Stanley Hall famously proclaimed that being an only child is "a disease in itself," researchers are discovering the opposite effect: hundreds of studies show that only children are socially capable and academically adept.

One researcher making a strong case for only children is Douglas Downey of Ohio State University. His recent study of 13,500 kids found that any difference in social competence between only children and those with siblings disappears by adolescence: by grade seven, only children were just as popular as their peers with siblings.

In another study, Downey found that only children have an academic edge over their peers with siblings. He collected data from 24,599 eighth-graders and found having more siblings lowers academic success. As family size increases, each child receives less parental attention and fewer educational resources.

And adult only children fare just fine, according to California State University assistant professor at Heidi Riggio. She found that adult singletons make friends just as easily and display similar social traits as adults who grew up with siblings.

According to Jeffrey Kluger, *TIME* magazine contributor and author of *The Sibling Effect: What the Bonds Among Brothers and Sisters Reveal About Us*, only children have some key advantages over children with siblings. "Only children tend to wind up with

better vocabulary and a more sophisticated sense of humor, simply because they grow up in a house outnumbered by parents," he says.

Skill-building for singletons

Though only children enjoy some advantages, Downey's research shows that young only children lag slightly in some areas of social development, though the gap disappears later on. Only children have fewer opportunities to key social skills like negotiation and sharing, simply because they aren't living with other children.



Raising successful singletons

- **Encourage healthy conflict resolution:** Don't shy away from family conflicts. Instead, use them as a springboard for lessons in negotiation, emotional understanding, and self-control. Only children can benefit from observing parents as they resolve minor conflicts.
- **Promote extended-family relationships:** Only children can gain a deeper sense of identity and gain valuable social skills through interactions with extended family members of all ages.
- **Play as a family:** Parent-guided interactions that occur during family play allows only children to develop empathy, social understanding, and behavioral regulation.

Source: Dr. Kyle Good, Ph.D., M.Ed.



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According to Seattle area child and adolescent therapist Dr. Kyle Good, Ph.D., M.Ed., conflict is the key to social learning for only children. "Parents often shy away from conflict and want to avoid it," says Good. "But conflict can be a valuable teaching tool." But parents can create learning opportunities by allowing only children to observe parents resolving minor conflicts.

Singletons can gain some of the skills children learn from having siblings—including negotiation and joint problem-solving—by developing close relationships with friends and cousins. Childcare can also serve to boost socialization; "Only children can get a great deal of socialization through daycare, because they'll be interacting closely with the same children for many hours a day," says Kluger.

Regardless of family size, family play is highly beneficial, says Good. The parent-guided interactions that take place during family play help children develop behavioral regulation and emotional understanding.

One and only

When deciding how many children to have, today's parents have a lot to ponder, says Newman. "No one can decide what the right family size is for you except you and your partner," she says. "The biggest influence on how your kids turn out is your parenting, not how many kids you have."

It's a message Austin appreciates. She grew up with two brothers and remembers feeling left out and excluded at times. Though she never wanted to be an only child, she can see herself raising one. Grace is happy and growing up well, she says: "That's what matters." ■

Malia Jacobson is a nationally published health and parenting journalist and mom of three.

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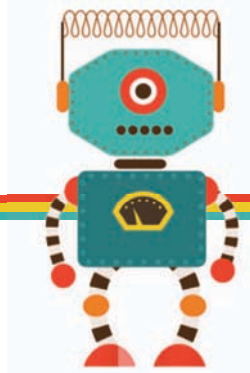
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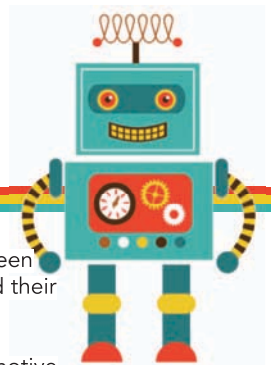


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Learning life lessons from a robot



The Brashear Bulls Robotics team was an unlikely venture from the start. Benny Luong and Lam Huynh, both seniors at Brashear High School, had been thinking about forming a robotics team since tenth grade, but when they asked their math teacher, Jeff Laurenson, to be one of the mentors, he was uncertain. "I had no mechanical aptitude or knowledge about robotics," he admits.

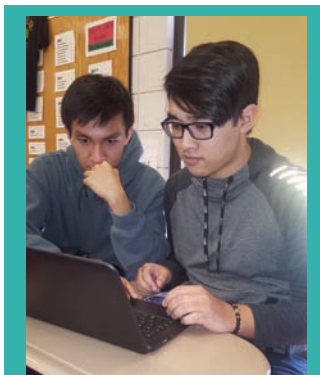
Undeterred, the boys recruited a few talented friends who were enrolled in automotive and computer programs at Brashear. When another math teacher agreed to be a mentor, everything was in place. They called their team Brashear Bulls Robotics and signed up for the annual FIRST Robotics Greater Pittsburgh Regional Competition, to be held at California University of Pennsylvania (Cal U) in March.

There was only one problem. Nobody knew how to build a robot.

Power up

Every spring, Cal U becomes a mecca for student robotics teams, who come from all over western and central Pennsylvania to compete. FIRST kicks off the competition in January by releasing a video that announces the theme and describes the objectives and tasks that robots will need to accomplish.

"We were thinking this competition was going to be very difficult," Benny says. "But when we saw the video, it wasn't as bad as we thought it would be."



Benny & Lam

Maybe?

This year's theme is called Power Up. In the video, opposing teams are "stuck" in an arcade game (which reminds me of Donkey Kong). In each match, a three-team alliance competes against another alliance to make their robots scurry back and forth and lift yellow cubes onto a scale and a tall platform to score the most points.

Once the theme was announced, the teams had six weeks to plan, design and build their robots.

The due date disaster

For the Brashear team, everything was going smoothly until February 20, 2018. This was the date the robot had to be finished and transported to the National Robotics Engineering Center in Lawrenceville, where they would have a brief opportunity to test it before it's bagged and shipped to Cal U.

Mr. Laurenson had already told me about the Due Date Disaster, but Benny and Lam must have forgotten, because when I mention it, they simultaneously jump, grimace and laugh.

I still struggle to picture exactly what happened, but according to the boys' vigorous and slightly hilarious description, something was miscalculated, something pulled and something snapped.

"The whole thing exploded!" claims Benny.

"Wood went flying everywhere!" says Lam.

Mr. Laurenson had explained it like this. "They basically destroyed their own robot on the day it was supposed to be done."

"For a few minutes, we thought it was over," Benny recalls.

I could imagine their panic. After working so hard, it must have been devastating to face a broken robot with only a few hours to fix it, but the team refused to give up. They figured out the problem, repaired or replaced the snapped chain and broken supports, and rushed it over to Lawrenceville.

As they were testing it, Christian, their

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Mr Laurenson with team

best operator, was at the controls when they ran into another glitch. The robot lost the radio signal and stopped working. With time running out, the team re-stripped and re-crimped all the wiring to get it working again.

By the time they left the testing grounds, the Brashear Bulls Robotics team had also been tested.

Mr. Laurenson acknowledges the team "learned a cool lesson about having grit and perseverance."

Life lessons

Since the due date, the boys haven't seen their robot, but they believe it's ready to shuttle and dump cubes at the competition in three weeks. Between now and then, the boys are evaluating troubleshooting options in case they run into more problems at the competition.



Brashear Bulls Robotics Team at Cal U in March

Photo Credit: twitter.com/Brashear7274

Team captain, Benny, hopes they win at least one match.

No matter what happens, both Lam and Benny agree that their robot-building experience has exceeded their expectations.

"I'm proud of what everyone has done and accomplished together," Lam says.

Benny is introspective. "It taught us how to solve problems. It's one of those life lessons that we will bring with us to college and the future."

Thanks to a robot, the Brashear Bulls Robotics team learned that sometimes the most unlikely ventures in life are the most valuable. ■

Regular Pittsburgh Parent contributor, Ann K. Howley, enjoys meeting smart, creative kids and writing about STEAM education.

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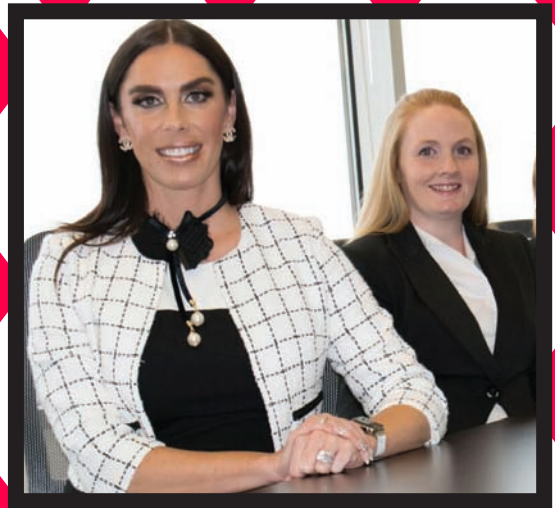
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MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION ACCREDITATION



Pittsburgh's Premier Child Custody Lawyers

Every parent wants the best for their child!

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Pittsburgh, PA 15219

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Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park
1551 Mayview Road Upper St. Clair, PA 15241
412-221-1099 | twpusc.org/crc/crc-home

Gather, learn & get fit at C&RC

The Community & Recreation Center at Boyce Mayview Park is a 90,000 square foot facility designed to provide a space for all ages to gather, learn, and get fit. The C&RC houses both an indoor and outdoor aquatics center, fitness floor, indoor walking track, 2 full-size basketball courts, 2 group exercise studios, poolside party rooms, multipurpose rental space, and a large lobby.

The indoor aquatics center contains a lap pool, spa, leisure pool with resistance channel, interactive water structure, and body slides. Beginning Memorial Day weekend members and visitors can enjoy the outdoor pool. Additional amenities at the outdoor pool include a floating lily pad walk as well as a large sandbox. Covered picnic pavilions and comfortable lounge chairs provide a space to relax when not swimming.

The state of the art fitness floor contains a wide variety of cardio pieces, free weight area, and strength training machines. A wide range of group exercise classes are offered daily in both the morning and evening hours. Most classes included with a membership, but non-members can also participate free of charge with the purchase of a daily admission pass. A complete schedule of all group exercise classes is available on the C&RC's website.

The C&RC offers a great variety of children and adult programs such as American Red Cross swim lessons, sports camps, dance, art, and science classes. All activities and membership is open to both C&RC Members and Non-Members residing in Upper St. Clair as well as surrounding communities. ■



COMMUNITY & RECREATION CENTER
AT BOYCE MAYVIEW PARK



Mars grad founds online tutoring business

A Mars High School graduate, Brett Davisson, has co-founded an online tutoring and studying service. The company, called StudyGoat, launched in April 2018 with over 600 test users. Davisson, who co-founded the company with a college friend, Jen Saunders, aims to bring tutors and students together in the digital world using a state-of-the-art website and tools like Skype.

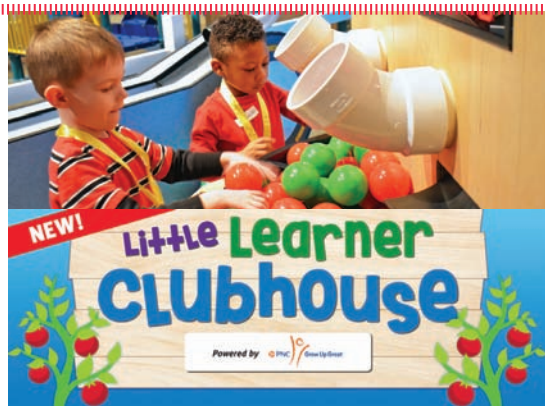
StudyGoat offers tutoring services from verified, college-educated tutors who are currently enrolled or have graduated from a U.S. college or university. Not only must tutors be passionate about the subjects they teach, they

must be exceptionally gifted. "Tutors are held to strict GPA requirements and are verified by providing transcripts and references, as well as several rounds of interviews," Davisson said.

Students can get help with subjects including SAT/ACT prep, all levels of mathematics, all categories of science, foreign languages including Spanish and French, essay writing skills and English language arts, among others. The way StudyGoat.com works is that students visit the site, browse eligible tutors in their desired subject, message and discuss projects and eventually schedule a session. Payment is only processed after a student or parent approve that the session occurred and went well, and Davisson ensures that his team works tirelessly to provide the best experience possible. "Not only are our tutors passionate and intelligent, they're personable and friendly. We want students to learn, and the best way to learn is with a fun, excited and outgoing teacher," he said.

Tutoring sessions often take place over Skype or similar business tools where tutors discuss problems with students one-on-one, use whiteboards to draw out problems or simply help them practice questions for exams. Rates start at \$20 per hour.

Anyone interested in learning more about what StudyGoat is doing to help students pursue their educational goals should visit www.StudyGoat.com to learn more!



Little Learner Clubhouse open at the Science Center

Aspiring scientists age six and under have a new exhibit space to explore at Carnegie Science Center. Little Learner Clubhouse, powered by PNC Grow Up Great®, is a nature-inspired hub for free-play and hands-on activities.

The colorful space features a host of interactive elements designed to foster scientific curiosity. Exhibit examples include "The Water Table," with a winding stream running through a fishing pond and clawfoot bathtub; "The Button Wall," which generates a variety of sights, sounds, and special effects; and "The Tomato Stand," which allows youngsters to explore simple machines, such as conveyors and vacuum tubes.

"The Little Learner Clubhouse is the bricks and mortar portion of our vision to provide a foundation of STEM experiences for early learners, their educators, and their families," said Ann Metzger, co-director of Carnegie Science Center. "It complements a wide range of initiatives we have in place in the community through our Early Childhood STEM Center."

Pediatric Alliance earns recognition for patient-centered care

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) has announced that Pediatric Alliance, P.C. of Pittsburgh has received NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Recognition for using evidence-based, patient-centered processes that focus on highly coordinated care and long term, participative relationships.

The NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home is a model of primary care that combines teamwork and information technology to improve care, improve patients' experience of care and reduce costs. Medical homes foster ongoing partnerships between patients and their personal clinicians, instead of approaching care as the sum of episodic office visits. Each patient's care is overseen by clinician-led care teams that coordinate treatment across the health care system. Research shows that medical homes can lead to higher quality and lower costs, and can improve patient and provider reported experiences of care.

"NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home Recognition raises the bar in defining high-quality care by emphasizing access, health information technology and coordinated care focused on patients," said NCQA President Margaret E. O'Kane. "Recognition shows that Pediatric Alliance has the tools, systems and resources to provide its patients with the right care, at the right time."



Spring and early Summer farm activities for the whole family

By Jill L. Ferguson



Spring is a fabulous time in Western Pennsylvania. The perennial flowers add color to the ground, birds start chirping in abundance now that winter has come to an end, and signs of new life are everywhere. Nowhere is this truer than on local farms. From March to early June, seeds are sown, seedlings are planted, and baby animals are birthed on farms throughout the tri-state area. And fun events exist for families who want to spend a day or an afternoon in the country, taking in the sights, smells and tastes of farm life.

Two local farms, Bedner's Farm and Greenhouse in MacDonald and Kerber's Dairy in North Huntingdon provide excitement for the whole family. Bedner's offers all ages and skill level outdoor yoga classes, a junior green thumb program for kids ages four through 12, mandala wood cut painting classes and a wealth of other programs in addition to hosting parties, pick-your-own produce events, hayrides and many other fun activities. Kerber's Dairy has sheep and goats for petting, offers all-season tubing, mini-golf, fresh-made ice cream that visitors rave about and they host children's birthday parties.

Other local farms offer tours of their fields, barns and animals; activities geared specifically towards children, such as flower pot painting and do-it-yourself terrarium building; and a chance to see how products are made (milk, cheese, baked goods from scratch). Research by Kingston University in London shows farm visits are important to challenge ignorance and misconceptions about farming (sometimes a child's only concept of farming comes from video games like FarmVille) and farm visits are important to help children understand where their food comes from.

Studies have shown that farms also provide the opportunity for hands-on and multi-sensory learning, which also boosts motor skills. Farms can encourage language development (think toddlers identifying animals, plants and colors and older children learning names of equipment and processes), help children develop or grow their appreciation of nature, promote healthy living (farm to table as opposed to packaged and processed foods to table), enhance problem solving skills and bring scientific concepts to life. And farms are a great place to encourage your child to explore the open spaces and make their own discoveries.

Brittany Bonilla, who grew up in Gibsonia, said her four-year-old daughter Aviana LOVES farms (capitalization theirs). "She is always wanting to kiss the cows," Bonilla said, "just like me." But more seriously, Bonilla said they love to go to farms and discuss how this country was formed and how we all survived off the land, the cycles of life and birth and death.

"We love discussing the purpose of each animal, and how they contribute to the earth, producing food and fertilizer. Farms are so educational," Bonilla said.

The Rodale Institute, located in Eastern Pennsylvania, has designed a Head Start Healthy Start curriculum for children that parents can check out to enhance the farm visit. Available at rodaleinstitute.org/myfirstgarden/lessons/where-food-comes-from.php. The curriculum walks kids through where food comes from, how seeds grow, planting a garden, harvesting and tasting and visiting a farm. And part of the curriculum has associated activities, books recommendations, crafts, snacks and lessons—all of which are fun and educational. Kids learn how to create snacks using recipes, what mulch is and why it is important and what organic means.

And if you need some recommended books to prepare for your farm visit, Gail Gibbons has authored three best-selling (according to Amazon) children's books on farming: *The Vegetables We Eat*, *The Fruits We Eat* and *From Seed to Plant*. These books, and a visit to the farm will teach children and reinforce the sentiment behind Wendell Berry's words in *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, "The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life." ■

Jill L. Ferguson is a writer, artist and entrepreneur originally from Pittsburgh.



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Letting go of mommy **GUILT**

By Kristi Wees

Guilt of all sorts fills our brains every single day.

GUILT: The feeling of having done wrong or failed in an obligation

Raise your hand if you have ever felt guilty about:

- Doing chores versus playing with your kids.
- Playing with your kids versus doing the dishes.
- Not getting little Sally the toy she wanted because it was too expensive.
- Letting the baby cry it out.
- Not breastfeeding long enough or not at all.
- Missing Johnny's school play due to a business trip.
- Not spending enough "quality time" with your partner.
- Not taking care of yourself.
- Going back to work after your maternity leave was up.
- Staying home with the kids and not pursuing your career goals.
- Taking a few minutes to go to the bathroom in peace and locking the bathroom door.

Is mommy guilt a real thing? It might as well be called a national epidemic! A book written by Bort, Pflock and Renner entitled: *"Mommy Guilt: Learn to Worry Less, Focus on What Matters Most, and Raise Happier Kids"*, broaches the subject of how this phenomenon is really prevalent. The authors present the results of a national survey of over 1,300 parents. A shocking 96 percent of parents reported they felt guilty about some aspect of parenting such as: yelling, family time, work choices, school and sports. So what is a mom to do?

Embracing mommy **guilt**

One method for lessening our mommy guilt may simply be to embrace it. What do I mean? Give it a big 'ole HUG? Actually, Yes! Lauren, a blogger who wrote an article on scarymommy.com, explains that she is taking exactly this approach to mommy guilt. She says, "so the next time mommy guilt creeps up behind me, ready to take a bite, I'm going to turn around to face it. I'll give it a hug and thank it for reminding me just how much I love my kids. I'll promise to do one thing (or stopping doing one thing) that I've been feeling guilty over. And then I'll tell it to take a hike."

Let it go ... Let it go...

It is easier said than done to just attempt to STOP feeling guilty as a mom. As the famous (or infamous) Elsa in Frozen, sings with such confidence, "letting it go" for many moms may seem next to impossible. In an attempt to gain wisdom from my fellow tribe of



continued on page 28

Pittsburgh Parent Education Expo

With just one click you can view valuable information regarding educational institutions and programs for your young children & teens.....anytime!

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Visit PittsburghParent.com

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TRUSTARTS.ORG/PGHKIDS

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mommy quilt continued from page 27

amazing moms regarding how to let go of mommy guilt, I posted the question to Facebook. Here is a sampling of the advice I received.

How do you let go of mommy *guilt*?

Stephanie says: "Can't change the past. But you can change the future."

Amy says: "Gut wrenching, soul bearing prayer. That gave me the calm and focus I needed to direct my attention to problem solving. Then came the connection to fellow journey women, who I believe have been God's hands to me. Knowing them all and seeing the undeniable love, devotion and advocacy has helped me to let go of guilt because I can see that we are the same."

Jessica says: "The energy of guilt is a low vibration. I like to spin my guilt to benefit others. When I feel like I should have done things differently, I remind myself that I did the best I could with the information I had at the time. Knowing differently now, means doing things differently going forward. I feel empowered by helping others find their

power. So I spin my guilt to help others with the knowledge I gained through my experience."

Meadow says: "Write it all down and crumple it up, stomp on it and burn it. It helps no one to stay in that place of guilt. Your kid needs you and you deserve to be treated better than that!"

Is *guilt* prevention possible?

As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So is it actually possible to prevent mommy guilt from taking over our lives by stopping it before it begins? Elayna Fernandez of thepositivemom.com advises that adopting this mantra: "All you can do is all you can do. And all you can do is enough. But you better make sure you do all you can do" (A.L. Williams) can really help to lessen mommy guilt.

I asked my own mom what she did to prevent mommy guilt when I was young. She recommends setting aside some one-on-one time with each child individually with no interruptions or electronics, every single week! That time could be grocery shopping with your son and letting him cross off the list while you teach him how to read labels, or a special mommy-daughter date to do yoga in front of the TV or even coloring or doing puzzles together. This time

does not need to be elaborate, expensive or indulgent to send the message to your child that they are loved, special and have your un-divided attention.

Surrounding ourselves with confident, positive, and low-guilt friends can really go a long way towards helping us all feel like amazing mothers and lessen a lot of the self-inflicted mommy guilt. As my friend Jennifer so kindly reminded me, "You can't move forward if you are always looking in the rear view mirror." So ladies, it is time to keep our eyes on the road! You can only have guilt about things in the past, so if we focus our efforts on looking ahead, we can leave mommy guilt in the dust and ride blissfully off into the sunset! ■

Kristi Wees has a master's degree in chemistry. She became a pediatric patient advocate with Empowered Medical Advocacy (EmpoweredAdvocacy.com) due to navigating her daughter's special needs.

Around & About MAY

Tuesday | 1

Pittsburgh Parent Virtual Education Expo

Visit our website PittsburghParent.com & click on the Virtual Education Expo for great school ideas, the expo runs until August!

Pittsburgh Parent Virtual Camp Expo

Visit our website PittsburghParent.com & click on the Virtual Summer Activities & Camp Expo for great camp ideas, the expo runs through August!

Rangos Giant Cinema

Location: Carnegie Science Center

Time: Times & movies vary

Cost: \$\$

• carnegiesciencecenter.org

The most technologically advanced movie theater in western PA – with a certified Giant Screen, Dual 4K laser projection, Dolby Atmos surround sound, state-of-the-art 3D technology, brand new comfortable seats and more.

Teen Tuesdays

Location: Shaler Library

Time: Tuesdays, 3 - 4pm

Cost: FREE • shalerlibrary.org

Preschool in the Park

Location: Mingo Creek State Park, Finleyville

Times: May 1 & 2, 10am & 1pm • Ages 3 - 5

Cost: FREE • (*PR) co.washington.pa.us

Wednesday | 2

First Time Homebuyer Event

Location: Regional Learning Alliance, 850 Cranberry Woods Drive, Cranberry Twp.

Time: May 2, 7 - 8:30pm

Cost: FREE

(*PR) MarsBank.com/firsthomeevent

Learn about the loan process, grants and the documents you will need. All attendees will receive a coupon worth \$500 off closing costs. Light refreshments will be served.

Friday | 4

UPMC Presents West Side Story Suite + In the Night + Fancy Free with the PBT Orchestra

Location: Benedum Center

Time: May 4 - 6

Cost: \$\$ • pbt.org

The Lion King

Location: New Castle Playhouse

Time: May 4 - 13

Cost: \$\$ • newcastleplayhouse.org



Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp-Resort at Kozy Rest

Location: Harrisville, Butler County

Time: The month of May

Cost: \$\$

pittsburghjellystone.com

May 4 - 6, Cinco De Mayo; May 11-13, Mothers Celebration; May 18 - 20, Hogwarts Happenings; May 25 - 28, Memorial Day. Themed activities for the whole family along with everything else that Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park-Resort experience offers!

Touch-A-Truck & BEE Well Family Expo

Location: Gateway #4 Fire Co., Monroeville

Time: May 5, 10am - 3pm

Cost: FREE • spectrumcharterschool.org

Meadowcroft's Opening Weekend

Location: Avella

Time: May 5 - 6

Cost: \$\$ • heinzhistorycenter.org/meadowcroft

Highlighted events have an advertisement within the publication

(*PR) – Pre-registration required
\$\$ – Cost involved

Please visit the website of the event to confirm before you go. All events & costs are subject to change.

Free Museum Day

Location: Compas Inn Museum, Fort Ligonier, Lincoln Highway Experience, Ligonier Valley Rail Road Museum & Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art

Time: May 5

Cost: \$\$ • laurelhighlands.org

Baby Book Shower

Location: CLP - Hazelwood

Time: May 5, 1:30 - 2:30pm

Cost: FREE • (RSVP) 412-421-2517

carnegielibrary.org

A FREE event for parents-to-be & parents of babies (birth - 18 months). Enjoy cake, songs, games & music.

The Sheetz Pittsburgh Toddler Trot

Location: Point State Park

Time: May 5, 8:30am

Cost: \$\$ • thepittsburghmarathon.com

One Mile Toyota Pgh. Kids Marathon

Location: North Shore

Time: May 5, 9:30am

Cost: \$\$ • thepittsburghmarathon.com

UPMC Health Plan / UPMC Sports Medicine Pittsburgh 5K Run

Location: North Shore

Time: May 5, 8am

Cost: \$\$ • thepittsburghmarathon.com

Beaver County 100th Anniversary History Celebration Weekend

Location: All through-out Beaver County

Time: May 5 - 6

Cost: \$\$ • visitbeavercounty.com/images/pdf/history_webpage_2018.pdf

continued on page 30

Calendar continued from page 29

Hands-On History Days

Location: Old Economy Village

Time: May 5, 10am - 5pm

Time: May 6, Noon - 5pm

Cost: \$\$

oldeconomyvillage.org

This event brings history to life for visitors of all ages. Come try your hand at a variety of nineteenth century crafts, trades and games.

Sunday | 6

The Dick's Sporting Goods Pittsburgh Marathon

Location: North Shore

Time: May 6, Wheelchair start: 6:50am

Time: May 6, Marathon start: 7am

Cost: \$\$ • thepittsburghmarathon.com

Storytime & More

Location: Powdermill Nature Reserve, Rector

Time: 2pm, 1st Sunday of each month

Cost: FREE • Ages 3-9 • carnegiemn.org

Discover the wonders of nature through a picture book, game, craft or nature walk.

Children's Heritage Day

Location: Depreciation Lands Museum, Allison Park

Time: May 6, 1 - 4pm

Cost: \$\$ • depreciationlandsmuseum.org

Monday | 7

Tiny Tots Playgroup

Location: Slippery Rock Area Park & Recreation

Time: Mondays thru May 14, 9:30am - Noon

Cost: \$\$ • slipperyrockpark-rec.org

Tuesday | 8

Preschool Young Nature Explorers

Location: Latodami Nature Center, North Park

Time: May 8 at various times of the day

Cost: FREE • (*PR) alleghenycounty.us

Birds: Hands-on, outdoor program to introduce children to the natural world.

Sensory Friendly Afternoon

Location: Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

Time: 2nd Tuesday of each month, 1 - 5pm

Cost: \$\$ • pittsburghkids.org

Announcement and exhibit sound volume will be reduced.

Wednesday | 9

Hop Into History

Location: Heinz History Center

Time: 2nd Wed. of each month, 10:30 - 11:15am

Cost: \$\$ • (*PR) heinzhistorycenter.org

Designed for 2 - 5-year-olds & their caregivers. Be transported back in time through music, dance and games.

First Time Homebuyer Event

Location: Fairfield Inn by Marriott, 200

Fairfield Lane, Butler

Time: May 9, 7 - 8:30pm

Cost: FREE

(*PR) MarsBank.com/firsthomeevent

Learn about the loan process, grants & the documents you will need. All attendees will receive a coupon worth \$500 off closing costs. Light refreshments will be served.

Thursday | 10

Techs Car Seat Inspections

Location: Dept. of Veterans affairs - Police, Aspinwall

Time: May 10, 3 - 6:30pm

Cost: FREE • (*PR) patechs.com/inspections

Little Gardeners

Location: Cranberry Twp. Municipal Ctr.

Time: May 10 & 24, 1 - 2pm • Ages 2 - 5

Cost: \$\$ • (*PR) cranberrytownship.org



11
Friday

Erie KOA

Location: 6645 West Road, McKean, PA

Time: The month of May

Cost: \$\$

koa.com/campgrounds/erie

May 11 - 13, Mother's Day & Care Camp

Big Weekend; May 18 - 20, Canadian

Victoria Day & May 25 - 28, Memorial

Day W.E. Themed Activities for the whole family along with the KOA Experience!

Robot Roundup - Girls Night!

Location: Carnegie Science Center

Time: May 11, 6pm - May 12, 9:30am

Cost: \$\$ • carnegiesciencecenter.org

Themed activities, Rangos Theater, continental breakfast & more.

Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka

Location: Old Schoolhouse Players, Hickory

Time: May 11 - 12 & 18 - 20

Cost: \$\$ • osptheater.com

Highlighted events have an
advertisement within the
publication

(*PR) - Pre-registration required
\$\$ - Cost involved

Please visit the website of the event
to confirm before you go. All events
& costs are subject to change.

Saturday | 12

Down on the Farm Day

Location: Round Hill Park

Time: May 12, 11am - 2pm

Cost: FREE

• alleghenycounty.us/special-events/down-on-the-farm-day.aspx

Explore the farm, meet the animals and watch the annual sheep shearing.

Unique Mother's Day Gift

Location: Cranberry Twp. Municipal Ctr.

Time: May 12, 10am - noon • Ages 5 & up

Cost: \$\$ • (*PR) cranberrytownship.org

Royal Ball

Location: Pittsburgh Field Club

Time: May 12, 11:30am - 3pm

Cost: \$\$

geminitheater.org/royalball-2018.htm#EVE

Buffet style lunch, story book characters, singing, dancing, games, prizes, silent auction & more.

Fiddlesticks: Outdoor Overtures

Location: Heinz Hall

Time: May 12, 10am, Discovery Time

Adventures & 11:15am, show time

Cost: \$\$ • pittsburghsymphony.org

Discover the music of the great outdoors with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra! The stars at night are big and bright in this fanciful outdoor adventure!

Mother's Day Tea

Location: Hartwood Acres Mansion Lawn

Time: May 12, Noon - 3pm

Cost: \$\$ • alleghenycounty.us/Parks

Tea, sandwiches, desserts & a guided tour of the mansion.

Baby Book Shower

Location: CLP - Allegheny

Time: May 12, 1:30 - 2:30pm

Cost: FREE • (RSVP) 412-237-1890

carnegielibrary.org

A FREE event for parents-to-be & parents of babies (birth - 18 months). Enjoy cake, songs, games & music.

STEAM for Young Architects

Location: Trust Arts Education Center

Time: May 12, 11am

Cost: \$\$ • trustarts.org

Create architecture, sculptures, and contraptions of our own! We will consider STEAM topics and learn and play together.

Kids Day America

Location: Butler Farm Show Grounds

Time: May 12, 11am - 3pm

Cost: FREE • visitbutlercounty.com

Walk for a Healthy Community

Location: Stage AE

Time: May 12, 11am - 3pm

Cost: \$\$ • (*PR) walkforahealthycommunity.org

Sunday | 13 Mother's Day

Mother's Day Mansion Tours

Location: Hartwood Acres Mansion

Time: May 13, Noon - 3pm

Cost: \$\$ • alleghenycounty.us/Parks

Take mom for a tour of the mansion on her special day!

Monday | 14

How I Became a Pirate

Location: Orr Auditorium, Westminster College

Time: May 14, 6:30pm

Cost: \$\$ • westminster.edu

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Looking Glass Plays for Young Audiences



Disney's The Little Mermaid Jr. – June 13 - 30

Be "part of their world" as you journey "under the sea" with Ariel and her friends in this wonderful musical.



The Jungle Book – July 6 - 21

Meet Mowgli, an abandoned boy in the jungle, finding his place among the community of animals in this classic tale.



The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley Jr.

July 25 - August 11 – Grab your passport and follow Stanley Lambchop around the world on an unforgettable trip.

Buy your KidCard and attend all 3 shows for just \$27! Special Ice Cream Socials and Sensory-friendly performances.



17

Thursday
Ramadan Begins

remake
learning
days

Remake Learning Days 2018

Location: Various Locations in Pittsburgh & surrounding areas

Time: May 17 - 25

Cost: FREE

RemakeLearningDays.org

Come to Remake Learning Days 2018! Experience hands-on, technology-infused, engaging and relevant learning experiences. Find learning events at schools, museums, libraries, afterschool centers, universities, media centers, tech startups & more, which are free and open for you to explore. No matter where you live.

continued on page 32

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EQT Children's Theater Festival

Location: Various Locations in the Downtown Pittsburgh's Cultural District

Time: May 17 - 20, Thur., 10am - 2pm, Fri. - Sun. 10am-5pm

Cost: \$\$

pghkids.trustarts.org

Experience six sensational performances of professional, international theater with performances for children of all ages. Panda's Home, Terrance Semien & the Zydeco Experience, The Rainbow Fish, Poggie, The Young King & Sunjata Kamalenya. Special Sensory-Friendly Performances of The Rainbow Fish will be offered, festival food & more!

Friday | 18

Family Campout

Location: Mingo Creek State Park, Finleyville

Times: May 18 - 19, Set up begins at 4pm

Cost: \$\$ • (*PR) co.washington.pa.us

The Fantasticks

Location: Area Community Theatre of Sharpsville

Time: May 18 - 20

Cost: \$\$ • actsharpssville.org

Mad Science Sleepover

Location: Carnegie Science Center

Time: May 18, 6pm - May 19, 9:30am

Cost: \$\$ • carnegiesciencecenter.org

Themed activities, Rangos Theater, continental breakfast & more.

Star Party

Location: Mingo Creek Obsy., Mingo Creek Park

Location: Wagman Obsy., Deer Lakes Park

Times: May 18 & 19, just before sunset

Cost: FREE • 3ap.org

Saturday | 19 Armed Forces Day

EQT Children's Theater Festival: The Rainbow Fish - Special Sensory Performance

Location: Byham Theater

Time: May 19, 2:45pm

Cost: \$\$ • Ages 3 - 8

pghkids.trustarts.org/kids/plan-your-visit/sensory-friendly

Designated sensory-friendly performances have either been adapted or created to serve the needs of individuals on the Autism spectrum and with sensory sensitivities and their loved ones and caregivers.

Water Safety Day

Location: Goldfish Swim School, Wexford

Location: Goldfish Swim School, Peters Twp.

Time: May 19, 3 - 5pm

Cost: FREE

• (*PR) goldfishswimschool.com/wexford or (goldfishswimschool.com/peters-township

Community Day

Location: Twp. Upper St. Clair

Time: May 19

Cost: \$\$ • wpusc.org

Steam Show Spring Gas-up

Location: Portersville Steam Show Grounds

Time: May 19 - 20

Cost: \$\$ • portersvillesteamshow.org

Big Truck Day

Location: Zelenople Community Park

Time: May 19, 11am - 2pm

Cost: \$\$ • myzeliepark.org

Sheep & Fiber Fest

Location: Greene County Fairgrounds

Time: May 19 - 20

Cost: \$\$ • waynesburgpa.org/Events/sheep

Spring Garden Market & Home Show

Location: Alameda Park, Butler

Time: May 19, 9am - 3pm

Cost: FREE children's activities • co.butler.pa.us

Super Science Saturday: Found in PA

Location: Carnegie Museum of Natural History

Time: May 19, Noon - 4pm

Cost: \$\$

• carnegiemn.h.org

You can explore a topic in-depth through hands-on activities, experiments, demonstrations, discussions with museum experts, family-friendly activities and more.

Sunday | 20

Free Museum Sundays

Location: Carnegie Museum of Art

Location: Carnegie Museum of Natural History

Time: 3rd Sunday of each month

Cost: FREE • cmoa.org

Fiber, Fabric & Fashion

Location: Oliver Miller Homestead, South Park

Time: May 20, 1:30 - 4:30pm

Cost: \$\$ • olivermillerhomestead.org

Ultimate Play Day

Location: August Wilson Park

Time: May 20, 1 - 4pm

Cost: FREE • (*PR) pittsburghparks.org

Tuesday | 22

Cinderella

Location: Heinz Hall

Time: May 22 - 27

Cost: \$\$ • trustarts.org

Highlighted events have an advertisement within the publication

**(*PR) – Pre-registration required
\$\$ – Cost involved**

Please visit the website of the event to confirm before you go. All events & costs are subject to change.

Saturday | 26

Outdoor Extravaganza

Location: Breakneck Campground, Butler Co.

Time: May 26 - 29

Cost: \$\$ • outdoorextravaganza.org

Sunday | 27

Living History: Free Family Fishing

Location: Amphitheater along the

Monongahela Wharf

Time: May 27, 11am - 3pm

Cost: FREE • heinzhistorycenter.org

Modern fishing equipment will be provided, along with tips on contemporary fishing.

Fish for FREE Day

Location: ALL Pennsylvania waterways

Time: May 27

Cost: FREE • fishandboat.com

Annual Summer Band Concert Series

Location: Ligonier

Time: Sundays, May 27 - August 26, 7pm

Cost: FREE • ligonier.com

Open Streets Pittsburgh

Location: 4-mile route from Market Square to Uptown through the the Armstrong Tunnel to East Carson St. in the South Side

Time: May 27

Cost: FREE • openstreetspg.org

PA Arts & Crafts Festival

Location: Washington County Fairgrounds

Time: May 25 - 27

Cost: \$\$ • familyfestivals.com

Monday | 28 Memorial Day

**Please submit info for our June Calendar by May 7
web@pittsburghparent.com**



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READY FOR FREE* HANDS-ON LEARNING FUN?

*The majority of events are free.
Please check the website for more details.



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